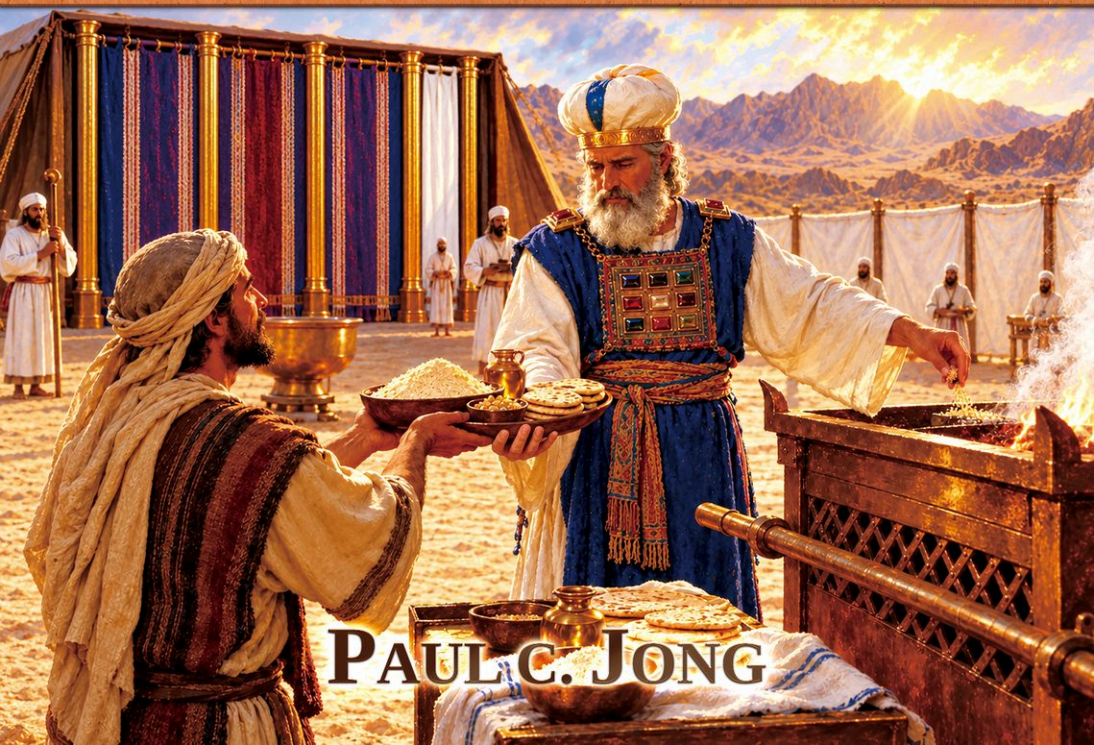
Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Leviticus

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)



Paul C. Jong



Leviticus Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)

Biblical Exposition & Sermons



Hephzibah

“For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD” (Leviticus 16:30)

The ordinances of cleanness and the sacrifices of atonement in Leviticus were not merely rules for daily life in ancient Israel. They are a shadow of salvation, showing how a sinner is made clean and comes before the holy God.

This book examines the word in Leviticus chapters 11 through 18 in connection with the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has accomplished. Born as descendants of Adam, people cannot help but commit sin. Yet for mankind in such a state, Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind by being baptized by John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. People become sinless not by their own deeds, but by believing this word of salvation that God has established.

This book guides readers to lay down their own righteousness and believe in this perfect atonement, so that they may obtain true cleansing and the assurance of salvation.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

<u>You must believe now.</u>

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Leviticus

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)

PAUL C. JONG

Hephzibah Publishing House

A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
SEOUL, KOREA

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Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (II)

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We offer a prayer of thanks to the Lord for giving us the Word of salvation and blessing us with the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit.

I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

I hope and pray that this book will help many souls be born again, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to everyone who worked hard with me.

I sincerely hope that the Lord will allow the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit to be spread throughout the world through those who believe in Jesus.

PAUL C. JONG

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Preface

In Leviticus are recorded the ordinances God appointed so that the people would distinguish between the clean and the unclean, and the law of sacrifice for atonement He appointed so that they could receive the remission of sins and come to the holy God. As we read the ordinances that make the body and daily life clean and the law of sacrifice that makes atonement for all the people, we come to wonder why God appointed such laws and how they are connected with the word of the New Testament. I hope that you, the readers, will understand the meaning of cleanness and atonement contained in this word, and will clearly know and believe, through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, how Jesus has removed our sins. In this book, Leviticus II from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, I intend to look through Leviticus chapters 11 to 18 in order and preach that word.

The word of cleanness and atonement read through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

To understand rightly God's will of salvation revealed in the Old and New Testaments, one must first know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The words about the law of sacrifice and the atonement in the Old Testament are a shadow that shows beforehand the salvation Jesus Christ would come to this earth and accomplish. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of that sin in full by shedding His blood on

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the Cross, and then accomplished our salvation by rising again from death. When we know and believe this word of the gospel, we come to understand how the atonement God promised in the Old Testament was accomplished through Jesus Christ. Moreover, through the word He gives to the people who have received the remission of sins, we learn the faith and the life that serve God in thanksgiving for the grace of salvation.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the "water" refers to the baptism Jesus received from John. With that baptism Jesus bore our sins, and with the blood He shed on the Cross He received in our place the judgment of those sins. God the Father planned our salvation; God the Son, Jesus, accomplished that salvation according to the Father's will; and God the Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of salvation. By believing in our hearts this word of the gospel—that Jesus has borne and removed all our sins—we receive the remission of sins and become God's children.

This faith becomes the foundation for understanding all the words of the Bible. Reading the law, we come to realize our own sins of failing to live according to God's will, and in the law of sacrifice we look into the way of atonement God prepared for sinners. In the prophecies of the prophets we learn the promise of the Savior who was to come, and in the New Testament we come to know the work of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled that promise. We also come to receive the instructions and rebukes given to the saints as the word that teaches what God's children who have received the remission of sins are to believe and how they are to live. I hope that through this book you, the readers, will look into the words of Leviticus concerning cleanness and atonement, and realize more clearly the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has removed all our sins.

To those who wish to know the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit in more detail, I recommend reading Have You Truly Been Born Again of Water and the Spirit? by Pastor Paul C. Jong. Once you come to know the meaning of atonement contained in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross, it will also help you understand the ordinances of cleanness and the law of sacrifice of atonement recorded in Leviticus.

The grace of God who washes away all sins

To understand the word of Leviticus, one must first consider the fact that the holy God dwells among His people. God had the people of Israel distinguish between the clean and the unclean, and made known to them the procedure for becoming clean when they had become unclean. He also appointed the law of sacrifice that makes atonement for the sins of the people and cleanses the sanctuary. The people could not come to God according to their own judgment, but had to follow the word God had appointed.

In Leviticus chapters 11–18 are recorded the ordinances concerning food and the condition of the body, childbirth and skin lesions, and the uncleanness of garments and houses, as well as the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, the commands concerning blood, and the statutes of daily life the people were to keep. Though the objects and procedures of each ordinance differ, through them God taught the people to know His holiness and to live according to His word. In this book I intend to look at the meaning of these ordinances, and to explain how God made known to the people the way to become clean and the way to receive the remission of sins.

Among them, let us look at the sacrifice of the Day of

Atonement in Leviticus chapter 16. Aaron first had to offer a young bull as a sin offering for himself and his house, and then kill the goat of the sin offering for the people and go into the Most Holy Place with its blood. He sprinkled that blood on and before the mercy seat, and made atonement for the sanctuary, which had been defiled by the uncleanness of the children of Israel and by the sins they had committed. To come to the holy God, the sacrifice of atonement God had appointed was necessary.

After finishing the atonement for the sanctuary, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he laid both his hands on the head of the other, live goat, and confessed all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all the sins they had committed, and put them on its head. Then he entrusted the goat to a man appointed beforehand and had him send it away into the wilderness. The goat was sent away into an uninhabited land, bearing all the iniquities of the people. Concerning this day God said, *"On that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Leviticus 16:30)*.

The laying on of hands that put the sins of the people on the head of the goat, and the blood of the sacrificial offering, show beforehand the atonement Jesus Christ would accomplish. Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received in our place the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross. Moreover, through the goat that was sent away into the wilderness bearing the sins of the people, we can look into God's will to carry their sins away. When we know and believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we come to understand how the promise of the remission of sins contained in this sacrifice was fulfilled through Jesus.

The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament

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was repeated every year, but Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and accomplished the eternal atonement by offering Himself as the sacrificial offering. The ground that assures us of the remission of our sins does not lie in our own deeds or in the state of our hearts. It lies in the fact that the Lord has removed all our sins and in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that testifies of it. Therefore, even when we find our own weaknesses and faults, we must acknowledge them before God and believe in the atonement the Lord has accomplished. I hope that you, the readers, will gain the assurance of the remission of sins through this word and serve God in thanksgiving.

From the ordinances concerning cleanness and the commands concerning blood and daily life, too, we learn the life of the people who belong to God. God had the people distinguish between the clean and the unclean, treasure the blood He gave for atonement, and not follow the abominable customs of Egypt and Canaan. We who have received the remission of sins must also take the word of God as our standard and discern what to believe and how to live. We must turn from living according to our own selfish desires, and, in thanksgiving for the grace of salvation, preach the gospel together with the Church of God and serve the Lord.

In this book, Biblical Exposition, sermons, and Questions and Answers are woven together. The “Biblical Exposition” of each chapter looks at the flow of the text and the ordinances, and explains their meaning verse by verse. The “sermon” testifies of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has removed our sins, and explains the life in which the saints who have received the remission of sins serve the Lord according to the word of God. And the “Questions and Answers” unfold, in the form of questions and answers, the things one may wonder

about while reading the text, helping you understand the meaning of the word more clearly. I hope that you, the readers, will read the Bible text itself and examine step by step how what this book explains is connected with the word.

I want everyone who reads this book to realize, through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the love of God toward them. I hope you will believe the fact that Jesus has borne and removed all our sins, and enjoy the assurance of the remission of sins and peace of heart. I also hope that, in thanksgiving for that grace, you will preach this gospel to others as well. I pray that this book will establish your faith firmly and help you serve the Lord according to the word of God. ✉

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CHAPTER

11

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Leviticus Chapter 11 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 11:1–8—how does this word say the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live?

1. The word of the text

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth: Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat. Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you" (Leviticus 11:1–8).

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2. The ordinance of clean animals teaches the faith and life of the saints

In Leviticus chapter 11, God distinguished for the people of Israel the animals that may be eaten and the animals that may not be eaten. Among the land animals, what could be eaten had to meet both of two conditions.

—It had to divide the hoof, having cloven hooves.

—It had to chew the cud.

The text says that the camel, the rock hyrax, and the hare chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves, and that the swine has cloven hooves but does not chew the cud, and so they are unclean. Having only one of the features, an animal was not recognized as a clean animal.

Through this distinction God teaches the faith He receives and the life of the saints. Chewing the cud shows the life of ruminating again on the word of God received into the heart and believing it, and the cloven hoof shows the life set apart, which discerns the will of God and follows that will.

At that time Israel actually distinguished its food according to this ordinance. But the saints of the New Testament do not receive the remission of sins by not eating particular foods. Mark 7:19 records, *"Thus purifying all foods."* Paul also, while exhorting people not to be judged over the matter of eating and drinking, says that these are *"a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17)*. The saints of the New Testament are not saved by not eating pork.

Also, in Acts chapter 10, God said to Peter, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. In the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, Peter testified that God had instructed him that he *"should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28)*. Therefore we must not regard a person as unclean and

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reject him because he is a Gentile.

The standard for discerning the faith and life of the saints is not nation or food but the word of God. The saints who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live ruminating on the word that Jesus bore all their sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of sin on the Cross. Also, even in their own insufficiency they must discern the will of God and, united with the church, live according to that will.

3. To chew the cud is the faith that keeps ruminating on the gospel

Just as an animal that chews the cud brings up again what it has eaten and chews it, the saints must keep ruminating on the word of God received into their hearts and believe it. The first word to ruminate on is the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John and bore the sin of mankind once and for all, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and became our Savior by rising again from death. 1 John chapter 5 testifies of this as follows.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).

The saints are not people who come to know this gospel once and then leave it behind. As long as they live, whenever their own weakness and faults are revealed, they ruminate on the

gospel again.

"I am lacking, but Jesus bore even this sin with the baptism He received from John. He received even the judgment for it on the Cross. By rising again from death, Jesus became my perfect Savior."

To ruminate in this way is not to take sin lightly. It is to acknowledge one's wrong honestly, and yet not try to produce salvation again by one's own deeds or by repeated prayers of repentance, but to believe in the eternal atonement Jesus accomplished.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Therefore, without excusing or hiding our wrong, if we have caused harm we must apologize and set it right. At the same time, without being shut up in self-condemnation, we must believe in Jesus, who has already borne all sins, and rise up again. The person who knows grace does not rationalize sin but returns to the way that pleases God.

4. The cloven hoof shows a life with a clear direction

When we apply the cloven hoof to the spiritual life, it refers to living while distinguishing truth from falsehood, the things of the spirit from the things of the flesh, and the will of God from one's own desires.

The saints, too, have the thoughts and desires of the flesh, but their standard of what is right must be clear. Rather than one's own desires, one's pride, and immediate gain, one must choose the word of God and the truth.

The saints may fall, but they do not change even their direction. When it is revealed that they have followed the flesh,

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they do not rationalize it as right but turn back before the word. They set the direction of their hearts, not because their ability is sufficient, but because God has said that this way is right.

This is the life set apart. It is not building a wall and living cut off from people; it is living in the world without accepting the desires and falsehood of the world as the master of one's life.

5. Why must both conditions be present?

Leviticus 11:3 does not require only one of chewing the cud and the cloven hoof. It requires both. This gives the important lesson that faith and life cannot be separated.

The case of the camel, the rock hyrax, and the hare—these animals chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves. Applied spiritually, we can think of the state of hearing the word and repeating it while not clearly setting the direction of one's life.

Even if one can know and explain the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if in life one keeps chasing only one's own desires and rationalizes falsehood and unrighteousness as right, then the chewing of the cud and the walking have been separated from each other. If one is a person who ruminates on the gospel, that gospel must change the direction of one's life as well.

This does not mean, however, that one is saved only if one's deeds are perfect. Salvation is received by believing what Jesus has accomplished. But the person who has been saved comes to want to live in the direction that pleases God, following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The case of the swine—the swine has cloven hooves but does not chew the cud. Applied spiritually, it makes us guard against the state of looking set apart and devout on the outside while having no faith in the gospel in the heart.

Attending worship, giving offerings, serving, fasting, and a moral life may all be necessary and precious. But having such an outward appearance does not make the sin of the heart disappear. If one does not believe in one's heart the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death, then however devout the outward appearance may be, it cannot take the place of the faith of salvation.

Chewing the cud is the faith of the heart, and the cloven hoof is the direction of life toward which that faith is headed. One must not replace faith with outward devotion, nor keep the gospel only as knowledge. The faith that believes in the perfect gospel and the direction fitting for that gospel must appear together.

6. How should the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit actually live?

—One must ruminate on the gospel every day. When guilt and discouragement come, one must believe the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood, and the promise of God, rather than one's own feelings and deeds.

—One must honestly acknowledge one's wrong, apologize, and return what should be returned. After that, without being shut up in self-condemnation, one must look to the Lord, who bore even that sin.

—When making a choice, one must discern by the word. At work one chooses honesty; in human relationships, reconciliation and love; in speaking, truth and edification. The standard is not perfect ability but the right direction before God.

—One must not make the gospel a tool of worldly desire. Rather than pursuing only wealth, health, and success, one must

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use one's family, workplace, possessions, and talents in serving the gospel and souls.

—One must be united with the church in the word and the gospel. The words of people cannot come before the Bible, but the life of hearing the word, praying, and serving together, and holding up one another's faith, is important.

—One must use faith even in small matters. Rather than only calculating one's circumstances and relying only on one's own means, one must pray to God, believe His word, and choose what is right. Even when the result is not seen immediately, taking one step in the direction that pleases God is living by faith.

7. The word of verse 8, *"Their carcasses you shall not touch"*

For Old Testament Israel this was actually a command not to touch the dead body of an unclean animal. If we apply this to the spiritual life of today, the saints must not take lightly the influence of the false gospel and of sin, which kill the soul.

As Peter realized in Acts chapter 10, we must not regard a person as unclean and reject him because he is a Gentile. The saints must discern faith and life by the standard of the word of God, not by nation or origin. They do not take part in the false gospel and in sin, but to the people who are in them they must preach the true gospel.

Conclusion

This is the core lesson that Leviticus 11:1–8 gives to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Salvation is not received by picking one's food or by producing conduct that is set apart. It is received by faith in the salvation Jesus completed by bearing our sins once and for all through receiving baptism from John, receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rising again from death.

Chewing the cud is the heart that holds on to the gospel, and the cloven hoof is the step that follows that gospel. Whenever they are shaken, the saints return to the perfect gospel, and acknowledging their wrong, even in their insufficiency they choose the way that pleases God.

Leviticus 11:9–12—how does this word say the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live?

1. The word of the text

"These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat. But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water, they are an abomination to you. They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that shall be an abomination to you" (Leviticus 11:9–12).

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2. Fins and scales teach the faith and life of the saints

God told Israel that among the creatures living in the rivers, the seas, and other waters, they might eat those that have both fins and scales, but those that do not meet this condition they were to regard as an abomination and not eat.

This is the ordinance concerning food that Israel at that time actually had to keep. But the saints of the New Testament are not saved by keeping this ordinance concerning food. Mark 7:18–23 distinguishes between food and the defilement that comes out of the heart of man, and Colossians 2:16–17 says not to let anyone judge you in food or in drink. Therefore what one eats cannot be made the standard of the remission of sins.

Also, as Peter realized in Acts 10:28, we must not regard a person as common or unclean and reject him because he is a Gentile. We must preach to people the gospel of salvation God has given, and serve them so that they too may receive the remission of sins by faith.

This ordinance concerning food also teaches with what faith the saints who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live. Fins show living according to the direction God has appointed, and scales show keeping the word of God in one's heart and living by receiving faith and strength from that word. Now let us look at these two in connection with the actual life of the saints.

3. Fins show the direction of life

Just as a fish keeps its balance and sets its direction with its fins, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not be dragged along by the current of the world but

must set the direction of his life according to the word of God.

The world regards money and success as the most important things, and justifies lies told to avoid loss and an unforgiving attitude. It puts the recognition of people first and tries to make even faith a means of self-satisfaction.

But the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has a different direction. Rather than asking, "What do people do?" he asks, "What pleases God?"

Choosing honesty at work, choosing forgiveness over hatred in human relationships, showing the gospel rather than boasting of oneself, and using one's possessions not only for oneself but in serving the work of God and one's neighbor—these are one aspect of the life that has fins.

Such a life is not possible because one's willpower is strong. It is believing the fact that Jesus has saved oneself, seeking the help of the Holy Spirit, and obeying one step at a time.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

There are times when, looking only at one's circumstances, it is hard to go forward. But if God has said that the way is right, one must pray, set one's direction by faith, and move. This is the life that uses the fins of faith.

4. Scales show the life that keeps the heart with the faith of the gospel

Just as scales protect the body of a fish, the saints must keep the word of God in their hearts and receive faith and strength from that word. Even in the world, they keep their hearts with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word that Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all by receiving

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baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and became our perfect Savior by rising again from death.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:6–8).

As the saints live, their own insufficiency and sins are revealed. Then Satan condemns them, saying, "You committed such a sin, so how can you be righteous?" On the other hand, the flesh deceives them, saying, "You have already received the remission of sins, so it is all right to leave your wrong as it is."

The faith of the gospel keeps the heart from these two attacks. One acknowledges the wrong, apologizes, and sets it right, yet because one believes the baptism that Jesus, who bore even that sin, received from John, and the Cross, one does not go back to the status of a sinner.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

The faith that has scales is neither a faith that hides sin nor a faith that thinks salvation has been canceled every time one sins. It is the faith that acknowledges the wrong and turns back, and yet holds on to the eternal atonement Jesus accomplished.

5. Fins and scales must be together

Leviticus chapter 11 does not say that it is enough to have only fins or only scales. It requires both. This gives the lesson that in the life of the saints, the faith of the gospel and the direction of faith must be together.

Feature in the text	Application to the spiritual life	What appears when it is lacking
Fins	Setting one's direction according to the will of God and moving	Living pushed along by circumstances and public opinion
Scales	Keeping one's heart and faith with the gospel of the water and the Spirit	Easily shaken by condemnation, fear, and false teaching
Both together	Believing the gospel and also living the actual life by faith	Faith and life separated from each other

If one says that one believes the gospel exactly and yet in actual life keeps chasing only one's own desires, one has lost one's direction. On the other hand, if one serves diligently and lives morally and yet does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, those deeds cannot wash away the sin of the heart.

The ground of salvation is not our deeds but what Jesus has accomplished. But the person who truly believes in that salvation comes to turn the direction of his life toward God, following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

As the word says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*, the person who has become righteous by believing the gospel must also live the life that follows by faith.

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6. A life that lives in the water but is not swept along by the waves

Just as a fish lives in the water, the saints also live in the family and the workplace, in economic life and human relationships. But greed, the recognition of people, and the matter of making a living must not be allowed to rule their lives.

The life of faith that has fins and scales is not a life that avoids the world; it is a life that keeps the heart with the gospel in the world and moves in the direction God has appointed.

7. Why the word ‘abomination’ is repeated in verses 10–12

The text says three times that what has no fins and scales is “an abomination.” This means that God does not take lightly the matter of distinguishing between cleanness and uncleanness.

When we apply this to the life of faith today, it becomes a warning that the saints must not take lightly the matter of not living by faith and simply leaving themselves to the current of the world.

But it does not mean that a person has immediately lost salvation because his faith is weak or he has fallen. Salvation rests on the perfect work of Jesus. It is only that a life not lived by faith does not please God, and it weakens the heart of the saints and keeps them from bearing the fruit of the gospel.

Therefore what matters is not to pretend not to fall, but to believe the gospel again and get up when one has fallen. If one has strayed from the direction, one must set the direction right before the word, and if one’s heart has been wounded by condemnation and worldly thoughts, one must keep one’s heart

again with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

8. The spiritual application of the word *"you shall not eat"*

Literally, it is a command not to eat unclean water creatures as food. When we apply this to the spiritual life of today, the saints must discern what their souls are taking in.

Not every sermon and religious teaching is food beneficial to the soul. A word that speaks only of the Cross of Jesus while leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, or that teaches that salvation must be completed by human good deeds and prayers of repentance, blurs the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The saints must check whether the word they hear is as follows.

—Does it expose the sin of man exactly according to the word?

—Does it testify of the fact that Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John?

—Does it testify that the blood of the Cross is the judgment of sin?

—Does it testify that Jesus rose again from death?

—Does it testify that salvation is accomplished not by human deeds but by the faith that believes in the righteousness of God?

To discern in this way is the life of picking one's spiritual food. But discerning a wrong teaching is different from hating a person. One must reject the false gospel, but to the soul suffering within it one must preach the true gospel.

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9. How to practice it in life

First, when one begins the day, one sets one's heart in the direction of serving God and the gospel rather than one's own success.

Second, one judges by the standard of the word rather than by circumstances and gain, and chooses the right way in prayer.

Third, one acknowledges and corrects one's wrong, yet believes in the salvation already completed and is not shut up in self-condemnation.

Fourth, while faithfully earning one's living, one uses one's time, possessions, and talents in serving the gospel and one's neighbor.

Fifth, together with the saints one hears the word, prays, exhorts one another, and serves the gospel.

Conclusion

The saints of the New Testament are not saved by keeping the ordinance concerning food about fins and scales. But this word gives a clear lesson about the faith and life of the person who has been saved.

Fins make us think of the life of faith that is not swept along by the current of the world but sets its direction and moves according to the will of God. Scales make us think of the life that keeps the heart by believing the gospel completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death.

Even in the world the saints must move one step at a time relying on God, return to the perfect gospel whenever they fall, and use their lives in serving the gospel and souls.

Leviticus 11:13–23—how does this word say the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live?

1. The word of the text

"And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat. All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you. Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you" (Leviticus 11:13–23).

2. The distinction of birds and insects teaches the life lived by faith

Leviticus 11:13–23 is the ordinance concerning food that God gave to the people of Israel. Verses 13–19 list the kinds of birds that were not to be eaten, and verses 20–23 distinguish, among the winged insects, those that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.

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God said to regard as an abomination the flying insects that creep on all fours. But among them He allowed those that have jointed legs with which to leap on the earth to be eaten, and He spoke of the locust, the destroying locust, the cricket, and the grasshopper after their kinds.

This word teaches what the saints should rely on as they live. The appearance of catching prey by one's own strength, like the eagle and the falcon, shows the person who does not rely on God but trusts only his own strength and seeks only his own gain. Also, the appearance of creeping about even while having wings shows the state of a born-again person who does not use faith but lives relying only on the strength of the flesh and his circumstances.

On the other hand, the appearance of springing off the ground and leaping, like the locust, shows the person who, though weak, believes in God, seeks help, and lives by faith. What pleases God is not a life that boasts of the strength of the flesh, but a life that relies on God and, united with the church, serves the gospel.

The saints of the New Testament are not saved by keeping this ordinance concerning food. Mark 7:19 records, "*Thus purifying all foods.*" Therefore we must not condemn a person because he has eaten a particular bird or insect.

In Acts 10:28, Peter, having entered the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, testified that God had instructed him that he "*should not call any man common or unclean.*" It means that we must not regard a person as unclean and reject him because he is a Gentile.

The faith and life of the saints must be discerned by the word of God, not by nation or the food one eats. God rebukes the person who is not born again yet puts on the appearance of being born again, and the person who, though born again, does not live

by faith but lives only for his own flesh. Therefore we must receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live a life that uses the faith we have received to rely on God and preach the gospel to other souls.

3. One must first become clean by the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Good deeds, humility, and a zealous church life cannot wash away the sin of the heart. Before a clean life, there must be the gospel by which one becomes clean.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John and bore the sin of mankind, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and became our perfect Savior by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

A person receives the remission of sins and becomes righteous not by deeds but by believing this gospel in his heart. After that, he lives the life that pleases God. The life of faith is not the price of salvation but the fruit borne by the person who has been saved.

4. Having strength does not mean that God is pleased

Among the birds that appear in verses 13–19, many are included that are strong and hunt other creatures, like the eagle and the falcon. This does not mean, however, that these birds themselves are morally evil. Each creature God created has its

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role within the ecosystem.

When we look at these features in the light of human life, we come to guard against a life that harms other people by strength and ability and fills only its own gain. God looks at what one uses one's strength for, rather than at one's high position.

The saints must use their wealth, their knowledge of the Bible, and their office not for their own gain or for attacking and dominating people, but for giving life to people.

5. One must guard against the life of killing other people with words

If we apply to life the way a bird of prey catches its prey with sharp talons and beak, we can think of the life of finding people's weak points and attacking and slandering them.

Discovering another person's shortcoming is not in itself a sin. One must discern what is wrong and set it right when necessary. But spreading a weak point with the intention of proving one's own superiority rather than restoring the other person is not the work of giving life to people.

The saints who have been saved by grace do not spread unconfirmed words or the weak points of others as if enjoying it. When one must speak of a wrong, one must deal honestly with the specific problem with the aim of restoration, and remember that one can also fall oneself.

"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

The mouth of the person who believes the gospel must not be used like a beak that pecks the soul of another person to death. One must speak the truth, yet speak words that give life to people,

rebuke yet restore, and raise up the weak.

6. One must guard against the life that trusts only in one's own ability

When we apply the strong power of the eagle or the falcon as a spiritual lesson, we come to guard against the life that relies only on ability, experience, money, and knowledge. One must not fail to pray because one has much, nor seek God only when one has nothing.

Faith is not abandoning responsibility and effort. It is doing faithfully what one has to do, while entrusting the result and one's life to God.

The life of faith is not the attitude that says, "I have ability, so I can do it even without God," but the attitude that says, "I will use the ability God has given me, yet rely on God and use it for His will."

The strong must not exploit the weak but protect them. The one who has much must serve the one who has little, and the one who learned the word first must teach and wait for the one who does not yet know, rather than condemning him.

7. The life that has wings and yet only creeps on the ground

Verse 20 says that *"flying insects that creep on all fours"* are an abomination. Having wings means having the possibility of flying, yet this is the appearance of not using them and only creeping about, stuck to the ground.

When we apply this to the spiritual life, it makes us guard

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against the state of having received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and having received the Holy Spirit as a gift, yet not using faith at all in actual life.

The saints have the privilege of praying to God. They can believe the word of God, seek the help of the Holy Spirit, and live for the gospel. Yet if they judge everything only by their own circumstances and calculations, it is like having wings and yet only creeping on the ground.

If one does not believe unless one sees with one's eyes, or gives up the truth when loss arises, or tries to serve God only when there is money and the recognition of people, one is not using faith. The attitude of not being willing to do anything because a matter cannot be solved by one's own strength is the same.

To live by faith is not reckless action that ignores reality. It is seeing reality exactly, yet believing in God, who is greater than reality, and choosing the action fitting for the word.

8. The life that leaps by faith even though weak

God said that among the winged insects, *"Those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth"* may be eaten. Insects like the locust, the destroying locust, and the cricket are far smaller and weaker than the eagle. But when they meet danger, they use their leaping legs and spread their wings to move.

What pleases God is the life that uses even a small faith, rather than the strength of the flesh. The leap of faith is not a wild adventure; it is confirming right and wrong by the word, relying on God, and taking one step of obedience.

—One chooses honesty over gain, and if a relationship has

been broken, one apologizes first.

—Even in hard circumstances one looks for a way to serve the gospel and one's neighbor, and when an opportunity to preach comes, one overcomes fear and opens one's mouth.

—In the face of difficulty one does not only complain but prays and begins what one has to do.

—When one's wrong is pointed out, rather than making excuses, one examines oneself before the word.

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

That one's faith is small is not the problem. The problem is not using even the small faith one has and continually being dragged along only by circumstances. God is pleased with the faith that relies on Him and leaps like the locust, rather than with the strength of the flesh like the eagle.

9. The wings of faith are not for showing off oneself

What matters is not how high one flies, but what one relies on and for what one moves. The saints must use their talents, office, and knowledge not for showing off themselves, but for saving souls, building up the saints, and preaching the gospel.

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

10. One must learn and be united within the spiritual order

This text makes us guard against the attitude of living alone

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by one's own strength. The saints need to learn from one another in the gospel, respect the faith and service of those who believed before them, and be united within the good order of the church.

If one insists that only one's own thought is right and refuses to receive anyone's exhortation, it is hard for faith to grow. One must not look only at the weak points of other people, but know how to see the faith and strengths that are in them and learn from them. When one's wrong is pointed out, too, one must first examine oneself in the light of the word.

But respecting the spiritual order does not mean believing the words of a leader unconditionally or covering up wrong. Every teaching must be verified by the Bible and the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

While receiving the word with all readiness, the Bereans *"searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11)*. Also, 1 Peter 5:3 commands leaders as follows: *"Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."*

Within the biblical order, the saints must lay down pride, listen to the exhortation of the word, and learn from one another, and leaders must not dominate people but serve as examples of the gospel and of life.

Blind obedience to a command that preaches another gospel or oppresses people is not faith. As Galatians 1:8 says, however authoritative a being may look, if he preaches another gospel, he must be rejected.

11. The spiritual application of the word *"they shall not be eaten"*

For Israel it was actually a command not to eat unclean birds

and insects. When we apply this to life today, the saints must discern what word and what values they are taking in as food for the soul.

One must not receive into one's heart a teaching that drives people to condemn and attack others, a teaching that makes only success and wealth the goal of faith, a teaching that makes a leader absolute, or another gospel that speaks only of the Cross while leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, or teaches that sin must be washed away by human deeds.

When the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit hears a word, he must examine it as follows.

—Does it fully testify of the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death?

—Does it testify that one receives the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of God, not by human deeds?

—Does it give life to people and build them up in the gospel?

—Does it exalt a particular man, or does it exalt Jesus Christ?

—Does it agree with the testimony of the whole Bible?

12. The actual life of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, rather than attacking the weak points of others, one learns, and even when one speaks of a wrong, one aims at restoration.

Second, one uses money, position, and knowledge in serving the weak and the gospel.

Third, even when one's ability is insufficient, one prays and begins by faith what one has to do.

Fourth, one listens humbly to exhortation, yet discerns every word by the Bible and the gospel.

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Fifth, one acknowledges and sets right one's wrong, and rises up again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus bore even that sin.

Sixth, one preaches the gospel directly, or serves the spread of the gospel with prayer, possessions, and service.

Conclusion

This text makes us contrast the life that harms other people by one's own strength and lives only for oneself with the life that relies on God and gives life to people.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has the wings of faith. He has been saved from all sins by believing the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death, and he can receive the help of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore one must not be bound only to one's circumstances and one's own ability. Even if one is small and weak like the locust, one must pray to God, take one step according to the word, and live a life that preaches to other souls the salvation one has received.

Leviticus 11:24–28—how does this word say the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live?

1. The word of the text

"By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the

carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening: The carcass of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It is unclean to you" (Leviticus 11:24–28).

2. First, the literal meaning

This word goes beyond the matter of eating the flesh of unclean animals and deals with the ceremonial uncleanness that arises when one touches or carries the carcass of such an animal.

Two kinds of contact appear in the text.

—The person who touched a carcass is unclean until evening.

—The person who carried a carcass must wash his clothes and is unclean until evening.

Here uncleanness does not mean exactly the same thing as a moral transgression. One may have touched a carcass unavoidably in the course of clearing away a dead animal. But whether one intended it or not, if one had touched a carcass, one had to follow the ordinance of cleansing.

This ordinance was a law for daily living that distinguished life from death and cleanness from uncleanness. If one had become unclean, one had to go through the procedure of cleansing, but as the word *"until evening"* shows, it was not a permanent brand; there was a way to return to the life of the community.

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3. In the New Testament this ordinance of washing is not kept literally

Hebrews explains the various ordinances of washing in the Old Testament as follows.

"Concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:10).

Therefore it is not the case that a saint of the New Testament cannot take part in worship until evening because he has touched a dead animal, or that he must wash his clothes in order to become spiritually clean. With the coming of Christ, the age of such ceremonial washing was completed.

This word about washing with water the clothes that have become unclean teaches the faith by which the saints acknowledge their wrong and wash their hearts by ruminating on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is renewing one's heart by believing again the word that Jesus bore all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. This is not receiving the remission of sins anew; it is believing in and relying on the eternal atonement Jesus has already accomplished.

"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

4. The carcass makes us think of the result of the death that sin has brought

The Bible says that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. The carcass of Leviticus chapter 11 is first the actual dead

body of an animal, but seen as a spiritual lesson, it makes us think of the result of the death that sin produces.

Dead works, though they look alive on the outside, cannot give life to God or to one's neighbor. Falsehood, lewdness, and greed, gossip and hatred, making the gospel a means of power, and preaching another gospel or rationalizing wrong are such works.

Such works cannot give life to the soul of a person. They dry up one's own heart and the hearts of one's neighbors and cloud one's fellowship with God. Hebrews says that the blood of Christ will *"cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14)*.

The person who has been washed by the gospel has been called to be a person who serves the living God, not a person who lives holding on to dead works.

5. The lesson given by 'touching' and 'carrying'

The text distinguishes between merely touching a carcass and carrying it. Both make one unclean, but to the person who carried a carcass the command to wash his clothes is added.

When we apply this to the spiritual life, we can think of the difference between coming into contact with a sinful environment by chance and holding on to it, carrying it, and spreading it to other people.

Touching—because the saints live in the world, they cannot live without ever coming into contact with sinful words and deeds. They may see false practices at work, come upon lewd or violent content on the internet by chance, and may hear people's gossip.

Having come into contact with it does not mean that the

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person's salvation immediately disappears. But if one takes it lightly, saying, "I did not do it myself, so it is all right," and keeps holding it in one's heart, one comes to be influenced by it. When one realizes that one has come into contact with something unclean, one must keep one's heart and get free from its influence.

Carrying—carrying a carcass is an action that goes beyond merely touching it and picks it up and carries it. Applied spiritually, we can think of accepting what is wrong, keeping it, defending it, and spreading it to other people.

Hearing gossip by chance is different from passing that word on to other people. Hearing a false gospel is different from teaching it. Coming to see dishonesty at work is also different from actively taking part in that dishonesty.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must examine what he is holding in his heart and what he is carrying to other people.

6. One must wash the heart with the gospel and also set right one's conduct

This word about washing clothes that have become unclean teaches the faith by which the saints acknowledge their wrong and wash their hearts by ruminating on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is renewing one's heart by believing the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross. Such faith does not rationalize wrong; it makes one set right one's outward conduct as well.

Ruminating on the gospel is not a way to avoid responsibility for one's conduct. Lies and a wrongly preached gospel must be

corrected, what belongs to others must be returned, and one must apologize to the person one has hurt. One must also repair the harm done by gossip and cut off the channels through which one comes into contact with lewd content.

One must not, while believing the gospel in one's heart, say that one will leave the dirt on one's clothes as it is. The faith of the inner man and the life that appears on the outside must be made new together.

7. The meaning of washing with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and became our perfect Savior by rising again from death.

The Holy Spirit testifies that the one gospel completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death is the truth. To wash with the gospel does not mean to repeat that work or our salvation.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Jesus bore all sins once and for all and accomplished the eternal atonement. For a saint to return to the gospel when he has done wrong is to confirm again by faith the salvation already completed.

"I clearly did wrong in this matter. The wages of this sin, too, is death. But when Jesus received baptism from John, He bore even this sin, and He received the judgment for it on the Cross. By rising again from death, Jesus has made me live as a righteous person. Therefore I will acknowledge my wrong, turn

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from this sin, and serve God again."

This is the life of washing one's conscience with the gospel and renewing one's faith.

8. One must distinguish the washing of salvation from the washing of life

It is important to distinguish this part exactly.

The washing of salvation. This is receiving the remission of all sins once and for all and becoming righteous by believing what Jesus has accomplished. This is not a salvation received repeatedly. Because Christ has accomplished the eternal atonement, there is no longer any need for a sacrifice for sin.

The washing of life. This is the person who has been saved discovering his own wrong as he lives, acknowledging it before God, renewing his faith with the completed gospel, and setting right his wrong conduct.

The washing of life is the process by which the person who has already been saved restores his fellowship with God and lives rightly. One must discard both the thought that one must be saved anew every time one does wrong and the thought that since one has already received the remission of sins there is no need to correct anything.

9. The lesson of the word *"unclean until evening"*

Literally, it means that the period of ceremonial uncleanness continues until evening. If we apply this to the life of the saints today, we can draw the lesson that one must not keep dragging around one's wrongs and unclean influences but must quickly

settle them.

One must look back before the word on the words and deeds of the day. It is examining whether one was dragged along by hatred and falsehood, by one's own gain and fear, and whether one held on to unclean content or carried gossip and complaints instead of the gospel.

When a wrong is revealed, one must not put it off until the next day and rationalize it. But neither must one spend the night in self-condemnation. One must acknowledge the wrong, believe again the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, decide what to correct, and come before God in peace.

The word "*until evening*" is not a word that casts the saints away as unclean forever; it also shows the grace that uncleanness has an end and that God has prepared the way to become clean.

10. One must love people, yet discern faith and life by the word

As Acts 10:28 says, one must not reject a person because of his nation or origin. But the teaching that person preaches and the direction of his life must be discerned by the word, and one must serve him so that he may believe the true gospel and turn back.

—One does not take part in sin, but one loves that soul.

—One rejects a false gospel, but to the person deceived by a false gospel one preaches the true gospel.

—One rebukes wrong conduct, but one does not give up on the restoration of the person.

—One does not brand a saint who has fallen, but sets him right with a gentle heart.

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"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

11. How to apply it in actual life

When one discovers that one has come into contact with an unclean influence or a wrong, one can deal with it as follows.

—Stop. One does not continue the wrong words and deeds but first breaks them off.

—Acknowledge. Without blaming only the environment or other people, one acknowledges specifically what one did wrong.

—Wash the heart with the gospel. One renews one's heart by believing the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross, and one also sets right the wrong conduct.

—Set right the harm. One takes what responsibility one can, such as apologizing, returning what should be returned, or correcting what was wrongly conveyed.

—Cut off the channel. One discerns the relationships, content, environments, and habits that repeatedly drag one into sin and keeps the necessary distance from them.

—Serve God again. Without continuing to hide because of guilt, one renews one's faith in the word and in the church and returns to the work of giving life to people.

Conclusion

Just as the uncleanness of a carcass reached the body and the clothes, the saints must not take lightly the influence of sin or

keep carrying it. But God not only exposes uncleanness; He has also given the way to wash and return.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not hide his wrong. Yet neither does he go back to the status of a sinner every time he does wrong. He renews his conscience by believing the baptism Jesus, who has already borne all sins, received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death; he sets right his conduct as well according to that faith; and he serves the living God and the gospel again.

The washing of the gospel is not an excuse for covering up sin; it is the power that brings one out of dead works and back to the life that gives life.

Leviticus 11:29–38—how does this word say the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live?

1. The word of the text

"These also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. These are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. Anything on which any of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item it is, in which any work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls you shall break; and whatever

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is in it shall be unclean: in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. And everything on which a part of any such carcass falls shall be unclean; whether it is an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; for they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you. Nevertheless a spring or a cistern, in which there is plenty of water, shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean. And if a part of any such carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it remains clean. But if water is put on the seed, and if a part of any such carcass falls on it, it becomes unclean to you" (Leviticus 11:29–38).

2. The ordinance of cleansing teaches the faith and life of the saints

Leviticus 11:29–38 identifies the unclean kinds among the creeping things on the earth, and distinguishes cleanness and uncleanness when a person touches their carcass or when their carcass falls on the items used in daily life, on food, on water, and on seed. God appointed in detail, according to each object, whether it was clean and how it was to be handled.

Object	Verdict and handling when a carcass touches or falls on it
A person who touched a carcass	Unclean until evening
Items of wood, clothing, skin, sack, and the like listed in verse 32	Put in water; unclean until evening, then clean
An earthen vessel	What is in it becomes unclean, and the vessel is broken
Moist food and drink contained in that vessel	Becomes unclean
An oven and a cooking stove	Becomes unclean, so it is broken down
A spring and a cistern	Does not become unclean, but whatever touches that carcass becomes unclean
Planting seed on which no water has been put	Clean even if a carcass falls on it
Seed on which water has been put	Becomes unclean if a carcass falls on it

God appointed that each object was to be handled differently. Israel had to follow that word, not its own judgment.

The saints, too, must acknowledge their wrong, renew their hearts by ruminating on the gospel, and believe the word rather than their own righteousness. Let us look through each ordinance at the life of faith in which one hears the word in the church and receives strength.

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3. In the New Testament one is not saved by this ordinance

A saint of the New Testament is not placed in the ceremonial uncleanness of Leviticus because the dead body of a mouse or a lizard has touched some item. Hebrews 9:10 says that such ordinances of food and washing were *"fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation."*

Also, Jesus taught that what fundamentally defiles a man is not the food that enters from outside, but the evil thoughts, covetousness, deceit, and pride that come out of the heart (Mark 7:20–23).

Therefore what we must wash today with the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not the dirt that arises from mere outward contact, but the influence of sin that has entered the heart and life.

But that sin is not washed away by human effort. Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and saved us from all sins by rising again from death.

The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

4. One must not take lightly even small and hidden uncleanness

The mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind that appear in the text are small animals that mainly creep on the ground and can come in close to the living space of people. Even

though they do not look threatening like large animals, if their carcass touched something, it became unclean.

Saints must guard not only against great sins, but also against the small sins that secretly creep in. One must not casually accept small lies and gossip, greed and lewd content, and self-centered thoughts.

The attitude of putting one's feelings before the word, or seeking only the comfort of the flesh rather than the gospel, also affects one's heart and life. When the word shines on it, one must not leave it alone but acknowledge it and set it right.

5. There are things that can be washed and used again

Items such as wooden articles, clothing, skin, and sacks became unclean when a carcass touched them, but they were not thrown away. When they were put in water and one waited until evening, they became clean again.

Not everything is thrown away because uncleanness has touched it. In the life of the saints, too, there are parts to be corrected and used again.

—A rough way of speaking and a wrong use of time are set right by training and planning.

—Possessions are used for sharing and serving the gospel, and in relationships where one has caused hurt, one apologizes and tries to restore them.

—Work one has neglected is begun again responsibly, and a wrong judgment is corrected by confirming the facts.

This word about putting unclean items in water and washing them teaches the faith by which the saints acknowledge their wrong and wash their hearts by ruminating on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is renewing one's heart by believing again

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the word that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received that judgment on the Cross, and also setting right one's wrong life.

One need not give up one's whole life because one has done wrong. Because Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, the saints have a way to wash again and rise up.

6. There are things He commanded to be broken

God said that an earthen vessel into which a carcass had fallen, and an oven and a cooking stove that had become unclean, were to be broken. Unlike the items to be washed and used again, there were also things that had to be broken.

This word teaches the faith by which the saints lay down their own righteousness and their own standards before God. We easily hold on to the thoughts we consider right and to our own goodness. But when the word of God exposes our wrong, we must not defend ourselves and hold out, but acknowledge the word as right and yield our own thoughts.

One must lay down even the heart that says, "I have done this much good, so I am right," and one must also turn from the thought that says, "All my righteousness has collapsed, so now I cannot live the life of faith." What holds up the saints is not their own righteousness but the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished. Jesus bore all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and became our Savior by rising again from death.

To abandon one's own righteousness is not to give up one's life. It is to acknowledge one's insufficiency, believe in the

gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live again with the strength God gives. One must turn from the heart and conduct that rationalized wrong and serve the gospel and other souls.

7. If the vessel is unclean, what is inside it is also affected

Verses 33–34 say that when a carcass falls into an earthen vessel, not only the vessel but also the food and drink in it become unclean.

This makes us think of the lesson that a person's heart and living environment affect what is contained in them.

If the atmosphere of a home is continually filled with anger and blame, the hearts of the children are also affected. If a church or a community revolves around human power and gain, the word preached and the service rendered in it can also be damaged. If the structure of a workplace or a business takes falsehood as its basis, it becomes harder and harder for an individual to live honestly.

So the saints must not think that it is enough for them alone to "believe well in the heart." One must also examine what one is holding as a vessel, and what one's family, neighbors, and the saints come to eat and drink within the environment one creates.

"Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21).

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must offer himself to God as a clean vessel that holds the gospel, love, and truth.

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8. A spring and a cistern do not become unclean as a whole

If a carcass fell into an earthen vessel, what was in it became unclean and the vessel had to be broken. But a spring and a cistern did not become unclean. While saying that whatever touched that carcass was unclean, God distinguished the spring and the cistern themselves as clean.

This word shows the hearts of the saints being washed in the Church of God, where the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached. Even if the heart of a saint has become dirty with wrong thoughts and deeds while living in the world, when he hears the word of God in the church, acknowledges his wrong, and ruminates on the gospel, his heart becomes clean again. Like a spring and a cistern, the Church of God has the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which washes the unclean hearts of the saints.

Jesus said as follows: *"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).*

However many our sins may be, they cannot be greater than the salvation Jesus accomplished. Jesus bore all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and became our Savior by rising again from death. Hearing and believing this word of the gospel, the saints confirm again the grace of the Lord, who has washed away all their sins.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

One must not despair or give up the life of faith because one's own righteousness has collapsed. In the Church of God

one must hear the word, acknowledge one's wrong, and renew one's heart by ruminating on the gospel. With that strength one must be united with the saints, preach the gospel to other souls, and benefit them.

9. The cleanness of seed, too, was distinguished according to the word God appointed

Verses 37–38 distinguish the cases in which a carcass falls on planting seed.

"And if a part of any such carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it remains clean. But if water is put on the seed, and if a part of any such carcass falls on it, it becomes unclean to you."

Seed on which no water had been put was clean even if a carcass fell on it, but seed on which water had been put was unclean. Israel had to follow the distinction God had spoken, not its own judgment.

The saints, too, must not call a wrong right by their own thinking, nor deny the completed salvation and despair because their insufficiency has been revealed. One must examine one's life by the word, acknowledge one's wrong, and set one's heart in the direction that pleases God, relying on Him.

10. To wash with the gospel is not to repeat salvation

In Leviticus, washing or breaking was repeated every time something unclean touched. But Jesus accomplished the eternal atonement once and for all.

"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own

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blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

The washing in the life of the saints is not being saved again, nor Jesus receiving baptism from John again and hanging on the Cross again. It is believing and confirming the gospel already completed.

One acknowledges one's wrong and believes that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and gave new life by rising again from death. By that faith one corrects one's wrong habits and returns to the life of serving God and the gospel.

The gospel is not a lid that keeps sin as it is. It is the power that makes one acknowledge and abandon sin and return to a new life.

11. What must be washed and what must be broken

What must be washed is the heart made dirty by wrong thoughts and deeds. One must acknowledge one's wrong, ruminate on the gospel of the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross, and set right one's life as well.

What must be broken is one's own righteousness and one's own standards, which one puts before the word. One must lay down the heart that boasted of one's own goodness or rationalized wrong.

Where one must return is the Church of God, where the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached. One must hear the word and, united with the saints, receive strength to serve the gospel.

The standard of judgment is the word of God, not feelings or circumstances. This is not producing salvation anew; it is the life

in which the saints who believe in the perfect salvation renew their hearts and serve God.

Conclusion

Just as a small carcass made many items of daily life unclean, the saints must not take lightly even small sins and secret habits. But God distinguishes what is to be washed and used from what is to be broken, and He has also given the way of restoration.

The saints must acknowledge their wrong, wash their hearts with the gospel, and lay down their own righteousness. They must hear the word in the church, ruminate on the gospel, and turn from a wrong life.

Jesus has dealt with all sins completely by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death. The person who believes this gospel can acknowledge sin without hiding it, and can abandon wrong conduct, renew his heart, and live as a clean vessel that God uses for honor.

Leviticus 11:39–47—how does this word say the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live?

1. The central word of the text

Leviticus 11:39–47 explains the ordinance of cleansing for when one has touched the carcass of an animal that may be eaten, and the command not to eat the things that creep on the earth, and it makes clear why God required such distinction of the

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people of Israel.

"For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

God first saved Israel and made them His own people, and then told them to distinguish between cleanness and uncleanness and live in holiness. The saints, too, must neither rationalize sin on the grounds of weakness nor despair because they have done wrong. One must acknowledge one's wrong, renew one's heart by believing the gospel that has already washed away one's sins, and continue a holy life.

2. Even the carcass of an animal that may be eaten makes one unclean

Even with an animal of a kind that may be eaten, if one touched its carcass after it died, one was unclean until evening. One had to distinguish whether it was a kind that may be eaten and whether the person who had touched the carcass was clean, and follow the word.

The saints who have been saved can also commit wrong, but they cannot call that wrong right. One must acknowledge one's insufficiency without hiding it, yet one must not despair, thinking that one has become a sinner again. One must renew one's heart by believing the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

3. When exposed to the unclean, we must follow the Word that cleanses us

Verses 39–40 say that the person who has touched a carcass is unclean until evening, and the person who eats of it or carries the carcass must wash his clothes and is unclean until evening. God appointed the cases in which one becomes unclean and the ordinance to be kept accordingly.

The saints can commit wrong in the family, at work, and in many relationships. One must not cover it up with the excuse of weakness or circumstances, but acknowledge it before the word.

One must ruminate on the gospel that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John and washed away even that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross. It is not staying in self-condemnation, but washing one's heart with the word of salvation and serving God again. The ordinance of washing clothes is also connected with this life of faith.

4. One must wash the heart with the gospel and also set right one's life

The person who ate of a carcass or carried it had to wash his clothes and remain in the unclean state until evening. This ordinance of washing teaches the faith by which the saints, when they have come into contact with something unclean, acknowledge their wrong and wash their hearts with the word of salvation God has bestowed.

The saints must acknowledge that God is holy, and acknowledge that their own wrong, too, is sin. And they must ruminate on the gospel that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of sin

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on the Cross. It is renewing one's heart by believing the word that has already washed away one's sins. Such faith does not rationalize sin; it makes one turn even from a wrong life and serve God.

This faith also makes one set right one's life. One must correct lies and gossip, apologize and make restoration if one has caused harm, and also cut off the channels and habits through which one comes into contact with lewd content.

This is not receiving salvation again or adding deeds to the salvation of Jesus. It is the life in which the person who has already been saved brightens his fellowship with God and bears fruit fitting for the gospel.

5. In the word "*unclean until evening*" there is a way of restoration

Uncleanness was not a permanent brand. When one washed one's clothes and the appointed time had passed, one could return to a clean state.

This gives the lesson that a saint who has done wrong must not be condemned as a person unclean forever. What a saint needs when he has done wrong in weakness is not to make himself clean by his own righteousness. It is to acknowledge his wrong, believe again the salvation God has already accomplished, and turn from the wrong way.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of the water and the blood.

Hebrews says as follows.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Because the eternal atonement has already been completed, there is no need to repeat salvation. But the saints must not hide their wrong.

"This was clearly a wrong action. God is holy. I acted in a way not fitting for the gospel. But Jesus bore even this sin and was judged. Now I will believe that grace and turn from this action."

To wash the heart with the gospel and set right one's life in this way is the clean life of the saints.

6. The word not to eat the things that creep

Verses 41–43 command not to eat the things that creep on the earth, and not to make oneself abominable and unclean with them.

This word makes the born-again person guard against a life of not relying on God but chasing only his own strength and the gain of the flesh. Earning a living and caring for one's family is not wrong, but one must not make one's own gain alone the purpose of life.

The saints must carry out their daily lives relying on God, and live in the direction of conveying to other souls the life and grace they have received and serving the gospel.

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7. Before the command of holiness comes the salvation of the exodus

The order in verse 45 is very important.

"For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

God did not say, "If you live in holiness, I will save you out of Egypt." He first brought them out of Egypt, and then told the people who had been saved to live in holiness.

It is the same in the New Testament. We were not saved because we lived rightly. We received the remission of sins and became a holy people by believing the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death. After that, we receive the command to live in holiness as befits people who have been saved.

Therefore two kinds of holiness must be distinguished.

The first is the holiness of salvation. This Jesus Christ has completed, and it is obtained once and for all by faith. It is a status given not by our deeds but by the baptism Jesus received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross.

The second is the holiness of life. This is the person who has already been made holy setting apart his thoughts and actions every day according to the will of God. The holiness of life is not the condition of salvation but the fruit of salvation.

1 Peter also quotes the word of Leviticus and says as follows.

"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15–16).

8. The saints of the New Testament do not judge people by food

This ordinance must not be applied as it is to the Christians of today so as to teach that one becomes unclean by eating a particular animal. Mark 7:19, explaining the teaching of Jesus, records, *"Thus purifying all foods."* Also, Colossians 2:16–17 teaches that the ordinances of eating and drinking are a shadow of things to come and that their substance is Christ.

Also, in Acts 10:28 Peter says that God had instructed him that he *"should not call any man common or unclean."* Therefore one must not judge another person as unclean on the grounds of nation, food culture, or past background.

The ceremonial binding force of the Old Testament distinction of foods was fulfilled in Christ, but the principle of holiness and discernment has not disappeared. The important question for the saints of the New Testament is not "What meat did you eat?" but the following.

—Is what I believe and accept the truth?

—Is what I come into contact with drawing my heart away from the gospel?

—Do my words and deeds give life to other people, or defile them?

—Do I love people while clearly discerning false teaching and sin?

—Does my life reveal the holiness of God?

9. The conclusion of verse 47 is *'distinguish'*

The last verse of Leviticus chapter 11 makes clear the purpose of all these ordinances.

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"To distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten" (Leviticus 11:47).

Holiness is not a vague feeling; it appears in discernment. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not accept everything unconditionally. He distinguishes the gospel from another gospel, faith from human righteousness, and the work that gives life to souls from the work that fills only the desires of the flesh.

But it is also necessary to distinguish a person from that person's wrong. To love people yet not accept falsehood, to have compassion on sinners yet not call sin good, and to not condemn oneself yet not rationalize one's own wrong—this is discernment within the gospel.

10. In actual life it can be applied like this

—One believes in the salvation Jesus completed by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death.

—One examines by the word what one sees, hears, and says, one's use of possessions, and one's attitude toward people.

—One acknowledges one's wrong, yet does not stay in self-condemnation, because one believes in the gospel by which even that sin was borne.

—One apologizes and restores the harm, and clears away the channels that make one repeat wrong habits and sin.

—One does not seek only one's own gain but preaches the gospel and helps the weak.

Conclusion

Because God saved us first, we must live in holiness. It is not that we are saved by living in holiness; because we are people who have already been made holy by the water and the blood of Jesus, we discern sin and falsehood, renew our hearts with the gospel whenever we have done wrong, and set right our lives and walk with God. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The holy people who live by faith, ruminating on the gospel of salvation

< Leviticus 11:1-28 >

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth: Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat. Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you. These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat. But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water, they are an abomination to you. They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination.

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Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that shall be an abomination to you. And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat. All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you. Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you. By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening: The carcass of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It is unclean to you."

God distinguished for the children of Israel the creatures that may be eaten and the creatures that must not be eaten. He spoke

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of the standard for the land animals, the creatures in the water, and even the birds and insects, and He also taught what to do when one had come into contact with the carcass of an unclean animal.

When we read this word, we are apt first to take an interest in the kinds of food. But we must think about to whom God gave this word. God taught His own people the standard they were to follow. He had them learn before God what to eat, what to keep close to, and even what to do when they had come into contact with uncleanness.

We who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit also need such teaching. Being saved does not mean that our thoughts and lives follow the will of God by themselves. We still sometimes put our own judgment first, and our hearts are sometimes captured by the circumstances of the flesh. Therefore we must ruminate on the gospel that saved us, and examine our hearts and lives in the light of that word.

We must ruminate on the gospel of salvation in our hearts, as in chewing the cud

Concerning the land animals, God said as follows: *"Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat" (Leviticus 11:3).*

Two standards appear here together. The animal had to divide the hoof, having cloven hooves, and it had to chew the cud. The text distinguishes the camel, the rock hyrax, and the hare as animals that chew the cud but do not meet the condition of the hoof. It distinguishes the swine as an animal that divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, but does not chew the cud. With

only one of the conditions, an animal did not belong to the clean animals.

Let us think about this word in the light of our faith. What kind of faith is the faith that chews the cud? It is thinking over again and again in our hearts the word of salvation God has given, and believing it. It is not rejoicing only when we first heard the gospel and then moving on; it is the faith that keeps confirming what salvation we have received.

What must we ruminate on? We must ruminate on how Jesus removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Jesus did not receive baptism from John because He had sin. He received baptism in order to bear the sin of the world and fulfill the righteousness of God. Because Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, John testified of Jesus as follows: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Bearing that sin, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John, Jesus hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He bore the judgment of sin that we had to receive, and He rose again from death. The remission of our sins rests on this salvation of the Lord.

But when we discover our own wrong, we easily forget this fact. Though we clearly believed the gospel, we come to see bad thoughts coming up, ourselves hurting other people with our words, and ourselves seeking our own gain first. Then, as we look at ourselves, even our assurance of salvation is sometimes shaken.

It is exactly then that we must ruminate on the gospel. While acknowledging our wrong as wrong, we must believe that Jesus bore even that sin when He received baptism from John. We

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must hold again in our hearts the fact that Jesus received the judgment of that sin on the Cross.

Ruminating on the gospel does not mean that Jesus receives baptism again or hangs on the Cross again. It is we who believe again in the salvation the Lord has already accomplished. It is our shaken hearts standing on the unchanging word of salvation.

We must not take our own wrong lightly on the grounds that we have received the remission of sins. Rather, because we know by what grace the Lord has saved us, we can honestly acknowledge our wrong and turn back. The faith that ruminates on the gospel does not make us insensitive to sin. It makes us stand rightly before God, relying on grace.

We must make the direction of our lives clear, like the cloven hoof

Together with chewing the cud, God spoke of the cloven hoof. This word makes us, together with knowing the gospel, also examine the direction of our lives.

What do we regard as right as we live? Do we regard following the will of God as right? Or do we always put first what is comfortable and profitable for us? When the word of God and our own thoughts differ, which do we try to follow?

To live by faith is to set the direction of our hearts in such places. It is distinguishing our own thoughts from the word of God, and discerning the desires of the flesh from the will that pleases God.

This does not mean that the person who has been saved never makes the slightest mistake. We still have insufficiency. But we must not, on the grounds that we are insufficient, throw away even the heart that wants to follow the will of God. If we have

walked a wrong way, we must acknowledge it before the word and move our steps again in the direction God says is right.

We can also think in connection with this of how God had Joshua meditate on the word of the law day and night and observe to do it. The word of God is not necessary only when we realize our need of salvation. Even after we have received salvation, it is the standard that examines our thoughts and leads our lives.

When we meditate on the word, our insufficiency is revealed. We see the heart that says it loves God and yet loves itself more, and we see ourselves putting only our own affairs first even though we know we must love our neighbor. Then we realize that we cannot put forward our own righteousness. And we come to rely all the more on the grace of the Lord, who saved us.

Therefore the faith that ruminates on the gospel and the life that follows the will of God must go together. Jesus accomplished salvation, and we receive it by faith. The person who has received that grace now lives with his heart set on God, who saved him.

This direction is needed when we do the work entrusted to us at home, when we work at our workplace, and when we serve the gospel together with the saints. We must lay down the heart that wants to do only as we wish, think of what pleases God, and carry out our own part.

We must have the direction of the word and faith, like fins and scales

In verse 9 appears the standard for the creatures in the water. He said, *"These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or*

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in the rivers—that you may eat."

To the creatures in the water, too, two conditions were given together. They had to have fins and scales. Verses 10 to 12 say again and again not to eat those that do not have these conditions.

Thinking of fins, we can look back on the direction of our lives. The person of faith must have the direction God has appointed. One cannot say that one lives by faith while moving only where one's own desires lead. We must discern according to the word of God what we must live for.

Thinking of scales, we can examine the faith that holds our hearts. With what do we keep our hearts when a hard thing arises? With the thought that our own ability is sufficient? With the vague expectation that our circumstances will get better? What holds our hearts must be the word God has spoken.

In the face of the accusation of sin, we must hold on to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the face of our own weakness, we must rely on the Lord, who saved us. When it is hard to carry out the work entrusted to us, we must examine the will of God and seek help.

Even if we have set the direction rightly, if we try to carry out everything by our own strength alone, we easily grow weary. On the other hand, if we speak of faith and yet set our hearts only on fulfilling our own desires, we grow distant from the will of God. We must go forward toward the direction that pleases God, with the faith that relies on God.

Our hearts are often shaken according to our circumstances. When things go well, we trust ourselves, and when things are blocked, we sometimes think that everything is over. But the salvation Jesus accomplished does not change because our circumstances have changed. Nor does the word God has given us disappear. Faith is holding that unchanging word in our hearts.

We must guard against the heart that boasts of its own strength

From verse 13 to verse 19 are listed the birds that were not to be eaten. Before this He spoke of the conditions of the hoof and chewing the cud, and of fins and scales, but here He distinguishes them by naming them: the eagle and the vulture, the falcon and the ravens after their kind, and so on.

As we read this part, there is no need to attach a different spiritual meaning to each of the names of the birds. As we examine the word by which God distinguished them, we can look back, especially through the appearance of the strong birds, on the heart that relies only on its own strength.

When a person has ability, he easily trusts that ability. When he has much experience, he puts his own judgment first, and when he has much, he sometimes feels no need to ask God. Such a heart can appear in the life of faith as well. Because one has done much work, one refuses to listen to the word, and because of the thought that one is right, one fails to consider the circumstances of others.

Before God, something does not become clean merely because it looks strong. Nor can our ability take the place of the will of God.

For whom are we using our strength? Do we use it only to defend our own claims and interests? Or, remembering the grace God has given, do we use it to help other people and serve the gospel?

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a person who knows that he has been saved by grace. He is not a person who has removed his sins by his own righteousness. Therefore he has no ground for exalting himself before other people. When he sees an insufficient person, too, he

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must remember his own insufficiency and give him the word and the help he needs.

What we need, rather than the confidence that we are strong, is the faith that relies on God. We must live relying on the Lord even when we have ability, and asking the Lord even when our ability is lacking.

We must go forward by faith, like the insects that have leaping legs

In verse 20 He distinguishes the flying insects that creep, and in verse 21 He speaks of those among them that may be eaten. He said, *"Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth."*

In verse 22 appear the locust after its kind and the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind and the grasshopper after its kind. What we should note here is that having wings alone did not make an insect one that may be eaten. God distinguished those that have legs with which to leap on the earth.

Through this appearance we can think about living by faith. If we stay only in the calculations of the flesh, our judgment always ends within our own limits. We think that we cannot do it because we have little, that we cannot begin because we lack experience, and that we can carry out nothing because there are difficulties.

But the person of faith tells God his circumstances and seeks His help. Before a matter he has discerned to be the will of God, he does not stop after calculating only his own ability, but looks for a way to carry it out, relying on God.

To go forward by faith does not mean not seeing reality. Nor

is it insisting that God will accomplish whatever we want. It is setting our hearts on the word of God, acknowledging our insufficiency, seeking help, and actually doing what we can carry out.

If we want to preach the gospel but are poor at speaking, we can ask God for wisdom and calmly explain it even to one person. If we want to help the saints but do not have much, we can serve with what we have now. If the work entrusted to us is hard, we can seek help, learn, and carry it out one step at a time.

God does not want us to look only at our own insufficiency and give up. He wants us to believe in the Lord, who saved us, and live according to His will. We must use this faith in actual life.

When we have come into contact with uncleanness, we must return before the word

From verse 24 appears the ordinance for when one has come into contact with a carcass. He said, *"By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening:"*

The text distinguishes between the case of touching a carcass and the case of carrying it. The one who touches it is unclean until evening, and the one who carries it must wash his clothes and is unclean until evening. From verse 26 to verse 28, too, this ordinance continues concerning the carcasses of unclean animals and of animals that go on their paws.

God did not let uncleanness be overlooked as if it were nothing. At the same time, He did not end by only saying that one had become unclean. He also taught the process of becoming

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clean.

Before this word we must examine what is clinging to our hearts. While believing the gospel, we may think only according to the judgment of the world. With our hearts captured by our own gain, we may turn away from other people, and while putting forward our own righteousness, we may hurt the saints.

What must we do when such a thing has been revealed? We must not cover it up with excuses. Nor must we justify the wrong by saying that we have already been saved. We must acknowledge before the word what was wrong, and receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit into our hearts again.

We must believe the fact that Jesus bore my sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. This gospel makes our conscience stand again on the truth of salvation.

When we apply to our faith the word in the text that they were to wash their clothes, we must not turn this into a new ceremony for obtaining the remission of sins. It is setting right our clouded hearts by relying on the salvation Jesus accomplished, and turning from wrong thoughts and attitudes.

The word of God testifies as follows: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).*

The person who believes this word has no need to hide his sins. Because the salvation the Lord accomplished is certain, he can acknowledge his wrong. If he has wronged someone, he must apologize, and if there is something to set right, he must set it right. Relying on the grace of the gospel, he must walk again the way that pleases God.

We must believe and preach the grace by which God has made us clean

We must not make this ordinance concerning food a condition of salvation today. The sin of the heart does not disappear by not eating a particular food. The One who makes us clean from sin is Jesus Christ.

In Acts, Peter saw the vision of a vessel containing various animals, and said that he had never eaten anything unclean. Then God said as follows: *"But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common'" (Acts 11:9).*

This event led to Peter going to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, and preaching the gospel. When they heard the word, the Holy Spirit came upon them. God gave the Gentiles, too, the grace of being saved by believing the gospel and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Therefore we must not exclude anyone from the salvation of God on the basis of his origin or outward appearance. Whoever he is, he must realize his own sins and believe the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. God gives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to the person who believes this gospel.

Dear saints, what we must ruminate on today is the gospel of the Lord, who saved us. The direction we must follow is found in the word of God. What we must use in the midst of difficulty is the faith that relies on God.

If you have discovered your own wrong, return before the word. If your own strength is lacking, ask the Lord for help. If the grace of salvation remains only as familiar knowledge, engrave again in your heart how Jesus bore our sins and was judged.

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Jesus received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. This Lord has saved us. We are people who have received that grace.

Now let us live ruminating on the gospel of salvation, discerning the will of God, and using faith in the life entrusted to us. Preaching to other people, too, the gospel that has made us clean, let us live the life of the holy people that pleases God. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Faith that lives before the God who made us holy

< Leviticus 11:29-47 >

"These also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. These are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. Anything on which any of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item it is, in which any work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls you shall break; and whatever is in it shall be unclean: in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. And everything on which a part of any such carcass falls shall be unclean; whether it is an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; for they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you. Nevertheless a spring or a cistern, in which there is plenty of water, shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean. And if a part of any such carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it remains clean. But if water is put on the seed, and if a part of any such carcass falls on it, it becomes unclean to you. And if any animal which you may

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eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening. He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth shall be an abomination. It shall not be eaten. Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth—these you shall not eat, for they are an abomination. You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten."

Dear saints, in the word we read today appear the ordinances concerning the carcasses of unclean animals and the person who has touched them, and concerning vessels, food, water, and seed. Some things He says are to be put in water, and some things He says are to be broken. He also distinguishes what becomes unclean and what does not become unclean even though the same carcass falls on it.

When we read these ordinances, we must also look at the

word of God recorded at their end. He said, *"For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45).*

God first says that He is the One who brought Israel up out of Egypt. God, who saved them and made them His own people, now commands them to live in holiness. Therefore in this word is contained whose will the people who belong to God must live by, and where they must obtain cleanness when they have come into contact with uncleanness.

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also stand before this word. We have received the remission of sins through the salvation Jesus accomplished. Now, keeping that grace in our hearts, we must examine our thoughts and lives in the light of the word of God.

The holy God has made us holy

Because God told us to be holy, we must first know where we obtain holiness. A person can strive to correct his life. He can also try to abandon wrong habits, be careful in his words, and do good to other people. But such efforts alone cannot remove the sins he has already committed.

We need a Savior who washes away sins. God knew our weakness and sent Jesus Christ. Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and bearing that sin He shed His blood and died on the Cross. The Lord, who received the judgment for our sins, rose again from death.

Hebrews says as follows concerning this salvation: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).*

The ground on which we have obtained holiness is the

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salvation Jesus accomplished by offering His own body. It is not a salvation that is completed only when our merits are added. We receive the remission of sins when we believe in our hearts what the Lord accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Therefore the person who wants to live a holy life must first stand on this gospel. If one tries to come before God while looking at one's own goodness, one is full of confidence when one has done well, but as soon as a wrong is revealed, one is discouraged. But if one relies on the salvation the Lord accomplished, one can come before God while honestly acknowledging one's insufficiency.

God, who has made us holy, now tells us to live in a way fitting for that grace. We must keep these two together in our hearts. The Lord accomplished salvation, and the life of us who have been saved must follow the word of that Lord.

We must not pass lightly over having come into contact with uncleanness

In verses 29 and 30 are listed the unclean things among the creeping things on the earth. Beginning with the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind, the creatures God distinguished appear. And in verse 31 He says that the person who touches their carcass is also unclean until evening.

Here uncleanness does not end merely as a matter concerning the animal itself. It is also related to the person who touches its carcass. In the word that follows, He deals even with the items people use and the food contained in them. God made known specifically how uncleanness was involved in the lives of the people.

We, too, must examine what our hearts are in contact with. The thought that trusts only in one's own strength without relying on God, the heart that puts only one's own gain ahead of the work of serving the gospel, and the attitude of protecting oneself with excuses rather than acknowledging one's wrong can come into us.

We easily discern the wrongs of other people, yet we easily become lenient toward the wrong thoughts that have come into our own hearts. We say that we could not help it because our circumstances were hard, and that we did the same because the other person did wrong first. But however many reasons we explain, a wrong does not turn into something right before God.

God does not make us examine our lives in order to leave us in that uncleanness. It is so that we may realize our wrong, obtain washing, and live by faith again. Therefore when we have discovered ourselves before the word, we must not avoid it but acknowledge it. The work of setting our hearts right begins from that acknowledgment.

"It must be put in water"—renew your conscience with the gospel

Verse 32 speaks of an item that has become unclean because a carcass has fallen on it. He said, *"Anything on which any of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item it is, in which any work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean."*

When things used in daily life, such as wooden articles, clothing, skin, and sacks, had become unclean, God had them put in water. And He said that they would be unclean until

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evening and then be clean.

From this word we learn both that we must not live carrying uncleanness as it is, and that God has prepared the way of becoming clean.

In Exodus, too, God had a laver placed so that the priests could wash their hands and feet. The fact alone that they had received the office of the priest did not do away with the need for washing. Even those who served God needed washing.

It is the same with our faith. Even though we have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, wrong thoughts and deeds appear in our lives. Even while doing the work of serving the gospel, our hearts can grow rough, and while working together with other people, we sometimes put ourselves forward. What cleanses our conscience at that time is the faith that believes in the salvation the Lord accomplished.

Jesus also knew what weakness we would reveal after we were saved. When He received baptism from John, He bore the sins of our whole lifetime, and He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Therefore when we discover our own wrong, we must acknowledge that sin, and believe that the Lord bore even that sin.

To wash our hearts with the gospel of the water and the Spirit is exactly this faith. It is confirming again the solution of our sins within the salvation Jesus accomplished.

It is not that the Lord must receive baptism again, nor that He must die on the Cross again. The salvation of the Lord has already been completed. What happens is that we receive that completed salvation into our hearts again and renew our clouded conscience and faith.

Therefore we must do the work of acknowledging our wrong and the work of believing the gospel together. We must not try

only to feel at ease in our hearts while hiding sin, nor must we turn away from the salvation the Lord accomplished while acknowledging sin. We must honestly acknowledge our wrong and believe in the Lord, who bore all those sins.

We must lay down our own righteousness, like the earthen vessel that had to be broken

God did not command that every item alike be put in water. To the earthen vessel He gave a different command. He said, *"Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls you shall break; and whatever is in it shall be unclean" (Leviticus 11:33).*

Verse 34 says that the moist food and the drink contained in that vessel also become unclean. In verse 35 He has them break down an oven or a cooking stove on which a carcass has fallen. God taught the people, distinguishing what must be washed and what must be broken.

When we apply this word to our hearts, we can see that there is something we must not hold on to before God to the end. It is the heart that relies on its own righteousness.

We do not easily abandon the thought that we are decent people. Even when we have done wrong, we want to tell how hard we have worked all this time, and we want to insist that we have more good points than the fault that has now been revealed. But what solves our sins before God is not the labor and reputation we have piled up. It is the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished.

To lay down one's own righteousness is to abandon the excuses by which one hid one's wrong. It is to lay down one's own standards, which one put ahead of the word of God. And it is to rely on the grace by which the Lord has saved me.

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There are also saints who are discouraged because their own goodness has collapsed. They thought they loved the Lord, and then they see themselves complaining in the face of a small difficulty. They thought they were acting for other people, and then they discover the heart that in the end looks after its own gain more. Then they sometimes feel as if they have lost the qualification to come before God.

At that time, do not set your heart only on rebuilding your own collapsed righteousness. Our salvation has never been built on our own righteousness. It is the salvation we received by the grace of the Lord from the beginning. The clearer our insufficiency becomes, the more we must rely on the Lord, who has saved us wholly.

When we stand before the Lord in this way, our hearts toward other people also change. Because we know that we too have been saved by grace, we come to think of the help other people need. The heart we poured into the work of proving our own rightness can be used in the work of preaching the gospel and serving the saints.

Looking at the spring and the cistern, we must think of fellowship within the word

In verse 36 appears a word that is distinguished from the vessels before it. He said, *"Nevertheless a spring or a cistern, in which there is plenty of water, shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean."*

Before this, He said that if a carcass falls into an earthen vessel, everything in it becomes unclean. But of a spring or a cistern He says that it does not become unclean. And yet He clearly distinguishes that whatever touches that carcass directly

is unclean.

Through this word we can think about how necessary it is to hear the word and share faith within the Church of God.

When we look only at our own hearts by ourselves, there are times when we cannot get out of our wrong and discouragement. We feel as if our own righteousness has collapsed and we have even lost the strength to serve God. But when we hear the word together with the saints and ruminate on the gospel, the Lord who saved us becomes clear again in our hearts. The heart that looked only at its own circumstances comes to think of the will of God.

The strength that renews our hearts within the church lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached there. It is recovering faith while hearing and believing the word of the remission of sins, setting our wrong thoughts right before the word, and exhorting one another with the gospel.

Therefore, do not distance yourself from the place where the word is heard because your insufficiency has been revealed. Rather, you must bring your heart before the word. If there is confusion in your heart, you must have fellowship with the saints who believe the gospel together with you and examine the will of God.

At the same time, we must not forget the word in the latter part of verse 36 either. The exception concerning the spring does not make even the contact with the carcass clean. We must not justify our wrong as it is while saying that we hear the word in the church. Fellowship within the word leads us to acknowledge our wrong and turn back.

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In the distinction concerning seed, too, we must listen closely to the word of God

In verses 37 and 38 He speaks of two cases concerning planting seed. He said, *"And if a part of any such carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it remains clean. But if water is put on the seed, and if a part of any such carcass falls on it, it becomes unclean to you."*

In the case where a carcass falls on planting seed, He says that it is clean. But in the case where a carcass falls on it after water has been put on the seed, He says that it is unclean. Even with the same seed, the text distinguishes its state and gives the command.

When we read this distinction, we can see how specifically God teaches cleanness and uncleanness. We cannot judge all cases to be the same merely because a carcass has touched them, nor can we always say that something is clean merely because there is water. We must listen to what God has said in each case.

In the life of faith, too, we must receive the word with this attitude. We must not hold on to one familiar expression alone and apply our own judgment to every case. We must carefully examine what God has commanded, what He has permitted, and what He has warned against.

The heart that believes in God respects His word. It does not regard something as right merely because it seems plausible to us, but sets its own judgment right according to the word. The detailed distinctions of the text teach us such an attitude of faith.

Even though we have been made clean, we must examine our lives

In verses 39 and 40 appears the ordinance for when an animal that may be eaten has died. The person who touches its carcass is unclean until evening. The person who eats of it or carries the carcass must wash his clothes and is unclean until evening.

The fact alone that it was an animal of a kind that may be eaten did not do away with even the ordinance concerning its carcass. God spoke separately about whether an animal belonged to the clean animals and about how one had come into contact with the carcass of a dead animal.

We, too, must examine both the fact that we have been saved and our own lives. Having received the remission of sins does not mean that every thought and action of mine now agrees with the will of God. Even a child of God can follow his own desires, and can trust only in his own strength instead of relying on God.

What is needed at this time is not the work of covering up a wrong life with the excuse of the grace of salvation. It is the work of acknowledging before the word what is wrong, and following the will of God again with a heart that believes the gospel.

From verse 41 to verse 43 He commands again and again not to eat the things that creep on the earth, and not to defile themselves with them. In the light of this word, we can look back on a life bound only by the thoughts of the flesh.

We live on this earth working and caring for our families. What matters is where we set our hearts within that life. We must discern whether we will make only our own circumstances and gain the standard of life, or whether we will rely on God and also think of what pleases Him.

To live by faith is to set our hearts on the Lord while carrying out the life entrusted to us. It is seeking help when there is

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difficulty, regarding the word of God as right rather than our own will, and sharing with other people the grace we have received. It is giving our hearts and time to the work of preaching the gospel and serving the saints.

Let us live discerning according to the will of God, who saved us

In verse 44 God says that because He is holy, the people also must consecrate themselves and be holy. In verse 45 He again makes clear the grace of having brought them up out of Egypt. And in verses 46 and 47 He makes known that all these ordinances are the word that makes us distinguish the clean from the unclean and what may be eaten from what may not be eaten.

God does not want His own people to live without discernment. He wants us to know God, who saved us, and to live according to His word.

We must examine ourselves before this word. We must look back on whether we are making excuses even though we know our wrong, whether we are keeping our distance even from the gospel because our own righteousness has collapsed, and whether, even while hearing the word, we are still setting the direction of our lives only on our own gain.

We have the word of salvation we can rely on again. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The Lord, who rose again from death, has become our Savior. The Holy Spirit, too, testifies of the word of the salvation the Lord accomplished. It says, *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).*

Receive this grace deeply into your hearts. Acknowledge

your own wrong, and believe that the Lord bore even that sin. Lay down the heart that wants to make yourself look righteous, and set your thoughts and lives right according to the word of God.

Our God has saved us and made us His own people. Now let us renew our hearts with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and live by faith before that God. Preaching to other people, too, the grace of salvation He has given us, let us live as a people who serve the holy God. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 11

[Question] 1. Leviticus 11:2–8—what meaning is there in God's appointing the animals to be eaten as those that chew the cud and have cloven hooves?

God appointed the animals to be eaten so that the people of Israel would follow His word even in the matter of eating, and live set apart as befits a people who belong to God. A land animal could be eaten only if it divided the hoof, having cloven hooves, and also chewed the cud. An animal that had only one of the two was not permitted.

The meaning of this ordinance is also revealed at the end of the chapter. God says that He is the One who brought Israel up out of Egypt, and that because He is holy, the people also must be holy (verses 44–45). Therefore the standard of cleanness did not depend on people's taste or on outward appearance. What mattered was to distinguish according to the word of God, who had set apart His own people.

Applied spiritually, chewing the cud makes us think of the faith that receives the word of God into the heart and ruminates on it, and the cloven hoof makes us think of the way of living set apart according to the will of God. It is not enough to hear the word and yet let it slip away, or to have only the outward form of a life of faith. The heart that believes the word and the life that follows that word must be together.

In particular, whenever their own insufficiency is revealed, the saints must ruminate on the remission of sins the Lord

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accomplished. It is believing and relying on the gospel that Jesus bore our sin through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death. To receive new strength in that grace and follow the will of God is the life of the saints who ruminate on the word.

[Question] 2. Leviticus 11:2–3—what two features did the people of Israel have to check in order to eat a land animal?

A land animal that could be eaten had to be an animal that divided the hoof, having cloven hooves, and also chewed the cud. It had to have these two conditions together, and with only one of them it did not become an animal that could be eaten.

Deuteronomy 14:4–6 explains the same standard again while listing the ox, the sheep, the goat, and others as animals that may be eaten. On the other hand, the camel, the rock hyrax, and the hare of Leviticus chapter 11 are classified as animals that chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves, and the swine as an animal that has cloven hooves but does not chew the cud. So these could not be eaten.

Thus the people were not to judge an animal clean by looking at only one of its features. They had to examine the whole standard God had given. Rather than whether it was something they were used to eating or something other people liked, they had to check whether God had permitted it. This ordinance had Israel remember and follow the command of God even in their daily eating.

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[Question] 3. Leviticus 11:4–6—why could the camel, the rock hyrax, and the hare not be eaten even though they chew the cud?

The reason the text gives is that although they chew the cud, they did not have the condition of dividing the hoof, having cloven hooves. God did not make chewing the cud alone the standard, but also required the condition of the cloven hoof.

Verse 4 names the camel, verse 5 the rock hyrax, and verse 6 the hare in turn, and says that they are unclean for the same reason. Therefore the reason these animals could not be eaten cannot be explained as being that the people particularly disliked them, or that they were all diseased animals. It was because they did not meet the two standards given concerning clean animals.

When we apply this distinction to the life of faith, we learn the lesson that hearing and knowing the word must not be separated from the life that follows the will of God. There is no need to give up following the Lord because of one's own insufficiency, but neither must one leave the direction of one's life to one's own desires on the grounds that one knows the word of salvation. One must ruminate on the word one has received, and at the same time have the heart that wants to live according to that word.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 11:5—what kind of animal is the '*rock hyrax*' that appears in the text?

In the Bible the rock hyrax is described as an animal that is small and weak in body yet makes its home among the rocks. Proverbs 30:24–26, explaining the things that are little yet wise, cites the appearance of the feeble rock hyrax making its dwelling

among the rocks.

Leviticus 11:5 classifies the rock hyrax as an animal that chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves. Therefore the people of Israel could not eat its flesh. Being a small animal or making its dwelling among the rocks was not the standard of cleanness. Whether it could be eaten was distinguished according to the conditions appointed in verse 3.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 11:8—why did God call certain animals unclean and not allow them to be eaten?

God gave this ordinance so that Israel would know that they were a holy people belonging to Him, and live distinguishing the clean from the unclean. Even the ordinary matter of choosing what to eat was related to the command of God. The people were not to break down the boundary according to their own thinking, but were to follow the distinction God had appointed.

Leviticus 20:24–26 connects the command to distinguish between clean and unclean animals and birds with the word that God had set Israel apart from the peoples to be His own. Therefore this ordinance was not simply a matter of God appointing their taste in food; it taught them the way to live as the people of God.

The saints, too, need the faith that discerns according to the word. If one has become one of the people of God by believing in the remission of sins the Lord bestowed, one must now live learning what pleases God. Rather than pushing the word away by putting first only the cares of the world and one's own interests, one must ruminate on the gospel one has received and follow the Lord.

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The grace of the remission of sins does not mean that there is no longer any need to hear the word of God. The person who knows that grace acknowledges his insufficiency before the word, relies on God, and goes on to a life that preaches the gospel of salvation to other people as well.

[Question] 6. Leviticus 11:9–12—by what standard was it judged whether the creatures living in the rivers or the seas could be eaten?

Among the creatures living in the water, those that had both fins and scales could be eaten. This standard applied not only to the creatures living in the seas but also to those living in the rivers and other waters. The standard was not where it was caught but whether it had the features God had appointed.

Verse 9 says to eat those that have fins and scales, and verses 10–12 classify those that do not have them as an abomination. Therefore something could not be regarded as permitted on the grounds that it had only fins or only scales. The text presents the two conditions together.

Also, as for the creatures that could not be eaten, not only their flesh but also their carcasses were to be regarded as an abomination. The distinction made while they were alive did not disappear just because they died. Even when eating water creatures, the people of Israel had to examine the command of God before their own preferences. The standards for land animals and for creatures living in the water were different from each other, but in following the distinction God had appointed they were the same.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 11:11—why did even the carcasses of the water creatures that could not be eaten have to be regarded as an abomination?

It was because those creatures were things God had appointed not to be eaten, and so even after they died, they did not change into something that could be eaten. Verse 11, referring to the water creatures without fins and scales spoken of before, commands not to eat their flesh and to regard even their carcasses as an abomination.

Here, to regard something as an abomination is the attitude of keeping away from what God has forbidden and not accepting it as food. The people were not to think that the command was to be kept only with regard to living creatures. They had to place even dead ones under the same distinction and keep the boundary God had appointed.

When we apply this word spiritually, we draw the lesson that we must not treat lightly, or accept and keep close, a life that does not please God. The saints must not, while saying that they believe in the Lord, remain in a life that relies only on their own strength and desires, but must examine their hearts and lives according to the word.

However, the object of this verse is the carcasses of the water creatures forbidden in the preceding verse. To apply it as meaning that one should abhor every dead person or turn away from the grief of the bereaved is different from the meaning of the text.

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[Question] 8. Leviticus 11:9–12—what lesson of faith can be learned from the ordinance that allowed only the fish that have fins and scales to be eaten?

When we apply this ordinance spiritually, we can learn the lesson that we must set the direction of our lives according to the word of God, and live by the faith that relies on God even in the midst of difficulty.

Through the way fins help the movement and direction of a fish, we can think that the saints, too, must discern by the word what is right and follow that way. One must not, while knowing the will of God, remain in a life that is shaken this way and that according to one's own interests. Even with insufficiency, one must set one's heart to follow God.

Also, the scales that cover the body make us think of the faith the saints are to rely on in the midst of difficulty. This does not mean that there are no trials in the life of faith. Rather, when one meets difficulty, it is not holding on only to one's own calculations and ability, but seeking help from God and going forward believing His word.

Such faith is different from vague optimism or self-confidence. It is ruminating on the gospel that the Lord has saved me, trusting that Lord, and walking the way that fits the word. The life that pleases God does not stop at speaking of faith; it is a life that relies on Him and follows Him in actual living. The lesson we examine through fins and scales, too, lies in this life of faith.

[Question] 9. Leviticus 11:13–19—what birds are in the list of the birds He said not to eat, and what features can be seen in their appearance?

In the list of the birds that could not be eaten appear the eagle, the vulture, the falcon, the raven, the sea gull, the little owl, the screech owl, the stork, the heron, and others. The text names several other birds besides these, and records the bat together with them.

Among these are some that catch and eat other creatures or eat carcasses, and there are also birds like the eagle and the falcon that snatch their prey with a strong beak and talons. Such an appearance calls to mind the fierce appearance of seizing and eating something by one's own strength. But one must not lump the whole list together under a single habit and explain that all the birds hunt alike or eat only carcasses. Rather than explaining the reason for each prohibition ecologically, the text designates the kinds that must not be eaten.

Spiritually, we draw the lesson of guarding against a life that trusts only in its own strength, harms other people, and lives only for itself. Rather than seizing on the weak points of others and attacking them, the saints must build one another up within the grace they have received and learn faith. One must live not as a person who boasts of his strength and harms others, but as a person who relies on God and serves the work of giving life to other souls.

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[Question] 10. Leviticus 11:20–23—what are the four kinds among the winged insects that God allowed to be eaten?

What God allowed were the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. These names are the names recorded in verse 22.

Verse 21 says that even among the winged insects that creep, those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth may be eaten. Then verse 22 lists specifically the four kinds that were allowed. Therefore it was not the case that every insect could be eaten merely because it had wings. Together with that feature, the people had to check the kinds God had allowed.

When we apply the appearance of springing off the ground and leaping to the life of faith, we can think of the attitude of not sitting down looking only at one's own circumstances and strength, but going forward relying on God. Even a weak saint can seek help from God and believe the word, and so carry out the work entrusted to him and serve the gospel. What is to be remembered first in this ordinance is the four kinds that were allowed, and what is to be learned through their appearance is the faith that actually lives relying on God. ✉

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CHAPTER

12

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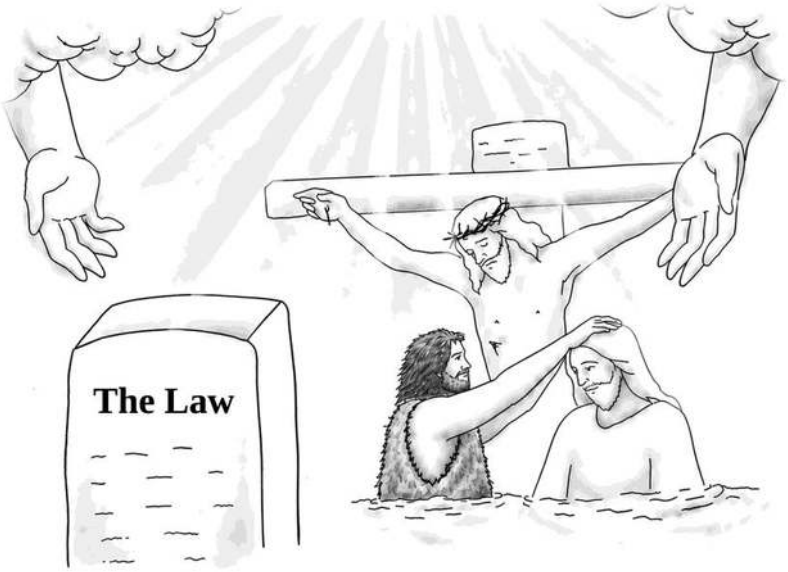

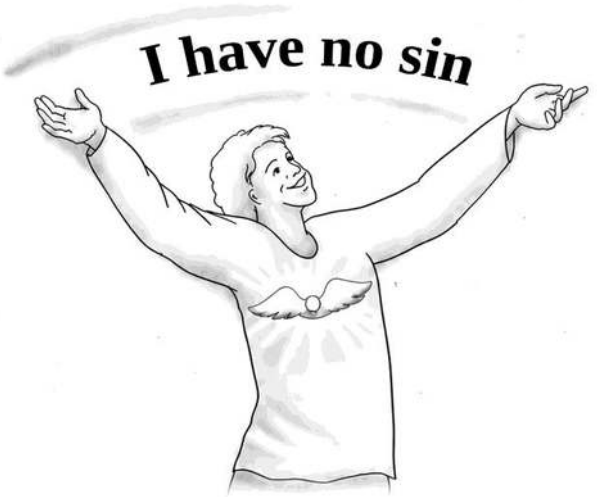

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Leviticus Chapter 12 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 12:1–5—what does this word say from the perspective of faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in the New Testament?

1. The person who comes before God needs cleanness

Leviticus 12:1–5 speaks of the period of uncleanness and the ordinance concerning purification for a woman who has given birth, and of the circumcision of a male child. In its direct sense, it is the regulation of purification after childbirth that the people of Israel had to keep.

For a person to come before God, he must obtain the cleanness that God acknowledges. The sin of the heart does not disappear merely because one thinks one is all right or because one lives a religious life. One must acknowledge one's uncleanness before the word, lay down the thought of becoming clean by one's own strength, and receive the washing away of sin by believing in one's heart the salvation God has accomplished.

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2. The person born of the flesh must be born again of water and the Spirit

A person is born under sin as a descendant of Adam. The sins that are revealed as one lives are connected with the sinful nature in the heart. Therefore one cannot solve one's fundamental problem of sin merely by correcting a few actions.

Psalm 51:5 says.

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me."

This is not a confession that lays the responsibility for sin on one's mother alone, but a confession acknowledging that one is a person under sin from the time of one's birth.

Birth in the flesh and the new life obtained from God are distinguished. Jesus said in John 3:5.

"Jesus answered, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Therefore, when we think of the uncleanness of childbirth in connection with the gospel, we must not regard childbirth itself as an evil deed, but must look at the fact that all of us who were born of the flesh need the washing away of sin and the new birth.

3. The circumcision on the eighth day must be looked at in connection with the circumcision of the heart

Leviticus 12:3 says.

"And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

This is the circumcision of the flesh that God appointed. The New Testament speaks of the circumcision of the heart in

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explaining the matter of becoming a person who belongs to God.

Romans 2:29 is as follows.

"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."

The circumcision of the heart is not accomplished by leaving some mark on the flesh or by performing a religious rite. It is connected with receiving the remission of sins by believing in one's heart the fact that Jesus bore one's sins and removed them.

Knowing the gospel and believing the gospel as one's own salvation are distinguished. One must believe that the sins one has committed in one's heart and through one's actions are also included in the word that Jesus bore the sin of the world.

4. The washing away of the sin of the heart is obtained when one believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished

What we must believe is clear.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John. And bearing those sins, He received in our place the judgment of sin that we should have received, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. Also, He rose again from death and became our Savior.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to believe together the baptism of Jesus, by which He bore sin, and the blood of the Cross, by which He received the judgment of sin, and to accept this salvation in one's heart. The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood (1 John 5:6–8).

Our faith does not newly produce the work of removing sin. It is receiving by faith the remission of sins the Lord has already

accomplished. The circumcision of the heart, too, lies not in a resolution to make one's heart clean by oneself, but in believing that the Lord has borne all one's sins.

5. The way into the sanctuary lies with the Lord, who cleanses

In verse 4, God did not allow her to touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification were fulfilled. Coming before God required the order and cleanness God had appointed.

When we look at this ordinance in connection with the salvation of the New Testament, the way to come to God lies in the atonement Jesus accomplished. Hebrews 10:19 says.

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus"

The boldness to come before God does not come from the judgment that one has become good enough, but from the faith that the Lord bore all one's sins, including one's insufficiency, and received even their judgment. The One who cleanses is the Lord, and we come before God relying on His salvation.

6. The period of purification must not be turned into a timetable for obtaining the remission of sins

When a son was born, a period of uncleanness of seven days and thirty-three days after it were prescribed; when a daughter was born, a period of uncleanness of two weeks and sixty-six days after it.

The text prescribes the difference in the periods, but does not

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directly explain the reason for the difference. Rather than arbitrarily attaching a spiritual meaning to the difference in the periods for a son and a daughter, we must look at the ordinance of purification God spoke of and the salvation He accomplished in the New Testament.

The verses that follow, 6–8, speak of the procedure in which, after the appointed period, the burnt offering and the sin offering are offered and the priest makes atonement for the woman. Therefore this ordinance must not be understood as if a person's sin disappears by itself simply with the passing of time.

In the New Testament, our cleanness rests on the perfect atonement Jesus accomplished.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

What we must hold on to is not the time we have waited or the merits we have piled up, but the fact that the Lord, who offered His own body for us, has accomplished the remission of sins.

7. The person who believes in the remission of sins serves the Lord with a clean heart

Even after one has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, one's own weakness and wrong can be revealed. At that time one must not hide or rationalize the wrong, but acknowledge it.

At the same time, one must believe in the salvation of the Lord, who bore even that sin. Acknowledging one's insufficiency and believing in the remission of sins the Lord accomplished must go together. It is not taking sin lightly, and yet not seeking the ground of one's cleanness in one's own

resolution or deeds, but placing it in the atonement the Lord accomplished.

The Lord knows what kind of people we are, and He bore not only the sins already revealed but even the sins we will commit throughout our lives. Looking at our own weakness and wrong, we easily think that we are still people who cannot come before God. But even then, we must not remain only in the thought that we are lacking, but must accept in our hearts the word that the Lord bore even that sin. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes before God as a righteous person who has received the remission of sins, not because his deeds are perfect, but because he believes that the Lord has remitted all his sins.

The faith that has received the circumcision of the heart sets the heart on the word that the Lord has taken away all sins. In this faith one gives thanks to God, hears the word, has fellowship with the saints, and serves the gospel following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

To acknowledge one's uncleanness and to believe in one's heart the washing away of sin that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross—this is the faith that accepts this word within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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Leviticus 12:6–8—what does this word say at the level of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in the New Testament?

1. Cleanness is obtained through the atonement God appointed

Leviticus 12:6–8 is the ordinance in which a woman who has given birth brings an offering after finishing the period of purification of the preceding verses 1–5, and the priest makes atonement for that woman.

"Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female."

This is the ordinance of purification given to a woman who has given birth, and childbirth itself must not be regarded as a moral transgression. In the text, the woman brings the offering God appointed, and the priest makes atonement for that woman. The way of becoming clean was appointed by God.

When we look at this word in connection with the salvation of the New Testament, we can see that the ground on which we become clean before God also lies in the atonement accomplished for us. Sin is not washed away merely by regretting one's sins or by resolving to become a better person. One must acknowledge one's sins and know how God has remitted those sins.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit accepts in his heart the washing away of sin that Jesus accomplished for him. He places the ground for coming before God not in his own efforts or judgment, but in the salvation the

Lord accomplished.

2. The burnt offering and the sin offering make us see together the sacrifice that bears sin and the judgment of sin

In verse 6, the woman brings a lamb of the first year for the burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for the sin offering. God appointed the offering the woman was to bring, and had her receive atonement through the priest.

When we look at this sacrifice together with the salvation of the New Testament, we must think together of the sacrifice that bears sin and the judgment for that sin. A sinner needs the remission of sins, and the problem of the judgment he must receive because of sin must also be resolved.

Before the sacrifice of the burnt offering, one comes to acknowledge that one is a person who must be judged because of sin. In the sin offering, one comes to see the way of God's salvation, by which He lets one obtain the remission of sins through the offering that bears sin. The sacrifice of these offerings makes us look to the salvation of Jesus Christ, who gave His own body in our place.

Therefore, in reading the ordinance of presenting offerings, one must not set one's heart only on how much one can offer to God. One must know what sacrifice the Lord made for oneself, who must be judged because of sin. Faith in salvation lies in accepting that sacrifice as the salvation from one's own sin and judgment.

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3. One must believe together the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross

Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John. And bearing those sins, He received in our place the judgment of sin that we should have received, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. Also, He rose again from death and became our Savior.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to accept in one's heart the salvation in which Jesus bore one's sins with the baptism He received from John and received their judgment on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood (1 John 5:6–8).

Here, one must not think of the word that Jesus bore the sin of the world separately from one's own sins. The sins one has committed with the evil thoughts and actions that came out of one's heart, and even the sins revealed and the sins kept hidden, are included in the sin of the world that the Lord bore.

To believe as one's own salvation the baptism by which the Lord bore sin and the blood of the Cross by which He received the judgment of sin—this is the faith that accepts the sacrifice of atonement of the Old Testament within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not stopping at knowing the gospel, but believing in one's heart that the Lord has remitted even one's own sins.

4. Jesus offered His own body and accomplished the atonement for us

The woman brings the offering God appointed, and the priest offers the offering and makes atonement for that woman.

In the New Testament, Jesus is the High Priest who saves us, and the One who offered His own body as the sacrificial offering for us. The Lord bore our sins and received the judgment of those sins with His own body.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

The ground on which we obtain holiness and the remission of sins lies in the fact that Jesus offered His own body once and for all. It is not that we pile up merits to prepare the price of atonement so as to be accepted by God, but that we accept by faith the fact that the Lord bore sin and gave His life for us.

5. Even when the offering differs according to one's circumstances, the cleanness God gives is the same

Verse 8 opens the way of becoming clean even to the woman who cannot afford a lamb.

"And if her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean –ASV"

Here, the word *"means"* refers to the economic circumstances of affording a lamb, and God had even a poor woman offer the burnt offering and the sin offering with two doves.

Not being able to bring a lamb does not mean obtaining less cleanness. To the woman who brings two doves, too, God said, *"She shall be clean."* He did not block the way of becoming clean on the grounds of poverty.

The salvation of the New Testament, too, is not given differently according to wealth or ability. The rich and the poor

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alike receive the remission of sins by believing the same gospel. It is not that one obtains a more perfect salvation by offering more, and even a person who has nothing to put forward can accept in his heart the salvation the Lord accomplished for him and come before God.

6. In the salvation received freely there is the sacrifice of the Lord's life

That He opened the way of becoming clean even to the poor is the compassion of God. But the fact that He took into consideration one's circumstances for affording an offering does not mean that He took the problem of sin lightly. In the text there is still the sacrifice of the offering and the atonement made by the priest.

In the New Testament, we receive salvation freely because Jesus gave His own life for us.

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

It is not we who prepared the price of the remission of sins. The Son of God bore our sins and shed His blood and died for those sins. Because the Lord paid the price of life that we could not pay, we receive that salvation by grace.

When one believes this fact in one's heart, rather than boasting that one was saved by offering something, one comes to give thanks for the love of the Lord, who gave His life for oneself. The heart that serves the Lord, too, comes not from trying to pay the price of the remission of sins, but from thanksgiving for having already received the remission of sins.

7. One receives by faith the cleanness given through atonement

The text ends with the word that the priest offers the offering the woman has brought and makes atonement for the woman, and that through that atonement cleanness is given to the woman.

In the New Testament, Jesus offered His own body and accomplished the atonement for us. The Lord accomplished the salvation to which the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed, and we receive the remission of sins by believing that salvation in our hearts.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit accepts in his heart that for him Jesus bore sin and was judged, and believes the fact that through that atonement the remission of sins and cleanness have been given to him.

Below, the same text is looked at from the perspective of Jewish law.

Leviticus 12:1–5—what does this word say from the perspective of Jewish law?

1. One must first see the legal character of the text

Leviticus 12:1–5 is a priestly law of purification given to the people of Israel under the Sinai covenant. It is not a verdict that the woman who has given birth has committed a moral

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transgression, but a regulation that appoints the ceremonial uncleanness and the procedure of purification that apply to a woman who has given birth. At first, the ordinance of uncleanness like that at the time of her monthly period applied, and in the period that followed she also had to keep the restrictions concerning hallowed things and the sanctuary.

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days."

2. Childbirth is not sin but the blessing of life

The first thing that must be made clear is that childbirth itself is not sin. From the time of creation, God blessed people to be fruitful and multiply. The Bible speaks of children as the blessing of God.

Then why was the woman who had given birth said to be 'unclean'?

The word "*unclean*" in Leviticus does not necessarily mean a moral transgression. It also refers to particular states that appear in the human body and life, such as touching a dead body, developing a skin disease, or a discharge occurring from the body of a man or a woman. Such ceremonial uncleanness is not

a verdict that 'that person is evil,' but means that according to that state the ordinances of purification concerning the sanctuary, hallowed things, contact, and the like apply.

Therefore this ordinance does not mean that bearing a child is sin or that sexual relations and pregnancy themselves are dirty. Nor does it mean that a woman is essentially more unclean than a man or that sin was added to the baby who was born. It is a ceremonial ordinance given to distinguish the holiness of the sanctuary from the physical state of human beings.

3. The period when a male child was born

The period when a male child was born is divided into two stages.

Period	Legal status of the new mother	Main provision
Days 1–7 after childbirth	Uncleanness like that of the monthly period	The nature of general contact uncleanness
The eighth day (included in the 33 days below)	Circumcision of the male child	The sign of the Abrahamic covenant
Days 8–40 after childbirth (33 days)	The period of becoming clean from the blood of childbirth	May not touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary
Total	40 days	Offering presented from the 41st day

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The first seven days, it said, she is unclean *"as in the days of her customary impurity."* This is connected with the ordinance concerning the monthly period in Leviticus chapter 15. The uncleanness of this period was not merely a restriction on entering the sanctuary; it was a state in which ceremonial uncleanness could be conveyed to other people or objects through contact.

The thirty-three days that follow differ in legal status from the preceding seven days. In the basic regulation, where there is no other cause of uncleanness, the thirty-three days after finishing the first seven days and performing the immersion for purification are set apart as 'the period of clean blood.' But verse 4 prohibits the following two things even in this period.

—Do not touch any hallowed thing

—Do not come into the sanctuary

Therefore it is important to read the uncleanness of the first seven days after childbirth and the waiting period of purification during the thirty-three days after it as distinguished from each other.

4. The circumcision on the eighth day

"And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Leviticus 12:3).

A male child had to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. This was not a command that first arose in Leviticus chapter 12, but a reconfirmation of the command of the covenant God had given to Abraham.

"He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your

descendant" (Genesis 17:12).

Circumcision was the physical sign that the child belonged to the covenant community of Abraham, and it was carried out on the appointed eighth day even though the new mother's period of purification had not ended. The law of purification for the new mother deals with the state of cleanness after childbirth and the restrictions concerning the sanctuary and hallowed things, while the circumcision of the male child deals with the sign of the covenant community, so what they apply to differs from each other.

5. The restrictions concerning the sanctuary and hallowed things given to the new mother

Childbirth is accompanied by a flow of blood. The law of purification in Leviticus deals with blood and life very seriously. As in the principle of Leviticus 17:11, *"The life of the flesh is in the blood,"* blood is closely related to life.

But the uncleanness of childbirth is not determined only by whether there was actual bleeding. Jewish law explains that if the childbirth falls under this ordinance, the uncleanness of childbirth is established even if no blood was seen. God appointed a period of purification for the woman who had given birth, and did not allow her to touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary until that period was fulfilled.

The new mother could not shorten the period of purification or omit the sacrifice merely on the basis of whether her health had recovered. After finishing the period God had appointed, she had to bring the offering and follow the priest's procedure of atonement.

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6. The period when a female child was born

When a female child is born, the period is doubled. The first fourteen days and the sixty-six days that follow are stages distinguished from each other, just as when a male child is born.

Period	Legal status of the new mother	Main provision
Days 1–14 after childbirth	Uncleanness like that of the monthly period	Twice the first period for the birth of a male child
Days 15–80 after childbirth (66 days)	The period of becoming clean from the blood of childbirth	Waiting until the period of purification ends
Total	80 days	Offering presented from the 81st day

The text of Leviticus does not directly explain why the period is doubled when a female child is born. The interpretations of later Judaism must also be examined as distinguished from the reasons stated in the text. This difference must not be interpreted as meaning the inferiority of a female child, more sin, a greater transgression in bearing a daughter, or that God regards women as less precious. The text merely appointed the mother's period of purification differently; it does not prescribe the human worth of male and female babies or their dignity as the image of God differently.

7. *'Unclean'* does not mean expulsion from the community

Verse 4 does not command the new mother to cut herself off completely from her family. However, since the ordinance of uncleanness like that at the time of her monthly period applies during the first seven or fourteen days, not only the restriction on entering the sanctuary but also the restrictions concerning contact and marital relations must be considered separately. In the period that follows, the restrictions concerning hallowed things and the sanctuary remain.

The uncleanness of the new mother does not mean that she was abandoned by God, lost her status as one of the people of Israel, or had her family relationships severed. It means that according to each stage after childbirth she had to keep the ordinances of purification and the restrictions concerning hallowed things and the sanctuary.

When the period of purification ended, the woman offered the offering according to the ordinance of verses 6–8 that follow, and the priest made atonement for her. After that she could again take part normally in the life of the sanctuary.

The appearance of the expression *"atonement"* here does not mean that childbirth was a moral transgression. This sacrifice was the sacrifice needed to complete the procedure of purification for the woman who had given birth.

8. There was also a provision for the poor new mother

To understand the ordinance of verses 1–5, one must also look at verses 6–8, which command the sacrifice after the period of purification. The new mother had to offer the burnt offering

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and the sin offering, and a person who found it hard to afford a lamb could substitute turtledoves or pigeons. Even a poor new mother was not excluded from the way of purification and return to the sanctuary.

Luke chapter 2 records that Mary and Joseph followed this law.

"Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem" (Luke 2:22).

And they offered a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons as the offering. This shows that the family of Jesus actually observed the law of Leviticus chapter 12, and offered the offering permitted to a family that was not well off economically.

Conclusion

The legal flow of Leviticus 12:1–5 is as follows.

Childbirth → uncleanness for the first seven or fourteen days → the period of purification of thirty-three or sixty-six days that follows → completion of the period → the priest's atonement and the completion of the procedure of purification → return to the life of the sanctuary. The circumcision of a male child was carried out on the eighth day after birth, separately from this process.

This law is not a regulation that evaluates childbirth as a moral transgression. Childbirth is the blessing of God, but to the new mother the ordinances of ceremonial uncleanness and purification applied. The woman, one of the covenant people, had to remain set apart from the sanctuary and hallowed things for the appointed period, and then go through the procedure of purification and return to full ceremonial participation in the worshiping community.

Leviticus 12:6–8—what does this word say from the perspective of Jewish law?

1. The position and function of the text

Leviticus 12:6–8 is the final procedure that a woman who had given birth had to go through after her period of purification had ended, in order to take part fully again in the worship of the sanctuary.

"When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female. (And if her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean –ASV)."

If the preceding verses 1–5 prescribe the period of purification, verses 6–8 prescribe the completion of the procedure of purification through sacrifice.

2. The procedure does not end by itself just because the period has passed

When a male child was born there was a period of purification of 40 days in total, and when a female child was born, 80 days in total. Jewish law explains that the offering was

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to be presented from the day after this period was finished, that is, from the 41st or the 81st day. Even though the period had passed, the procedure of presenting the offering remained.

The order the law appointed is as follows.

Childbirth → the waiting period of uncleanness and purification → preparing the offering → bringing it to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting → the priest offers the sacrifice before the LORD → completion of the atonement and the procedure of purification → return to the life of the sanctuary

Both the passing of time and the priestly procedure were necessary. The new mother could not omit the period or the duty of sacrifice merely on the basis of her personal feelings or the recovery of her health; after waiting for the appointed period, she had to bring the offering and finish the procedure of purification through the priest.

3. The two offerings the new mother had to bring

As a standard, the new mother had to prepare two kinds of offerings.

Kind of sacrifice	Offering	Legal function
Burnt offering	A lamb of the first year	The burnt offering offered to God after the period of purification
Sin offering	A young pigeon or a turtledove	Completion of the procedure of purification after childbirth

The two sacrifices had different functions from each other.

The burnt offering—the burnt offering was a lamb of the first year. The burnt offering is the sacrifice in which the body of the offering, except for its skin, is burned and offered to God. God had the new mother offer the burnt offering together with the sin offering after finishing the period of purification.

The new mother was not excluded from the people of God because of childbirth. It was only that during the period of purification she could not touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary. Even after the period of purification ended, the duty of offering the offering God had appointed remained.

The sin offering—the sin offering was a young pigeon or a turtledove. This sin offering functions to complete the procedure of purification for the woman who has given birth.

Even after going through the procedure of purification after childbirth, the new mother had to offer the sin offering in order to recover the qualification of cleanness that allowed her to eat the meat of the offerings. Jewish law thus distinguishes separately the state in which the procedure of atonement by sacrifice still remains even though the other procedures of purification have been finished.

Verses 7 and 8 speak of the result of the priest's making atonement for the woman as the recovery of cleanness.

—*"And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood"*

—*"She shall be clean"*

Therefore this sin offering is not a sacrifice that punishes the bearing of a child as a transgression, but a sacrifice that completes the procedure of purification for the woman who has given birth.

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4. The meaning of "*make atonement for her*"

The atonement of Leviticus is used not only for moral transgressions but also for removing ceremonial uncleanness related to the sanctuary. Therefore one must not mistakenly think that the new mother had committed some particular sin. What is important here is not the individual's subjective sense of guilt, but the objective ceremonial status before God.

Through childbirth, the new mother was in the following state.

—Her status as one of the people of Israel remains as it is.

—She has not fallen out of the covenant of God.

—Nor has she been judged to be a moral criminal.

—According to the stage after childbirth, she must keep the ordinances of purification and the restrictions concerning hallowed things and the sanctuary.

—She recovers the qualification of cleanness that allows her to eat the meat of the offerings only when she has offered the sin offering and finished the procedure of purification.

Therefore the priest's making atonement for the new mother is the carrying out of the duty of sacrifice that remains after childbirth, so as to complete the procedure of purification.

5. The priest is the public mediator who carries out the recovery of cleanness

The new mother brought the offering to the priest "*to the door of the tabernacle of meeting*" but did not carry out the sacrifice herself. The priest received that offering, offered it before the LORD according to the ordinance of God, and made atonement for the new mother. Through this public carrying out

of the sacrifice, the procedure of purification was completed and the new mother's state of cleanness was recovered.

6. The substitute provision for the poor new mother

Verse 8 takes into consideration the new mother who cannot afford a lamb.

"And if her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering"

A new mother whose economic circumstances allowed it offered one lamb and one dove. But a new mother who could not afford a lamb could substitute two doves.

Economic circumstances	Burnt offering	Sin offering
Able to afford a lamb	A lamb of the first year	A young pigeon or a turtledove
Hard to afford a lamb	One dove	One dove

This provision shows several important facts.

First, one was not excluded, on account of being poor, from the way of returning to cleanness and to the worship of the sanctuary.

Second, though the economic value of the offerings differed, their legal effect was the same. When the priest offered the sacrifice according to the ordinance, the new mother who offered a lamb and the one who offered doves both obtained the

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result, *"She shall be clean."*

Third, while the standard of cleanness was the same, in the offering the circumstances of each person were considered and the poor were taken into consideration.

7. It is the same as the ordinance for the poor in Leviticus chapter 5

The way of offering one of two doves as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering also appears in Leviticus 5:7–10.

"And if his means suffice not for a lamb, then he shall bring his trespass-offering for that wherein he hath sinned, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, unto Jehovah; one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering–ASV"

The common point of these two texts is the expression *"means suffice not for a lamb."* The law did not keep the poor from coming to God on the grounds that they could not prepare a lamb.

However, the sacrifice of Leviticus chapter 5 makes atonement for a trespass, while that of chapter 12 recovers ceremonial cleanness after childbirth. Though the kinds of offerings are similar, the causes differ, so the transgression of the one text and the childbirth of the other must not be regarded as the same sin.

8. Mary, too, followed this ordinance for the poor

In Luke chapter 2 it is recorded that after giving birth to Jesus, Mary performed the purification according to the law of Moses.

"Now when the days of her purification according to the law

of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem" (Luke 2:22).

"And to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons'" (Luke 2:24).

Mary and Joseph did not offer a lamb and a dove, but a pair of doves. This strongly suggests that the provision for the poor in Leviticus 12:8 was applied to them.

Here, too, several things must be distinguished.

—Mary's purification is the ordinance of Leviticus chapter 12 concerning a new mother who has given birth.

—The circumcision of Jesus on the eighth day is the ordinance of the Abrahamic covenant.

—Presenting the firstborn son to God is the ordinance of Exodus chapter 13 concerning the firstborn.

In Luke chapter 2 these several duties of the law appear together, but the legal basis and purpose of each differ from one another.

9. The cleanness of the rich new mother and the poor new mother is the same

The most important legal conclusion in this ordinance is the end of verse 8.

"The priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean"

What decides cleanness is not the market price of the offering but the sacrifice according to the ordinance of God. Since the rich new mother who offered a lamb and the poor new mother who offered doves were both equally clean, poverty was not an obstacle, nor did wealth guarantee a higher cleanness.

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Therefore in this ordinance the strictness and the mercy of the law are together.

—The period of purification and the sacrifice cannot be omitted.

—An individual cannot arbitrarily change the method of sacrifice.

—But it does not force an offering one cannot afford economically.

—The substitute offering God permitted also has the same effect of cleanness.

Conclusion

From the perspective of Jewish law, Leviticus 12:6–8 is the procedure by which a new mother who has finished the period of purification recovers, through the priest's atonement, the qualification to approach the sanctuary and hallowed things. The new mother offered a lamb as the burnt offering and a dove as the sin offering, and if she was poor, she obtained the same cleanness even by substituting two doves. This ordinance is not a law that condemns the woman who has given birth, but an ordinance of restoration that dealt with the ceremonial uncleanness after childbirth and, regardless of economic circumstances, brought her back to the worshiping community along the way God appointed. ✉

Sermon by Paul C. Jong

The grace of salvation revealed in circumcision and the sacrifice of purification

< Leviticus 12:1-8 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days. When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female. (And if her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle-doves, or two young

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pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean –ASV).”

Dear saints, Leviticus chapter 12 is the ordinance of purification given to a woman who has borne a child. God appointed the period of purification after childbirth, and had a male child be circumcised on the eighth day. He also commanded that when the new mother’s period of purification was fulfilled, the burnt offering and the sin offering be offered.

In this word there is a period that must be waited for, there is the sign of the covenant God established, and there is the sacrifice that must be offered in order to become clean. And at the end, He opens the way of becoming clean even to the woman who cannot afford a lamb.

Through this word we must learn the way to come before God. We must know the grace by which God cleanses, and come with the faith that believes in that grace. We need the faith that believes in Jesus, who, in order to bear our sins, received baptism from John and shed His blood and died on the Cross, the Lord who rose again from death.

Let us look at the period of purification God appointed

In verse 2, God says that when a woman bears a male child she is unclean seven days. Then in verse 4 He commands as follows: “*She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are*

fulfilled."

In the case of a male child being born, the first seven days and the thirty-three days after them add up to forty days. In the case of a female child being born, the first fourteen days and the sixty-six days after them add up to eighty days. The text speaks of the first period of uncleanness and the subsequent period of purification from the blood of childbirth as distinguished from each other.

When we read the difference in these periods, we must look at the written word just as it is. God appointed the periods differently for when a male child and a female child were born, but He did not explain the reason in this text. Therefore we cannot judge on the basis of this difference that a female child bears greater sin or is a lower being. In verses 6 and 7, He speaks of the same ordinance of sacrifice whether a son or a daughter was born.

Also, the text does not explain that the new mother had committed some personal transgression. It teaches the period of purification that applies to a woman who has given birth and the procedure for coming before God. We must not arbitrarily turn the ordinance of uncleanness and purification God spoke into an evaluation of a person's worth.

What we must learn here first is the fact that when we come before God we must respect His word. The woman did not set the period of purification by her own thinking. She had to wait for the period God appointed, and offer the sacrifice He commanded.

Our salvation, too, must follow the way God has prepared. Sin does not disappear because one thinks one is all right, nor does one become righteous before God by considering that one has tried hard enough oneself. We must know and believe how God has saved us.

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The circumcision on the eighth day makes us remember the covenant of God

Among the ordinances after childbirth, God speaks separately of what is to be done to the child. He said, *"And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Leviticus 12:3).*

This is the circumcision performed on a male child. The child's receiving circumcision on the eighth day and the end of the new mother's period of purification are distinguished from each other. Even after the child had received circumcision, the period of purification remained for the new mother.

Circumcision is connected with the covenant God gave to Abraham in Genesis. Promising to be the God of Abraham and of his descendants, God gave circumcision as the sign of the covenant. It says, *"And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you" (Genesis 17:11).*

Therefore the center of what must be remembered through circumcision is the covenant God established. God gave the promise that He Himself would be their God and would make them His own people.

Then how do we become the people of God today? We receive the remission of sins and become the children of God by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts. Colossians also explains the circumcision received in Christ as follows: *"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:11–12).*

We are people born as descendants of Adam and under sin. We cannot solve the problem of sin and death by our own strength. So Jesus came as our Savior.

Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John. And He received the judgment in our place and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. By believing this salvation, we become people who have died with Christ and obtained new life in Christ.

This is the circumcision that must be received in the heart. It is believing the fact that our sins were passed on to Jesus, and that the Lord bore the judgment we should have received. It is laying down the heart that tries to reach salvation by cutting off sin little by little with one's own efforts, and accepting the salvation the Lord accomplished.

The fact that one has lived the life of faith for a long time or the fact that one has performed religious rites cannot take the place of this faith. It must be clear in one's heart how God has removed my sins through Jesus Christ. The person who believes in that salvation enjoys the new life God has given.

When the period of purification was fulfilled, the sacrifice God appointed had to be offered

In verse 6, He says what the woman who has finished the period of purification must do. He said, *"When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting."*

The woman had to bring a lamb of the first year for the burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for the sin offering. Following the waiting for the period of purification, there was

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the offering of the sacrifice.

The text also tells us where the woman had to bring the offering. She had to bring it to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And the priest offered that sacrifice for the woman. God also said, *"Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female" (Leviticus 12:7).*

The one for whom this sacrifice is offered is clearly recorded in the text. The priest makes atonement for the woman. It is a sacrifice for the purification of the new mother.

Also, the whole procedure did not end merely with the time the woman had waited. When the period was fulfilled, she had to bring the offering God had appointed and become clean through the service of the priest.

This word makes us think of the ground on which we obtain salvation. As the years pass, things of the past may grow dim. One may live on having forgotten what one did wrong. But the fact that one has forgotten does not mean that the sin has been resolved. We need the Savior who bears sin and the atonement He accomplished.

The sacrifice God gave contains the way by which He resolves sin and uncleanness. A sinner does not come before God declaring himself clean; he comes through the sacrifice and atonement God appointed.

Today we come before God relying on the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. The Lord bore our sins and offered His own body. We obtain cleanness by believing in that Lord.

Through the burnt offering and the sin offering we must look to the sacrifice of the Lord

God had the new mother offer the burnt offering and the sin offering together. The sin offering makes us think of the resolution of sin and uncleanness, and the burnt offering is the sacrifice in which the sacrificial offering is offered to God. Through these sacrifices we must look to Jesus, who bore our sins and offered Himself to God.

We must not think vaguely of the work by which the Lord saved us. Jesus actually bore our sins, and actually received the judgment of those sins.

When Jesus received baptism from John, our sins were passed on to the Lord. Bearing those sins, the Lord hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died. The death on the Cross carries with it the fact that the Lord bore the sin of the world. Therefore we must believe in both the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

The One who bore our sins is Jesus, and the One who was judged in our place is also Jesus. The One who rose again from death and became our Savior is also Jesus. Through this Lord, God has given us the remission of sins and holiness.

Dear saints, when our own faults are revealed, we must think of this salvation. While acknowledging the fact that we have done wrong, we must not regard even the salvation the Lord accomplished as imperfect because of that wrong. Jesus knew our weakness, and bore the sins of our whole lives.

We are not people who prepare an offering again to try to add something to the Lord's salvation. We are people who believe in the salvation the Lord Himself accomplished. We must honestly acknowledge our wrong, and renew our hearts by believing in the Lord, who bore even that sin.

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When this faith becomes clear, our gaze turns from ourselves to the Lord. The heart that boasted of its own righteousness comes to give thanks for the grace of the Lord, and the heart that had sat down in discouragement because of its own insufficiency comes to rise up again, relying on the Lord.

He gave the same grace of purification even to the poor woman

Verse 8 is the word for the woman who cannot afford a lamb. He said, *"And if her means suffice not for a lamb, then she shall take two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."*

God knew the woman's circumstances. Not every family could afford a lamb. So He had the woman whose circumstances did not allow it bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons. Of these, one was offered as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering.

Though there was a difference in the offering, the promise concerning cleanness was clear. He said that when the priest makes atonement for her, she becomes clean. He did not give the poor woman a way of becoming less clean. That woman, too, became clean through the sacrifice God appointed.

In this word we see the grace of God. God did not close the door of purification to the person in difficult circumstances. He did not leave that woman in uncleanness on the grounds that her ability to afford an offering was lacking.

Our salvation, too, does not differ according to wealth or ability. Those who have much and those who have little alike receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ. Those

with much knowledge and those who could not get an education alike need the salvation the Lord accomplished.

Is there anyone who thinks he has nothing to put forward before God? Do not draw back from the gospel because of that fact. The One who paid the price for our salvation is Jesus. We receive by grace the salvation He accomplished.

That we were saved freely does not mean that this salvation is a light thing. The Son of God bore our sins and gave His own life. There was the sacrifice of the Lord that cannot be measured in money. Therefore in our hearts there must be thanksgiving instead of boasting. We must praise the Lord who gave us salvation, and convey this grace to other people as well.

Jesus, who came under the law, has become our true Savior

In Luke we can see a scene connected with this ordinance of purification. In chapter 2, verse 21, it is recorded that Jesus received circumcision on the eighth day, and from verse 22 onward, it is recorded that when the days of purification were completed, His parents took the baby and went up to Jerusalem.

Concerning the offering they were going to offer at that time, it says as follows: *"And to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons'" (Luke 2:24).*

The offering permitted in Leviticus to a new mother in difficult circumstances was offered even after the birth of Jesus. Mary and Joseph acted according to the ordinance of the law.

In this scene we must engrave on our hearts the fact that Jesus truly came clothed in a human body. The holy Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, came among people. He came

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under the law in order to save us, who are under the law.

The sacrifice of Leviticus chapter 12 is a sacrifice of purification for the woman who is a new mother. This scene must not be read as meaning that Jesus had to wash away His own sins. Jesus is the Savior who came to bear our sins.

Simeon took that baby Jesus in his arms and praised God, saying that he had seen the salvation of God. Led by the Holy Spirit, he saw in the baby before his eyes the salvation God had prepared. Jesus was the One who would be the light of salvation not only to Israel but also to the Gentiles.

We, too, must believe in this Jesus as our own Savior. We must not stop at thinking of Him only as the baby of Christmas. We must believe in Him as the Lord who received baptism from John in order to bear our sins, who died on the Cross in order to receive the judgment of those sins, and who rose again from death.

Let us live within the grace of the Lord, who has cleansed us

Leviticus chapter 12 begins with the word that the woman is unclean, and ends with the promise that she becomes clean through the atonement God appointed. While speaking of uncleanness, God also gave the way of becoming clean.

Through circumcision He caused the covenant to be remembered; through the period of purification He caused the word of God to be followed; and through the sacrifice He caused the atonement God appointed to be relied on. He bestowed that grace even on the poor woman.

We have a Savior to whom we must look through all these words. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from

John, and received their judgment with the blood of the Cross. The Lord, who rose again from death, has saved us from sin.

Therefore, believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your hearts. Accept clearly how the Lord has removed my sins. Lay down the heart that tries to complete salvation by your own deeds, and believe in the holiness the Lord has given.

The person who lives by that faith can rely on the Lord again even when he discovers his own insufficiency. He can acknowledge his wrong and turn from it, and go forward toward the things that please the Lord. He can serve the gospel together with the saints, and convey the grace of salvation to those who do not yet know the remission of sins.

The One who has cleansed us is the Lord. Our salvation is His grace. I hope that you will keep this grace in your hearts and become saints who give thanks to God and live by faith. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 12

[Question] 1. Leviticus 12:2—how long was the period of uncleanness first appointed for a new mother who has borne a male child?

A new mother who had borne a male child was unclean for the first 7 days. Verse 2 explains that the uncleanness of this period is like the uncleanness at the time of her customary impurity, that is, at the time of the monthly period.

Then verse 4 speaks of 33 more days as the period of becoming clean from the blood of childbirth. Therefore the period from the birth of a male child until the rite of purification is 40 days, the 7 days and the 33 days added together. However, the answer to what is directly asked about verse 2, the period, is 7 days, and the whole 40 days must not be explained as a state completely the same as the first 7 days. Concerning the latter 33 days, it speaks separately of the restriction that she may not touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary.

Also, the circumcision of the child was to be performed on the eighth day (verse 3). Even though the new mother's period of purification had not yet ended, the circumcision of the child had to be performed on the appointed day. The ordinance of purification that applies to the new mother and the circumcision performed on the child must be understood as distinguished from each other.

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 12:2—what state does the expression *'as in the days of her customary impurity'* say the new mother is in?

The term rendered here as *"customary impurity"* is an old expression referring to the monthly period. Therefore the words *"as in the days of her customary impurity"* mean that during the period first appointed after childbirth, the new mother is in the same unclean state as that which applies to a woman during her monthly period.

Leviticus 15:19 also speaks of a period of uncleanness of 7 days in connection with a woman's discharge of blood. Leviticus chapter 12 explains the first 7 days of the new mother who has borne a male child by likening them to that ordinance.

Here, the word unclean means a state in which one is under certain restrictions according to the ordinance of purification. It is not a word that accuses the woman of having done something evil because she has borne a child. The text does not permanently exclude the new mother, but presents together the way of becoming clean through the appointed period and sacrifice.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 12:3—when God said that on the eighth day the child's *'flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised,'* what rite does this mean is to be performed?

That the flesh of the child's foreskin is circumcised means performing circumcision, cutting off the foreskin that covers the tip of the male child's genital organ. Leviticus 12:3 commands that this rite be performed on the eighth day after the child is born.

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Circumcision was the sign of the covenant God gave to Abraham and his descendants. Genesis 17:10–12 says that the males must be circumcised, and that it must be performed when the child is eight days old. Therefore the command of Leviticus had them continue to keep the ordinance of the covenant already given.

In the Bible appear cases in which this command was followed. Joshua circumcised the people who had been born in the wilderness and had not received circumcision (Joshua 5:4–9), and for John the Baptist, too, the occasion for circumcising him on the eighth day after his birth was held (Luke 1:59). Jesus, too, was given His name on the eighth day, when He was to be circumcised (Luke 2:21).

Therefore this verse is a command to perform on the child, at the appointed time, the sign that belongs to the covenant of God. It is an ordinance that differs from the rite of purification for the new mother in the person to whom it applies and in its timing.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 12:4—what are *'the days of her purification'* given to the new mother a period for?

"The days of her purification" are the period God appointed for becoming clean from the uncleanness related to the blood of childbirth after giving birth. Until this period was fulfilled, the new mother could not touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary.

When a male child was born, 33 more days had to pass after the first 7 days, and when a female child was born, 66 more days had to pass after the first 14 days. The text did not let the new

mother shorten the period or come into the sanctuary by her own judgment. She had to follow the appointed period.

Also, when the period was fulfilled, she had to bring the offerings for the burnt offering and the sin offering to the priest. When the priest offered the sacrifice before the LORD and made atonement for the new mother, she became clean (verses 6–8). Therefore this ordinance includes together the period of waiting and the sacrifice to be performed after it.

This period is not an explanation that blood actually flows for the same number of days for every new mother. It is an ordinance that appointed how access to hallowed things and the sanctuary was to be restricted in connection with the blood of childbirth, and when the rite of purification was to be performed.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 12:4—childbirth is the blessing of God, so why did the new mother's blood of childbirth become the object of the ordinance of purification?

This matter must be understood by distinguishing the blessing of God given to the bearing of life from the ordinance of purification related to the flow of blood. God created man and woman and blessed them to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:27–28). Therefore the fact itself of having borne a child cannot be explained as sin.

Leviticus chapter 12 says that concerning the blood of childbirth after giving birth, the new mother is unclean for a certain period, and that until the period of purification is fulfilled she may not touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary. In Leviticus chapter 15, too, there are regulations of purification according to the state of the body, such as the discharge of blood,

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and at its end it makes clear the will of God that His tabernacle not be defiled (Leviticus 15:31). The ordinance of childbirth, too, must be looked at in this context of the holiness of the sanctuary and the regulations of purification.

However, Leviticus chapter 12 does not separately explain all the reasons why God made such regulations concerning the blood of childbirth. Therefore one cannot conclude that the new mother committed some particular moral sin in bearing a child, or that the flowing of blood itself is an evil act.

What the text clearly shows is the fact that even the woman who has given birth must become clean by following the period and the sacrifice God appointed. God did not speak only of the period of uncleanness; He also appointed the way for the new mother to become clean and come to the sanctuary again.

[Question] 6. Leviticus 12:2–4—what meaning do the 40 days that appear in the Bible have, and can the same meaning be applied to the new mother's period of purification?

The 40 days of the Bible appear in several important events. At the time of Noah's flood, rain fell for 40 days (Genesis 7:12); Moses stayed on Mount Sinai 40 days and 40 nights (Exodus 24:18); and Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–2). In these events we can see different contexts, such as judgment, time spent before God, and temptation.

Therefore one cannot apply one meaning in the same way to every text just because the number 40 days is the same. In particular, Leviticus chapter 12 does not directly explain the new mother's 40 days as a symbol of temptation or judgment.

In this chapter, the 40 days are the first 7 unclean days after

the birth of a male child and the 33 days of becoming clean from the blood of childbirth added together. The text distinguishes the two periods, speaks of the restrictions concerning hallowed things and the sanctuary before the period is fulfilled, and then has the sacrifice offered when the period is fulfilled.

Therefore here we must first understand the meaning that one must wait for the period of purification God appointed and follow that ordinance. One may refer to the 40 days of other events in the Bible, but on that basis one must not conclude that the new mother was punished for sin for 40 days.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 12:5—how is the period of purification for a new mother who has borne a female child divided, and how many days is it in all?

A new mother who had borne a female child was unclean for the first 14 days, and after that 66 more days had to pass as the period of becoming clean from the blood of childbirth. Therefore the whole period is 80 days. The *"two weeks"* of verse 5 means two sevens of days, that is, 14 days.

Compared with the 7 days and 33 days for when a male child was born, each period is double. But the text does not separately explain why God appointed double for when a female child was born. From this difference in period alone one cannot conclude that a female child is of lower worth than a male child, or that the mother committed a greater sin.

Also, verse 6 has the same kinds of offerings for the burnt offering and the sin offering brought when the period of purification is fulfilled, whether a male child or a female child was born. Though there is a difference in the period, the way of

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becoming clean, by the priest's making atonement for the new mother, was given to both alike. If one remembers the first period of uncleanness and the subsequent period of purification from the blood of childbirth as divided, one can avoid confusing the days.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 12:6–8—what offerings did the new mother whose period of purification had ended bring, and how did she perform the rite of purification?

When the period of purification was fulfilled, the new mother brought one lamb of the first year for the burnt offering, and one young pigeon or one turtledove for the sin offering, to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. This ordinance applied both to the woman who had borne a male child and to the woman who had borne a female child.

The priest offered those offerings before the LORD and made atonement for the new mother. The text says that then the blood of childbirth becomes clean and the woman becomes clean. The new mother brought the offerings, and the priest offered the sacrifice according to the office God had entrusted to him.

A woman who could not afford a lamb could bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons. Of these, one was made the burnt offering and the other the sin offering. In this case, too, when the priest made atonement for the woman, she became clean.

Therefore the heart of the rite of purification is to bring the offerings God appointed after the period is fulfilled, and to offer the sacrifice before Him through the priest. This way of purification was open even to the poor new mother.

[Question] 9. Leviticus 12:6–8—what is the meaning of God's having the burnt offering and the sin offering offered together in the new mother's rite of purification?

The burnt offering and the sin offering were offerings offered together so that the new mother might become clean through the sacrifice God appointed and come before Him. The text designates a lamb for the burnt offering and a bird for the sin offering, and says that when the priest makes atonement for the woman, she becomes clean.

The first thing to be careful about here is to distinguish the order in which the offerings are listed from the order in which the sacrifices were actually offered. In verse 6 the offering for the burnt offering comes first, but from that alone one cannot conclude that the burnt offering was offered before the sin offering. In the ordinance of the sacrifice of birds in Leviticus 5:8–10, it says clearly that the sin offering is to be offered first and then the burnt offering. Therefore the center of this question lies not in some special symbolism of the order, but in the fact that a sacrifice and atonement were needed for the new mother.

Together with waiting for the appointed period, the new mother had to offer the sacrifice God commanded. It is not that she makes the way of becoming clean from uncleanness herself, but that she follows the way God has prepared.

When we connect this sacrifice with the gospel, we come to look to Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for the remission of sins. Jesus bore our sin through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place on the Cross, and rose again from death. The saints believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished, give thanks, and come to God.

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[Question] 10. Leviticus 12:8—what can be learned from the ordinance by which a poor new mother could offer two birds instead of a lamb?

This ordinance shows the fact that God opened the way of becoming clean before Him even to the poor. A woman who could not afford a lamb could bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons. Though the price of the offering differed, when she offered the offerings God appointed and the priest made atonement, she became clean.

If God had accepted only a lamb, a poor new mother would have had difficulty because she could not afford that offering. But God knew her circumstances and appointed offerings that could be offered instead. This is a consideration He showed so that no one would be excluded from the way of coming to God because of being poor.

In Luke 2:22–24, too, it is recorded that the parents of Jesus went up for the purification according to the law of Moses and followed the ordinance of offering a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Thus in the law there was not a way that only the rich could manage, but a way that even people in difficult circumstances could follow.

We also learn that the remission of sins is not bought with wealth or an expensive offering, but is received by believing in the sacrifice and grace God has prepared. Because the Lord paid the price of salvation with His own life, the saints must give thanks for that grace. The church, too, must not judge the value of a person's faith by his economic circumstances, but must preach the gospel of salvation to everyone. ✉

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CHAPTER

13

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Leviticus Chapter 13 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 13:1–23—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The basic principle for reading the text

Leviticus 13:1–23 is the ordinance of cleansing by which, within the community of Israel, the priest examined an abnormality of the skin and distinguished cleanness from uncleanness. The text deals with cases from something swelling on the skin, a scab forming, or a bright spot appearing, to an abnormality arising in the place where a boil has healed, and according to their state and changes, one distinguishes whether it is a leprous sore, or a skin disease or the scar of a boil that can be pronounced clean.

If we first sum up the literal meaning, it is as follows.

—Not everything is unclean just because an abnormality has appeared on the skin.

—The priest must examine it according to the appointed standard.

—In the case of verses 4–6, he isolated the person twice,

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seven days each time, and examined him, and the sore that arose in the place of a boil in verses 21–23 was examined again after seven days of isolation.

—If the lesion spreads, he pronounces it unclean.

—If it has faded and does not spread, he regards it as an ordinary skin disease or the scar of a wound and pronounces it clean.

—Even after one has once received a verdict, if the state changes, one must be shown to the priest again.

On the basis of this literal meaning, we can look at the nature of sin, the sinfulness of man, and the cleansing Jesus Christ has bestowed.

2. The symptoms that appear on the skin reveal the state within

"When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body like a leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests" (Leviticus 13:2).

Just as a lesion of the skin reveals a source within the body, the sins a person commits do not arise by chance merely because of the outward environment, but come out of the heart. Jesus said.

"What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:20–23).

People commonly lay their wrongs on the environment or on other people.

"I hated him because he made me angry."

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"I lied because my circumstances were hard."

"I took revenge because someone did wrong first."

The environment does not so much create anew a sin that was not in the heart as reveal in words and actions the anger, greed, pride, lewdness, envy, and falsehood that were already there. Therefore the person who stands before the gospel must acknowledge his own root before trying to correct a few actions.

3. It was not the patient himself but the priest who pronounced the verdict

Just as the patient did not pronounce himself "I am clean" or "I am unclean," but the priest pronounced the verdict according to the ordinance of God, so a human being cannot judge his own sin by his own thinking.

Some people, having committed a great sin, rationalize it, saying, "Everyone lives that way." Conversely, some people, even though Jesus has already removed all their sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, keep looking only at their own feelings and keep concluding that they are sinners. In both cases they put their own thinking ahead of the verdict of God.

The final standard that judges our spiritual state is not feelings or reputation among people, but the word of God.

—The law exposes the sin of man exactly.

—The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word that Jesus bore all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and saved us by rising again from death.

—The Holy Spirit testifies of the salvation of Jesus Christ accomplished by water and blood.

This does not mean that a pastor or church leader today can arbitrarily condemn a person's soul by his own authority alone. The servants of God must discern people's sin and faith by the word, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and lead them to the remission of sins. Also, if there is anyone who rationalizes his own sin and spreads it to other people, the servants of God must rebuke him by the word and stop its spread.

4. When it was not clear, he did not pronounce a verdict hastily

"But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the sore seven days" (Leviticus 13:4).

If the symptoms were not clear, the priest did not condemn immediately on the basis of emotional suspicion or rumor, but isolated the person for 7 days and then examined him, and if it was still unclear, he waited another 7 days and looked for clear evidence and change.

This principle is also important for discernment within the church.

Just because someone has made a mistake, one must not immediately deny the whole of that person's faith. Nor must one define a person as a sinner, a heretic, or an apostate on the basis of unconfirmed words or rumors alone. One must examine what the wrong is, and confirm whether it is a momentary mistake or a stubborn sin that keeps spreading.

At the same time, the person concerned must not merely keep repeating, "I am not really that kind of person." Over a certain period of time, he must examine how his conduct actually

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appears. For direction and fruit, rather than words, show one's state.

5. 'Whether it spreads' was an important standard of judgment

The important standard in verses 4–8 is whether the lesion spreads on the skin. Even a small bright spot was unclean if it kept spreading, and if it faded and did not spread, it was regarded as an ordinary skin disease and pronounced clean. Sin, too, easily goes beyond being committed alone, and is rationalized and draws in other people as well.

—One spreads gossip and a false gospel to other people.
—One justifies greed and plants the same values.
—One gathers people to one's side for a dispute, or has other people take part in the same sin in order to hide one's sin.

Committing sin is wrong, but rationalizing it and drawing in other people and polluting the community is even more serious. When one has done wrong, one must not try to lighten the burden of one's heart by making people take one's side or having others take part in the same sin, but acknowledge it before God and return to the gospel. Having other people take part in the same sin is not repentance but the spread of sin.

6. The ordinance of washing one's clothes and the washing of the heart that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

If after two observations the lesion had faded and did not spread, he pronounced it an ordinary skin disease and had the

person wash his clothes.

"Then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean" (Leviticus 13:6).

Through the ordinance of cleansing by washing one's clothes, we can look at the matter of the saints acknowledging their sin and receiving the washing of the heart by the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One must ruminate on and believe the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and received the punishment of that sin on the Cross.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must deal with the sins he has committed as follows.

—He acknowledges a wrong as a wrong.

—He believes that Jesus bore even that sin.

—He does not remain in self-condemnation or despair.

—He actually sets right his wrong actions and habits.

—If there is anyone he has harmed, he apologizes and makes restoration within the range of what is possible.

Thus one must believe in the salvation already accomplished and escape from the condemnation of the heart, and within that grace also turn from a wrong life.

7. Even after one had once been pronounced clean, one had to be shown again if it spread again

Verses 7–8 say that even after one has once been pronounced clean, if the disease spreads again, one must be shown to the priest again.

Even though one has received the remission of sins, one must not take sin lightly or rationalize it and draw in other people. One must acknowledge the wrong and ruminate on the word that

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Jesus resolved even that sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

At this time the saint does not become a sinner again and have to be saved anew. Nor does Jesus have to receive baptism from John again and hang on the Cross again. One must return to the word of the gospel already completed, honestly confirm one's state, and turn from the wrong way.

Therefore the saints must not cover up their wrong, but believe in the gospel that has remitted even that sin, and must not draw other people into the same sin.

8. An old disease and living flesh

Verses 9–11 pronounce as an old leprosy the case in which not only a white swelling and white hair but also *"raw flesh,"* that is, living raw flesh, has appeared. In such a case the state was clear, so there was no need even to isolate the person for 7 days and observe him.

Verses 14–15, too, pronounce a person unclean if raw flesh appears.

When raw flesh appeared, the priest pronounced that person unclean. Conversely, in verses 16–17 He had the person be shown to the priest and receive the verdict of clean if that raw flesh turned white again.

God had the priest distinguish and pronounce the case in which raw flesh appeared and the case in which the sore turned white again. The priest had to declare cleanness and uncleanness not according to his own thinking but according to the standard God had spoken.

9. The person whose whole body turned white, and the faith that acknowledges one's own sinfulness

"If the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. It has all turned white. He is clean. But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean" (Leviticus 13:13–14).

In the ordinance that if the whole body turns white one is clean, that if raw flesh appears one is unclean, but that if it turns white again one is clean, we must look at the faith that acknowledges one's own sinful root and is saved. One must not think that it is enough to correct a few wrongs, but must acknowledge that one is a fundamental sinner who cannot put forward one's own righteousness.

Before being saved, people commonly think like this.

"I will be all right if I just correct a few wrongs."

"I am better than other people."

"I have my wrongs, but I have also done many good things."

But when one looks at oneself in the light of the law, one comes to know that the problem is not only in a few actions. One comes to acknowledge that evil thoughts, greed, pride, and falsehood come out of the root of the heart.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

It means that the person who does not claim that he can fix himself, but acknowledges that he is a being who needs the grace of God from head to foot, comes to accept the perfect salvation of Jesus Christ.

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10. Even the place where a boil had healed had to be examined again

Verses 18–23 have the priest examine again if a white swelling or a reddish bright spot appears in the place where a boil has healed. He did not judge the present change to be safe on the grounds that it had healed in the past.

—If it is deeper than the skin and the hair is white, it is unclean.

—If the judgment is unclear, he isolates the person for 7 days.

—If the disease spreads, it is unclean.

—If it does not spread and stays as it is, he regards it as the scar of the boil, and it is clean.

A person is not a being who can solve the problem of sin by his own strength just because he has corrected a few wrongs. One must acknowledge one's own state, in which sin keeps coming out of the heart, and believe in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

The scar of a boil and a spreading sore were different. If the bright spot stayed as it was and did not spread, he regarded it as the scar of the boil and pronounced it clean. The saints, too, must not judge by outward appearance or people's opinion alone, but must carefully discern faith and life by the word of God.

11. Jesus is the true priest who cleanses uncleanness

In the Gospels is recorded the event of a leper coming to Jesus. Matthew chapter 8, Mark chapter 1, and Luke chapter 5 together tell of this event.

"Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, 'If You are willing, You can make me

clean.' Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed" (Mark 1:40–42).

In the general flow of the law, what is clean becomes unclean when it comes into contact with what is unclean, but Jesus, even though He touched the leper, did not become unclean, and cleansed him with His own cleanness and life. The priest could only pronounce whether one was clean, and could not remove the source of the disease, but Jesus, by speaking and touching, cleansed the disease itself.

Also, Jesus told him to show himself to the priest and offer the offering Moses commanded. Jesus did not disregard the law; He had the person who was under the law furnish the evidence of cleansing that the law required.

12. The gospel of the water and the Spirit cleanses the source of sin

Just as leprosy is not healed by covering it with clothes, the sin of the heart does not disappear by hiding sin or restraining one's conduct with good deeds and religious efforts. God the Father sent Jesus Christ and removed that sin.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore all the sins of the world once and for all and fulfilled the righteousness of God. Bearing those sins, Jesus received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation of the water and the blood is true.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

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And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth –ASV" (1 John 5:6–7).

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not acknowledged as clean because his own deeds are clean. He receives the remission of sins by believing the fact that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

Also, the sacrifice of Jesus is not an imperfect or temporary cleansing.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

13. The lesson for life given to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 13:1–23 teaches the person who believes the gospel the following attitudes.

First, one must not hide sin. Just as an abnormality of the skin was shown to the priest, one must honestly expose one's heart and life before the word of God.

Second, one must not justify oneself by one's own standard. One must let the law of God pronounce oneself a sinner, and let the gospel pronounce oneself clean by the righteousness of Jesus.

Third, one must not spread sin to other people. One must not draw in other people in order to rationalize one's own wrong, or spread false teaching and dispute.

Fourth, one must not condemn people hastily. Even the priest, when the state was unclear, observed repeatedly over a period of time. One must not judge another person's faith by rumor and

impression alone.

Fifth, one must not rationalize sin by one's own judgment. One must acknowledge one's sin before the word, and believe the gospel that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

Sixth, one must acknowledge one's own sinfulness entirely. One must acknowledge not "I only need to correct a few things," but the fact that "apart from Jesus I cannot become clean."

Seventh, even when one discovers sin, one must not despair, thinking that one has become a sinner again, but must believe in the baptism that Jesus, who bore even that sin, received from John, in the Cross, and in His rising again from death, and turn one's life around.

Conclusion

Leviticus 13:1–23 is, beyond the diagnosis of skin disease, the word that examines the state within by the phenomena that appear on the outside, prevents the spread of uncleanness, and pronounces the verdict according to the ordinance of God. Sin, too, is revealed from the heart in words and actions, and when rationalized it spreads to other people. Human beings cannot heal its source by their own righteousness and efforts.

Jesus touched the unclean person and cleansed him. He bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and made us clean forever by rising again from death. Therefore we must not hide sin or despair, but acknowledge it before the word, believe this gospel, turn from the life that spreads sin, and give life to other souls.

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Leviticus 13:24–28—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The core of the text

Leviticus 13:24–28 is not a word that pronounces unclean the fact itself that a burn wound has arisen. It is the word in which, when a new bright spot appears in the place that was burned, the priest examines and pronounces whether it is a mere scar from the burn or a spreading skin disease.

"Or if the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, then the priest shall examine it; and indeed if the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it is leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore. But if the priest examines it, and indeed there are no white hairs in the bright spot, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days. And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore. But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar from the burn."

The text distinguishes the changes of the skin that arise after a burn according to the standard God appointed. Today one must not condemn a particular skin disease or patient as a sinner on the basis of that disease alone.

Through this word we must look at our own sinfulness and the salvation Jesus Christ has bestowed.

2. One must know one's own root before the word of God

Verse 24 does not make the burn itself the ground for a verdict of uncleanness, but has the priest examine the new change that appears in that wound. Just as the priest examined the sore by the standard of God, we, too, must examine our own root in the light of the word, not only a few wrongs that have appeared on the outside.

Even when a person resolves not to sin, he keeps sinning. Because he is a person who cannot become clean by his own strength, he needs the salvation of Jesus Christ.

3. The sin in the heart is revealed in words and actions

What the priest must examine in verse 24 is a reddish-white or purely white bright spot that has appeared in the place that was burned.

Before trying to correct the sinful actions that appear on the outside, one must know where that sin comes from. People commit sin because of the evil thoughts, greed, and pride in their hearts.

In our hearts and lives are revealed hatred, the pride that exalts oneself, the heart of revenge and of resentment toward God, and the attitude of turning away from one's own wrong and spreading anger to other people.

Even while seeing such sins come out of oneself, one must not lay the responsibility only on the environment or on other people. One must acknowledge before God that one is a person who commits sin, and believe in the salvation that washes away that sin.

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4. The case in which it is deeper than the skin and the hair has turned white

Verse 25 has the priest pronounce it unclean if the hair of the bright spot has turned white and the place is deeper than the skin.

White hair and a place deeper than the skin were the signs for distinguishing the sore. Since sin, too, is not resolved by controlling only the actions revealed on the outside, one must examine the root of the heart from which those actions come.

—Why do I hate that person?

—Why do I keep lying?

—Why am I obsessed with the recognition of other people?

—Why can I not let go of money and power?

—Why can I not acknowledge my own wrong?

—Why do I justify sin even though I know the gospel?

Since words and actions are the fruit of the heart, one must not stop at stopping the action, but expose the root of the heart before the word.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a religious discipline that changes only the outward appearance. It is the gospel that reveals where the sin of man comes from, and makes one believe how Jesus bore and removed all those sins.

5. If it was not clear, he waited 7 days

In verse 26, if there was no clear sign, he did not immediately pronounce it clean or unclean, but isolated the person for 7 days and observed. This prevents the two extremes of condemning at the sight of a wound alone, or feeling relieved because it is unclear. Over a period of time, one had to examine whether the state was spreading, weakening, or staying as it was.

Within the church, too, the same carefulness is needed when judging a person's faith or some incident. One must not deny the whole of a person's faith on the basis of a single slip of the tongue. Conversely, one must not keep covering up repeated falsehood and dispute as mere mistakes.

The following things must be examined over a period of time.

—Does he acknowledge the wrong, or does he keep making excuses?

—Does he return to the gospel, or does he insist on his own righteousness?

—Does he try to remedy the harm, or does he lay the responsibility on other people?

—Is the influence of the sin diminishing, or is it spreading even to other people?

—Does he accept the word, or does he use the word to justify his own sin?

Just as the priest of the Old Testament observed the symptoms with his eyes, in the life of the saints the state must be examined through the word of God and fruit.

6. If it spread, he pronounced it unclean

"If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore" (Leviticus 13:27).

One of the most important standards of judgment in this text is 'whether it spreads.'

The more sin is hidden and rationalized, the more it spreads. Hurt feelings can grow into hatred and gossip and draw in other people and create a dispute, and even small greed can spread into lies and deceit. To avoid the burden of conscience, one may even have other people take part in the sin one used to commit alone.

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Sin spreads as one gathers people to one's side, repeatedly spreads the faults of others, and calls false teaching the gospel. Hurting others on the grounds of the hurt one has received, recommending sin as freedom, and dressing up something to be repented of as persecution are the same.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not spread sin to other people. When one has done wrong, one must not try to lighten the burden of one's heart by making people take one's side, but must first acknowledge one's wrong before God.

7. A person's cleanness is pronounced by the word of God

Verse 28 says not to pronounce it leprosy if the lesion has not spread and has faded.

"It is the scar from the burn"

The priest distinguished the scar of the burn from leprosy not according to his own thinking but according to the word of God.

A person's receiving the remission of sins before God, too, is not something decided on the basis of his own thinking or his own deeds. One must acknowledge one's own sinfulness and believe in the salvation God has accomplished.

The person who thinks he has committed only a little sin tries to fix himself by his own efforts. But the person who knows that his root is that of a sinner relies on the grace of salvation Jesus has bestowed.

The person who believes the gospel that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and received its punishment on the Cross receives the remission of sins. The saints must be assured of their cleanness by believing not in their

own deeds but in the salvation the Lord accomplished.

8. What washes away sin is the salvation the Lord accomplished

That a person has suffered much does not mean that the suffering pays the price of sin in his place. The illness, failure, and pain that human beings undergo cannot be a sacrificial offering of atonement that removes sin.

The judgment of sin was borne by Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death.

To receive the remission of sins, one must not rely on one's own hardships or efforts, but believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

9. The true standard of judgment is the word of God

The person who had been burned did not look at his own wound and declare himself clean or unclean. The priest examined it according to the ordinance of God.

Within the gospel, too, one's own feelings must not become the final judge.

"I am in such pain that I must have been abandoned by God."

"I keep thinking of my past sins, so I must still be a sinner."

"My heart is at peace, so what I am doing now must be right."

Feelings are not the standard for judging whether an action is right or whether one has been abandoned by God. The law exposes sin, and the gospel pronounces how Jesus dealt with that

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sin. The verdict of God on the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is as follows.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

This is not a salvation that covers a wound for a moment, but the salvation in which He bore all sins and judgment and made the believer perfect forever.

10. The cleanness of salvation and the examination of life must be distinguished

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has been made clean from all sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death. The cleanness of salvation is the eternal atonement accomplished once and for all. The examination of life is the matter of the person who has already been saved examining his thoughts and actions before the word every day, preventing the spread of sin, and living as befits the gospel. Since it is not a work for being saved again, the two must not be confused.

The salvation of Jesus is not canceled because a saint has done wrong. But neither can one say, "I have already received the remission of sins, so it does not matter even if sin spreads."

Because one is a person who has already been made clean, one does not leave the spreading of sin alone, but acknowledges the wrong, believes in the completed gospel, and sets right one's life.

11. The life that acknowledges one's own sin and believes the gospel

Before this word, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must acknowledge his own root and live relying on the salvation the Lord accomplished.

—One abandons the thought that it is enough to correct a few wrongs. One acknowledges that one is a person who cannot become clean by oneself without the salvation of the Lord.

—One does not hide the sins revealed in one's heart and life. One does not lay one's wrong only on the environment or other people, but acknowledges it before God.

—One does not pronounce a verdict by one's own heart alone. One looks at oneself in the light of the word of God, has fellowship with trustworthy saints, and honestly examines one's state.

—If the judgment is unclear, one takes time and looks at the fruit. One does not hastily cut off a relationship or condemn other people in a state of intense emotion.

—If sin is spreading, one stops it concretely. One must stop gossip, acknowledge the wrong, apologize to the person one has harmed, and cut off the channels that spread sin.

—One returns to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One believes the fact that Jesus bore even this sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

—One does not seek the ground of one's cleanness in one's own deeds. One must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished and escape from the condemnation of the heart.

—One preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to other souls as well. One must live not as a person who spreads his own sin, but as a person who preaches the gospel of the remission of sins.

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Conclusion

Leviticus 13:24–28 is a word that examines a bright spot arising in a burn by the standard God appointed, and pronounces cleanness or uncleanness.

Rather than trying to correct only a few wrongs, a person must acknowledge his own root, which keeps committing sin. Because he cannot become clean by his own righteousness, he needs the salvation of Jesus.

Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death. The saints who have received the eternal remission of sins by believing this gospel must not hide their insufficiency or put forward their own righteousness, but must acknowledge their wrong, wash their hearts with the gospel, and not spread sin to other people.

Leviticus 13:29–37—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 13:29–37

This passage is the ordinance of cleansing by which the priest distinguishes a sore on the head or beard, and it calls this a *"scale"* or *"a scaly leprosy of the head or beard."* From the perspective of the gospel, it can be read as a picture that shows the appearance of sin deeply rooted within being revealed and spreading, and the work of God examining people and cleansing them.

What the priest examines in the text is as follows.
—Is the sore deeper than the skin?
—Is the disease spreading?
—Does it stay as it is even after time has passed?
—Is there evidence of recovery, normal hair growing again?

2. A sore arising on the head or beard—an abnormal sign revealed on the outside

Verse 29 prescribes that *"If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard,"* he is to be shown to the priest.

The head and the beard are the parts of the body where the sore is examined in this passage.

We, too, must not hide the sins revealed in our thoughts and judgments, words and actions, but examine them before the word of God. Sin does not appear from the start only as a huge action. Hatred, pride, greed, lewd thoughts, unbelief, and resentment in the heart appear in words and actions.

Jesus said that the source of a person's becoming defiled is not only outside, but within the person.

"All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:23).

Therefore what is needed before the gospel is not the self-defense that "I have not done any great wrong outwardly," but exposing the reality of the heart before the word of God.

3. *"Deeper than the skin"*—the source of sin, deeper than actions

In verse 30 the priest examines two phenomena.

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"If it appears deeper than the skin, and there is in it thin yellow hair"

If these two signs were present, the priest pronounced the person unclean.

Applied from the standpoint of the gospel, the problem of sin is deeper than a mere surface habit. It is not that a person first becomes a sinner because he has told a few lies. Because there is a source of falsehood, greed, and pride in the heart, it appears in various actions.

Human resolution or ethical education can restrain actions for a while, but cannot remove the source of sin. The word of God is *"a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12)*, and exposes even hidden motives.

The priest of Leviticus could examine the sore, but could not make the disease clean. Likewise, the law points out sin and reveals that one is a sinner, but it is not the salvation itself that removes sin. The One who cleanses sin is Jesus Christ.

4. When it is not certain, one does not judge hastily

Verse 31 is the ambiguous case in which the sore is not deeper than the skin, but no black hair is seen either. The priest did not declare the person unclean on suspicion alone, but isolated him for seven days and observed his state.

In verse 32, too, the priest checks the following three things again.

—Has the scale not spread?

—Has no yellow hair appeared?

—Is it not deeper than the skin?

The saints, too, must distinguish a momentary mistake from a stubborn sin rooted in the heart. One must not define the whole

of a person as evil because he has fallen once, nor leave it alone because it is a small sign. Nor are rumor and impression grounds for concluding about faith. Just as the priest followed the standard of God and the appointed time, the final standard today, too, is not an individual's intuition or authority, but the word of God and the gospel.

5. The reason for shaving the hair around the sore

Verse 33 prescribes as follows.

"He shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave"

Shaving the surrounding hair while leaving the sore is a measure to observe clearly the boundary and the change without damaging the wound. Spiritually, too, we can think of the meaning that sin must not be covered or merely changed in form, but exposed exactly before the light of the word.

People use various excuses to hide sin.

"Other people do the same."

"I could not help it because of my circumstances."

"I am just this kind of person."

"I have already received the remission of sins, so sin in daily life does not matter."

But the gospel does not let one rationalize sin. It makes one acknowledge sin honestly and believe how Jesus bore and washed away that sin. The purpose of examining oneself within the gospel is not to be condemned again, but to abandon falsehood and walk in the truth.

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6. The sore was examined for two periods of seven days

If after the first seven days the sore had not spread, there was no yellow hair, and it was not deeper than the skin, He had the hair shaved except for the sore and the person isolated again for seven days.

The priest did not finish with the first examination, but examined the sore again after the appointed period had passed. If at the next examination, too, the scale had not spread and was not deeper than the skin, he pronounced the person clean and had him wash his clothes. Whether one was clean was pronounced according to the conditions God had appointed.

The One who resolves the sins of the saints is God. When one has committed sin, one must acknowledge the wrong, and ruminate on and believe the word that Jesus has already resolved that sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

7. If it has not spread and is not deep, he declares it clean

Verse 34 has the priest pronounce the person clean and have him wash his clothes if even after the second seven days the disease has not spread and is not deeper than the skin. It was not that the priest healed him, but that he declared cleanness according to the standard of God. In the gospel, too, it is not that a sinner becomes clean by his own efforts, but that God washes away sin through Jesus Christ and declares him clean.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John,

received the punishment of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ" (1 John 5:6).

This cleanness is not a temporary cleanness obtained again by offering a new sacrifice each time.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

In the ordinance of washing one's clothes, we can look at the faith by which the saints acknowledge their wrong and wash their hearts with the gospel. Setting right one's life by believing in Jesus, who bore that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross, is not a merit that completes salvation, but what a person who has already been saved is to do.

8. The case in which it spreads again after one has been pronounced clean

Verses 35–36 are a very realistic word.

"But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing,"

If the disease spread even after the verdict of clean, he pronounced the person unclean without needing to look again for yellow hair. For the present spreading itself was sufficient evidence.

When applying this from the standpoint of the gospel, one must not read it as meaning that "a saved person loses his salvation again if he sins." The status of salvation obtained by the atonement Jesus Christ accomplished once and for all, and the matter of dealing with sin in life after being saved, must be

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distinguished.

The saints, too, can do wrong, but if they rationalize it and spread it, they make the community sick. Spreading resentment and gathering people to one's side, spreading false teaching or making people take lewdness and greed lightly, and dividing the community with gossip and dispute fall under this.

An individual's falling must be confessed and turned from within the gospel. Making it into an ideology or a claim and drawing other people into the same sin must be dealt with even more strictly. However, the church's exhortation and discipline, too, must be based not on rumor or emotion, but on the clear word and facts, and on love aimed at restoration.

9. Black hair growing again is evidence of recovery

Verse 37 concludes as follows.

"There is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He is clean"

The condition of the verdict in verse 37 is the case in which the scale has not spread and black hair has grown in it.

In the case in which the scale stayed as it was and black hair had grown, the priest had to confirm that the person had healed and pronounce him clean. He did not keep giving the same verdict merely on the grounds that the person had been unclean before, but examined the present state according to the standard God had spoken.

The remission of the saints' sins, too, lies in believing the word of God. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The person who believes this gospel is justified not by his own deeds but by the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Conclusion

If we sum up this text from the perspective of the gospel, it is as follows.

First, since sin comes out of the heart, the fundamental problem is not solved by outward resolution alone.

Second, one must expose oneself before the word that examines the inner being of a person, and must not hide or rationalize sin.

Third, the law and the priest distinguish uncleanness, but the One who fundamentally cleanses is Jesus Christ.

Fourth, our problem of sin has been resolved by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death, and the Holy Spirit testifies of this.

Fifth, even though one has received the eternal remission of sins, one must not leave sin alone, but acknowledge it, believe the gospel, and set right one's actions and relationships.

Sixth, one must not draw in other people in order to rationalize one's wrong and make the community sick.

Seventh, one must believe the word of God that has washed away one's sins. The ground of the remission of sins lies not in how much one's actions have changed, but in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Therefore the question the saints must ask before this word is not simply, "Have I committed a great sin?"

"Am I not hiding a sin that is growing within me?"

"Am I not rationalizing that sin and spreading it to other people?"

"Am I accepting the examination of the word of God?"

"Am I returning to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has resolved my sins?"

"Am I relying on the salvation Jesus accomplished rather than on my own deeds?"

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In Leviticus 13:29–37, the priest examined the sore and pronounced whether one was clean according to the standard God appointed. The saints, too, must not take sin lightly by their own thinking or justify themselves, but acknowledge sin before the word. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who has cleansed us from sin, and must not draw other people into the same sin.

Leviticus 13:38–46—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The broad flow of the text

Leviticus 13:38–46 distinguishes three things.

—Not everyone is unclean just because there are white spots on the skin.

—A bald head whose hair has fallen out is not unclean in itself either.

—But if clear signs of disease appear, the person is pronounced unclean and isolated outside the camp.

Literally, this is the ceremonial ordinance of cleansing of ancient Israel. It is not a word saying that a skin disease or hair loss arose because of that person's personal sin. Jesus, too, looking at the man blind from birth, said, *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned" (John 9:3)*.

Therefore one must not condemn people by connecting illness, disability, or appearance directly with sin. However, through the structure of the text—cleanness and uncleanness, inside the camp and outside the camp—we can look at the sin of man and the

salvation Christ accomplished from the standpoint of the gospel.

2. Not everything is unclean just because it is a white spot

Verses 38–39.

"If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, specifically white bright spots, then the priest shall look; and indeed if the bright spots on the skin of the body are dull white, it is a white spot that grows on the skin. He is clean."

If the white bright spots were dull white and there were no signs of disease, the priest pronounced the person clean. He did not call the person unclean merely because the color had changed, but distinguished a sore from a mere change of the skin according to the standard of God.

This gives an important principle for spiritual discernment as well. Just because an insufficiency or an appearance different from others is seen in a person, that is not in itself sin.

—Having a quiet personality does not mean having no faith.

—Being poor at speaking does not mean not having the Holy Spirit.

—Looking different does not make one an unclean person.

—One cannot say that a person is cursed by God because he has an illness or a disability.

—One cannot conclude that a person has abandoned the gospel because he has been discouraged for a time.

What the Bible defines as sin must be called sin, and one must not make one's tastes and prejudices the standard of God. One must not claim, on the grounds of believing the gospel, to know a person's inner being carelessly, or brand a person as unclean over a small difference.

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3. Baldness is not unclean

Verses 40–41 are very clear.

"As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he is bald, but he is clean. He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he is bald on the forehead, but he is clean."

Being bald or bald on the forehead is in itself neither evidence of disease nor a cause of uncleanness. God distinguished as a normal state an outward change that people might mistake for disease.

Applied spiritually, a person's appearance, age, constitution, economic circumstances, level of education, and social standing are not the standard that decides cleanness or uncleanness before God. A person does not receive the remission of sins because his appearance is neat or because he has a long religious career. He receives it only by believing in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

Conversely, even if a person looks beautiful and devout on the outside, if sin remains as it is in his heart, the outward form cannot make that person clean. God is not One who looks at whether one has hair or not; He looks at the heart of a person.

One must not pronounce unclean by one's own thinking what God has said is clean. One must take the word of God, rather than a person's appearance, as the standard.

4. The problem is not appearance but an actual sore

In verses 42–44 the situation changes.

"And if there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white sore, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead."

Baldness itself is clean, but if a sore appears on that part, it must be examined. Verse 43 has the priest examine whether the bright spot is like leprosy breaking out on the skin, and if it is a clear sore, verse 44 has him pronounce the person unclean.

What must be thought of here from the standpoint of the gospel is the clarity of sin. Sin is not the same as a person's individuality or weakness.

—Having a different temperament and hating are different.

—A mistake and a deliberate lie are different.

—A difference of opinion and inciting people for the purpose of dispute are different.

—Falling because of weakness and rationalizing sin as right are different.

—Asking questions because one does not understand the gospel well and deliberately distorting the gospel are different.

One must not label every insufficiency as sin, but neither must one shield what God has called sin as mere individuality or weakness. The standard for distinguishing *"clean"* and *"unclean"* is not a person's feelings but the word of God.

5. What the sore arising on the head shows

Verse 44 says, *"His sore is on his head."* The priest examined the sore arising on the head and pronounced the person unclean according to the standard God had appointed.

In a person's sin, too, one must examine not only the actions revealed on the outside, but also the thoughts and judgments of the heart that rationalize that sin.

"It is all because of other people that I have become like this."

"I have special circumstances, so it is all right."

"I have believed the gospel, so it does not matter how I live."

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"Because I am right, I do not need to listen to the exhortation of the community."

Such thoughts, which do not acknowledge sin as sin, make a person even more stubborn. The fact of having committed sin is a problem, but teaching it as right and propagating it to other people is an even greater problem.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that covers sin and says it is all right. It is the gospel that makes one acknowledge how deep and serious sin is, and makes one believe how Jesus bore and washed away all those sins.

6. "*Unclean! Unclean!*"—the public acknowledgment of one's own state

In verse 45, the person pronounced unclean had to do as follows.

"Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'"

Tearing one's clothes and baring one's head express grief and mourning, and covering one's mustache and crying *"Unclean!"* expresses a warning that makes known one's ceremonial uncleanness and prevents contact. It is not a public confession that one is morally more evil than others.

But from the standpoint of the gospel, it makes us think of the attitude of not hiding one's own spiritual reality. Before receiving the remission of sins, a person must acknowledge before God that he is a sinner. If one pretends to have no sin, or hides sin with the fact that one's deeds are a little good, one will not seek the grace of salvation.

The acknowledgment *"Unclean!"* is not meant to end in

despair. It is the starting point for acknowledging that one has no ability to make oneself clean, and for seeking the One who can cleanse.

A patient in Mark came before Jesus and confessed as follows.

"If You are willing, You can make me clean" (Mark 1:40).

He did not deny his own uncleanness, and at the same time he did not doubt the power of Jesus either. At this, Jesus was moved with compassion for him, touched him, and said.

"I am willing; be cleansed" (Mark 1:41).

The priest of the law could diagnose the disease, but Jesus actually cleansed the unclean person. This is the difference between the diagnosis of the law and the salvation of the gospel.

7. The person who had to live alone and dwell outside the camp

Verse 46.

"He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp."

Inside the camp was where the tabernacle of God and the community of Israel were. The person pronounced unclean could not take part in that life and, separated from his family and the worshiping community, had to undergo severance and loneliness in addition to the pain of the disease.

This picture becomes a picture that shows the spiritual result that sin brings. Sin divides between God and man, and breaks the relationship between one person and another.

—Lies cut off trust.

—Lewdness destroys covenants and relationships.

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—Greed makes one use one's neighbor.

—Pride makes one refuse the exhortation of the word.

—Hatred and dispute divide the community.

A sinner cannot enter into the presence of the holy God by his own strength. Nor can he wash himself by good deeds or religious zeal and return inside the camp. First, a way of becoming clean is needed.

8. Jesus, who came to man driven outside the camp

In Leviticus, the unclean person dwelt outside the camp. But in the New Testament, Jesus not only cleanses, but also Himself suffered outside the gate.

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

Jesus paid in their place the shame and judgment of the people who had to be driven out of fellowship with God because of sin. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, and received in their place on the Cross the punishment of sin that sinners should have received.

The patient of Leviticus cried *"Unclean!"* so that no one would come near, but Jesus did not avoid him; He touched him and said, *"Be cleansed."* He cleansed the unclean person with His own cleanness.

9. The cleanness accomplished by the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The event in which Jesus cleansed the patient does not stop at physical healing, but shows the authority of Christ, who saves

sinners.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus first fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus bore the sin of mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and received the punishment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross. And by rising again from death He overcame sin and death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is true.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:8).

Therefore a sinner does not become clean little by little through his own good deeds or repeated prayers of repentance. He receives the remission of sins by believing in his heart the fact that Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John, and received its punishment with the blood of the Cross.

That cleanness is not imperfect or temporary.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

The person who has believed the gospel is no longer a person who must cry *"Unclean!"* forever toward his own conscience. Looking at his own deeds alone, he is still lacking, but because he believes in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished, he has become a clean, righteous person before God.

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10. Even after being saved, one does not take uncleanness lightly

Having received the remission of sins does not mean that one may disregard sin in daily life. Rather, because one knows what kind of sinner one was and at what price the Lord has cleansed one, one guards against sin all the more.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live as follows.

First, one must not call unclean, by outward form and prejudice, a person whom God has called clean.

Second, one must acknowledge one's wrong, believe in the baptism that Jesus, who bore even that sin, received from John, and in the Cross, and turn back.

Third, one must not draw people into complaint, greed, and dispute and make the community sick.

Fourth, one must not make the ordinance of isolation of ancient Israel a command to reject people today for illness or appearance.

Fifth, just as Jesus cleansed the unclean person, the church's exhortation and discernment, too, must be aimed at repentance and restoration.

Conclusion

Leviticus 13:38–46 does not call all white spots and hair loss unclean, but distinguishes normal differences from an actual sore. The saints, too, must not judge hastily by appearance and circumstances, and yet must honestly acknowledge their own sin before the word. Sin brings severance from God and from the community, and a sinner cannot recover cleanness by his own strength.

But Jesus went out of the camp, outside the gate, and bore our shame and judgment. Jesus made sinners completely clean by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

The person who believes the gospel is one of the clean people who have entered into God through the salvation of Christ. Within that grace, one must not hide or spread sin, must not condemn people for their appearance or illness, and must live with the heart of Jesus, who first stretched out His hand to the unclean person.

Leviticus 13:47–51—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of the text

Leviticus 13:47–51 deals with contamination that arises not in a person's skin but in garments and leather goods. The text calls this a *"leprous plague,"* but one must not conclude that it means a particular modern disease that occurs in people was transferred to clothes. God defined a decaying plague appearing on garments and leather in the language of the law of cleansing.

The flow of this word is as follows.

—A strange plague appears on a garment or on leather.

—The owner does not judge arbitrarily, but shows it to the priest.

—The priest isolates it for seven days.

—After seven days he examines again whether the plague has spread.

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—If it has spread, it is *"an active leprosy"* and is pronounced unclean.

This passage concentrates on the stage of distinguishing the existence of contamination and whether it spreads, rather than yet explaining the method of making it clean.

2. The reason He had not only people but even garments examined

Verses 47–48.

"Also, if a garment has a leprous plague in it, whether it is a woolen garment or a linen garment, whether it is in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather,"

Before, the skin was examined, but now He has the priest examine a plague on the woolen and linen garments people wear and use every day, on the warp and woof of linen or wool, and on leather and leather goods. The cleanness of the holy people was not limited to the time of worship or to the body, but extended even to the living environment and the articles of daily use.

From the standpoint of the gospel, too, one must examine before God one's home and economic life, one's words and human relationships, one's workplace and business, the internet and media, church service and office, and even one's repeated personal habits.

The sin of the heart leaves traces in life. Greed appears in the use of money, pride in the attitude with which one treats people, and lewdness in what one looks at and in relationships, and hatred and envy spread to the community through words and rumors.

3. The cleanness of garments and the life of the saints

God had the priest examine even a plague arising on the garments the people wore and used. Through this ordinance we can examine our lives before the word of God.

Concerning how the saints must live, Romans 13:14 says as follows.

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

Meanwhile, Revelation 7:14 says that the saved have been made clean by the blood of the Lamb.

"Washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"

What cleanses sinners is the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. The saints must believe in that grace and not live according to the lusts of the flesh. Setting right one's life is not a merit for obtaining the remission of sins, but the matter of a saved person living following the Lord.

4. A greenish or reddish plague—contamination that has begun to be visible

Verse 49.

"And if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest."

When a greenish or reddish plague arose on a garment, leather, or the like, the priest examined it, kept it for seven days, and then checked again whether it had spread.

From the standpoint of the gospel, too, the sin in the heart

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reveals signs. Greed appears in one's conduct toward money, hatred in words, pride in refusing exhortation, and lewdness in what one looks at and in one's conduct. If one pursues only one's own gain while claiming to believe the gospel, the fruit is revealed as time passes.

Just as the plague was only a sign to be examined and not the final verdict, a saint's momentary mistake and an entrenched habit of sin must also be carefully distinguished.

5. Showing it to the priest—one's own judgment is not the standard

When a plague appeared, the owner had to show it to the priest without deciding "it is all right" or "*unclean.*" The standard lies not in an individual's feelings or convenience but in God. People easily judge their own problems as follows.

"Everyone does this much."

"I have not harmed other people, so it is all right."

"I have believed the gospel, so daily life is not important."

"My intentions were good, so it is not wrong."

Thus people can minimize or rationalize their own sin. That is why one must look at oneself in the light of the word of God. The servants of God must discern sin and faith by the word and preach the gospel, and must rebuke and restrain the spreading of sin to other people. An individual's authority or feelings must not take the place of the word of God.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must believe the word of God rather than the feelings that condemn themselves or the thoughts that call themselves righteous. Looking at their own deeds, they are lacking, but the status of salvation must be judged by the gospel Jesus

accomplished, and the wrongs in daily life must be honestly corrected by receiving the rebuke of the word.

6. Keeping it for seven days—the discernment that avoids hasty conclusions

Verse 50.

"The priest shall examine the plague and isolate that which has the plague seven days."

To *"isolate"* means not that the garment continued to be used, but that it was set apart from other things, kept apart, and observed. The priest did not immediately destroy it or leave it alone, but stopped its use for a certain period and confirmed the change.

It is the discernment that does not condemn on suspicion alone or leave a sign alone, but separates the problem from other areas and prevents its spread, and gives the final verdict after confirming the evidence that time reveals.

In daily life, too, there are times when it is not clear whether some habit is spiritually harmful. At such times, rather than continuing it and making excuses, one needs to stop for the time being and examine it before the word.

If some gathering or relationship keeps weakening one's faith, one can keep one's distance for a while and look at its fruit. If one's use of media drags one's heart into lewdness or greed, one must stop using it and examine it. If a dishonest element is suspected in one's way of doing business, one must stop and check rather than proceed as it is.

There is no need to apply the period of seven days literally to every modern situation. The core is to confirm the nature of the problem through sufficient time and objective observation.

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7. The meaning of examining even the warp and the woof

In verses 48 and 51 appear the *"warp"* and *"woof"* of cloth. God commanded that a plague arising not only in garments but also in the warp and woof of linen or wool, and in leather and things made of leather, be shown to the priest. After seven days the priest examined whether that plague had spread.

The problem of the saints' sin, too, must be examined before the word of God. The sin of the heart does not disappear just because one corrects the appearance seen by other people. One must acknowledge the fact that sin comes out of a person's heart, and believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. When one discovers sin, one must not try to hide it with outward appearance, but believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has resolved even that sin.

8. Whether it had spread was the decisive standard

In verse 51 the priest examines again after seven days.

"If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather or in anything made of leather, the plague is an active leprosy. It is unclean"

That the plague had spread after seven days is the decisive standard showing that the contamination was continuing to expand within the material. Sin, too, spreads to other areas of life if one does not acknowledge a small complaint or a private desire but rationalizes it.

—A lie spreads into repeated deceit, and resentment into

gossip and forming factions.
—A desire for money leads to dishonest dealings, and a lewd gaze to a continuing habit.
—The attitude of not acknowledging one's wrong grows into a heart that opposes the word and the church.

Also, sin does not end with the individual alone. To justify one's own sin, one draws in other people. Saying, "You do the same," or "Everyone lives that way, so what is the problem?" one spreads the same sin to the home, the church, and society.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not, when he has committed sin, make other people take his side and rationalize the sin. He must acknowledge his own wrong before God and people, believe in the salvation of Jesus, who bore even that sin, and turn from the wrong action.

9. The verdict of *"an active leprosy"*

The word *"active"* in verse 51 does not simply mean that the plague is unpleasant to look at. It means that persistence and expansion—not disappearing even after time has passed, and spreading out within the material—have been confirmed.

The saints' weakness and a sin stubbornly held on to must be distinguished. The direction of one who, even when he falls, grieves in his heart, acknowledges it before the word, holds on to the gospel, and tries to turn, is different from the serious contamination of justifying sin and even teaching it to other people.

However, one must not readily brand other people *"active"* on the basis of this text. Even the priest confirmed the objective evidence of spreading after watching for seven days. The church

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today, too, must not be in a hurry to condemn or exclude a person. It must examine together the facts and the word, sufficient time, the explanation of the person concerned, and the possibility of restoration.

10. The law diagnoses contamination but cannot remove it

Even when the priest examined the contamination and pronounced it unclean, the examination itself did not remove the contamination. The law, too, exposes sin and its depth, but does not wash it away. The One who actually cleanses sinners is Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:26 says as follows about how the Lord sanctifies the church.

"That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word"

Here the core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is revealed. When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

Therefore a sinner becomes clean not because he has himself mended the garment of his own conduct. It is because he believes the fact that Jesus Christ bore all sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

11. The cleanness of salvation and the cleanness of life must be distinguished

The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the eternal remission of sins through the completed salvation of Jesus.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

This is a word concerning the status of salvation, and the person who believes in Jesus, who bore all sins, is clean before God. Correcting one's life is not for being saved again, but for living as befits the grace of having already been saved.

Even a saved saint may have wrong habits remaining. Lies, anger, greed, lewdness, laziness, and a self-centered attitude can appear in his life. At such times the saint must not say, "I am righteous, so there is no problem at all."

One must hold on to the following two facts together.

—Because Jesus has washed away all my sins forever, I am a righteous person before God.

—But the wrongs that have appeared in my life must be acknowledged before the word and corrected.

The gospel sets one free from condemnation, but does not let one take sin lightly. Because one knows the grace of the Lord, it makes one hate sin and live rightly.

12. Beyond the individual, the home and the church must also be examined

Garments and leather are a part of the life a person lives, wearing and using them. So this word makes one examine not only the individual's heart but also one's way of life and even

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the culture of the community.

If lies and abusive language are repeated in the home, the children learn them. If gossip and taking sides are tolerated in the church, that becomes the culture of the community. If a leader uses his authority to hide wrong and the people around him defend it, the contamination spreads into the organization.

What is needed at such times is not covering it up so that it looks quiet on the outside. One must expose the problem before the word, stop its use and spread for a while, and examine whether it is actually spreading.

But the purpose of dealing with the problem must lie not in removing people, but in preventing the spread of sin and restoring people and the community. The text, too, did not discard every garment from the start, but first had it isolated and observed.

Conclusion

Leviticus 13:47–51 shows that sin and uncleanness can affect not only the heart but also the areas of life. A plague on a garment was neither discarded immediately nor left alone, but shown to the priest and isolated and observed for seven days, and if spreading was confirmed, it was pronounced active.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must examine their lives in this way.

—Is the desire of my heart not hardening into a habit of life?

—Are my words and actions not spreading sin to other people?

—Can I stop a suspected matter for a while and examine it before the word?

—Am I not drawing in other people in order to rationalize

my wrong?

—Do I seek my salvation in deeds, or in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross?

The law exposes contamination, but Jesus Christ cleanses sinners. Jesus bore our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this gospel of the water and the blood.

The person who believes the gospel does not try to become clean by his own deeds, and prevents the spread of sin within the cleanness he has already received. One must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, not plan sin for the desires of the flesh, and keep one's home, relationships, church, and daily life before the word.

Leviticus 13:52–59—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of the text

Leviticus 13:52–59 prescribes how the contamination that has appeared in garments and leather goods is to be finally judged and dealt with. In the preceding passage, the priest isolated the suspicious article for seven days. Now he examines it again and deals with it in four ways according to the result.

—A plague that has spread: the whole article is burned.

—If, after it has first been washed and kept another seven days, the color of the plague has still not changed, it is burned.

—If the plague has faded, only the contaminated part is torn out.

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—If the plague has completely disappeared, it is washed again and made clean.

This is the actual ordinance of cleansing for garments in ancient Israel. Today one must not carelessly apply it to people or the church by literally likening them to a garment and saying, "It must be burned," or "it must be cut out." But at the level of the persistence of sin, the examination of the word, the judgment of God, the cleansing accomplished in Christ, and the ordering of the saved saint's life, one can receive a deep lesson of the gospel.

2. Contamination that had spread had to be burned

Verse 52.

"He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, for it is an active leprosy; the garment shall be burned in the fire."

If the plague had spread after seven days, it was pronounced *"an active leprosy,"* in which decay continues, and the whole article was burned. Even if one takes sin lightly or hides it, the judgment of God does not disappear, and God does not take lightly the sin that spreads to the whole of life and to other people.

—Falsehood becoming a way of life, and greed dominating business and relationships

—Lewdness spreading into thoughts, habits, and relationships, and resentment into gossip and forming factions

—Spreading wrong doctrine in the community, or hiding sin by office and authority

God does not regard such spreading of sin as a mere mistake. If one keeps rationalizing and propagating sin, one will in the end stand before the judgment of God.

3. Burning shows an uncompromising judgment on sin

If an active plague had spread, even a garment that was expensive or precious because it had long been worn had to be burned. In dealing with sin, too, the human attachment that cannot let go because of benefit or familiarity cannot be the standard.

"If I cut off this relationship, I will suffer loss."

"Even if this method is wrong, I can make money."

"This habit is so old that I cannot help it."

"This person is in an important position, so his wrong must be covered up."

But the judgment of God on sin does not change because of the price or usefulness of its object. What God has called unclean is unclean even if it looks beneficial to man.

Yet this does not mean that the saints must fight against sin and complete the remission of sins by their own strength. The fundamental judgment on sin was borne by Jesus Christ on the Cross. Because the Lord received in our place the punishment of sin we should have received, the believer has escaped from the condemnation of God.

4. Not having spread does not immediately mean clean

Verses 53–54.

"But if the priest examines it, and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which is the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days."

Not having spread was a good sign, but it could not

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immediately be declared clean.

The priest did not end the verdict with the fact alone that it had not spread. As God commanded, he had it washed, and had to examine it again after seven days.

The remission of sins is not obtained by a person restraining sin for a while or correcting his own appearance. One must believe in Jesus, who bore our sins, and in the judgment He received. The saints must acknowledge their wrong without hiding it, and receive the washing of the heart by the word of the salvation already accomplished.

5. "*Wash*"—the process of exposing and washing before the word

In verse 54 the priest commands that the article with the plague be washed. The saints, too, when they discover their own wrong, must acknowledge that sin and believe the word of the gospel that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of sin on the Cross.

With this faith one must wash one's heart and also turn from a wrong life. Ephesians says.

"That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26).

The word reveals the judgment of God instead of the excuses that rationalize sin. One must look at one's own thoughts and actions in its light, acknowledge sin, and believe that Jesus has dealt with that sin.

Not "Do I think I am right?" but

"What does God say?" is what one must ask.

The saints are not saved again; they believe in the eternal remission of sins already received and set right their wrong life.

6. If it remains the same even after being washed

Verse 55.

"Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed if the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it is unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire"

If the color had not changed even after washing, it was unclean even if it had not spread. God looked not only at spreading but also at persistence.

The priest saw that the color of the plague had not changed even after washing, and pronounced it unclean. Even if it had not spread, in this case he had to follow the command of God to burn it.

People, too, cannot remove sin by their own efforts alone. One does not receive the remission of sins by stopping the wrongs revealed on the outside or by adding religious acts. One must acknowledge one's sin and believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

7. *"Whether the damage is outside or inside"*

The latter part of verse 55 says as follows.

"It continues eating away, whether the damage is outside or inside"

Whether the contamination was on the outside or on the inside, the verdict was the same. In a person's sin, too, not only what is public is sin; even the thoughts and desires that no one knows are exposed before God.

People can manage their outward appearance. They can

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attend worship, serve, speak gently, and use devout expressions. But inwardly they can serve honor, money, and lust.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a religion that tidies up only the outward appearance. It is the gospel that reveals the fundamental sin in a person's heart, and makes one believe the fact that all those sins were passed on to Jesus Christ.

8. When the plague had faded, that part was removed

Verse 56.

"If the priest examines it, and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather."

If the plague had faded after washing, He had the part with the plague torn out of the garment or leather, or the warp or woof. The method of dealing with it differed from the case in which He commanded burning in the preceding verse.

The priest did not decide the method of dealing with it by his own thinking, but had to follow the ordinance God commanded according to the state of the plague.

When the saints discover a wrong in their lives, they must acknowledge that sin and turn from it. They must wash their hearts with the faith that Jesus has already remitted the sin, and must not rationalize their own wrong and have other people take part in the same sin.

9. If the plague appeared again, it had to be burned

Verse 57.

"But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a spreading plague; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague."

If the plague was seen again even after the part with the plague had been torn out, He had it pronounced a spreading plague and had the article burned. He did not leave a plague that had reappeared as it was on the grounds that the plague had earlier faded.

Suppressing sin and the remission of sins are different. Even if one restrains one's actions by resolution, training, and efforts to keep the law, sin keeps coming out of the heart, so one cannot save oneself. Jesus Christ must deal with sin fundamentally.

Even a saved saint, when he has done wrong, must acknowledge that sin. He must believe the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross, and must not rationalize his own sin and spread it to other people.

10. If the plague has completely disappeared

Verse 58.

"And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean."

If the plague had completely disappeared, the article was not burned but could be washed again and used. God opened the way of restoration, and did not keep calling unclean what had become clean.

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The saints are justified because they believe in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. One must not judge the remission of sins by looking at one's own deeds, but believe the word of God, who has washed away our sins.

Therefore the assurance of the remission of sins and exhortation concerning life must be distinguished. A saint who has done wrong must acknowledge that sin and turn from it, but must not put forward his own deeds as merit in order to obtain the remission of sins.

In the ordinance of washing again, one can look at the matter of the saints ruminating on and believing the remission of sins already accomplished and washing their hearts. The remission of sins in the New Testament was completed by the once-and-for-all atonement.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Therefore the saints do not try to be saved again, but believe in the completed gospel and wash away and set right the wrongs of life.

11. The fundamental washing the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives

However many times a garment is washed, the sin in the human heart does not disappear. What washes away the sin of the heart is the faith that believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said as follows.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John. And bearing that sin, He was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

Revelation says as follows, referring to the saved.

"Washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

This does not mean that actual cloth is laundered with blood, but that sinners have been made completely clean by the vicarious atonement of Christ. Unlike the world's methods of washing, the gospel of the water and the Spirit washes away all the sins of the believer forever.

12. The ordinance that pronounces what is clean and unclean

The last verse, verse 59, sums up this whole passage.

"'This is the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean.'"

This ordinance does not condemn unconditionally, but distinguishes cleanness from uncleanness. What had spread or whose color remained as it was, was unclean; what had faded had that part removed; and what had completely disappeared was washed again and made clean.

The discernment of the gospel must be just as exact.

—One must not call sin what is not sin.

—Nor must one cover what is sin with the word weakness.

—One must not make the improvement of one's own deeds

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the ground of the remission of sins.

—One must not put one's own judgment ahead of the word that Jesus has washed away sin.

—Nor must one confuse a person's salvation with the wrongs in that person's life.

13. The application given to the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Before this word, the saints must examine the following.

First, am I not leaving a repeated sin alone, saying, "That is just how I am"?

Second, am I acknowledging my sin before God without hiding or rationalizing it?

Third, do I believe the word that Jesus resolved even that sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross?

Fourth, am I not drawing in other people in order to rationalize my own wrong?

Fifth, am I not doubting salvation itself because of sin in daily life and thinking that I have become a sinner again?

Sixth, conversely, am I not using the faith that I have received the eternal remission of sins to justify the desires of the flesh?

The saints who believe the gospel must *"put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:14)*. It is not that they try to become righteous by their own deeds, but that, because they have already put on the righteousness of Christ, they must live as befits that grace.

Conclusion

Leviticus 13:52–59 distinguishes what has spread from what remains as it was, and what has faded from what has completely disappeared. Active contamination was burned however precious it was, but a faded part was removed, and when the plague had disappeared, the article was washed again and made clean. While dealing strictly with sin and uncleanness, He opened the way of restoration.

The conclusion of the gospel to which all these ordinances point is that sin cannot be completely washed away by human effort. Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of fire for those sins on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the eternal remission of sins through the salvation Jesus accomplished. Whenever the saints discover a wrong in their lives, they must acknowledge that sin, and ruminate on and believe the word that the Lord has already resolved even that sin. With that faith they must turn from the wrong way, and must not draw other people into the same sin. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Lay down your own righteousness and believe in the Lord's cleansing

< Leviticus 13:1-23 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body like a leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean. But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the sore seven days. And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore appears to be as it was, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days. Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore has faded, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again. And if the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the

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skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy. When the leprous sore is on a person, then he shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the swelling on the skin is white, and it has turned the hair white, and there is a spot of raw flesh in the swelling, it is an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he is unclean. And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the one who has the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, then the priest shall consider; and indeed if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. It has all turned white. He is clean. But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. And the priest shall examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean; for the raw flesh is unclean. It is leprosy. Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. And the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. He is clean. If the body develops a boil in the skin, and it is healed, and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest; and if, when the priest sees it, it indeed appears deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore which has broken out of the boil. But if the priest examines it, and indeed there are no white hairs in it, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days; and if it should at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore. But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread, it is the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean."

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Dear beloved saints, in today's word appears the ordinance by which the priest examines a person's skin and pronounces whether he is clean or unclean. He had the priest examine in detail what had risen, whether the color of the hair had changed, what the sore was like, and whether the disease had spread. In some cases He had him pronounce immediately, and in some cases He had him wait seven days and then examine again.

As we read this word, there are also passages that feel different from our thinking. He says that the person whose leprosy has spread over his whole body and has all turned white is clean, while He says that when raw flesh appears he is unclean. He says that even if a scar remains in the place where a boil had been, if it has not spread he is clean. God did not lump all the symptoms together and give the same verdict.

Before this word we must look back on our own spiritual state. On what basis do I think I am clean before God? Is it conduct better than that of other people? Is it the life of faith I have lived for a long time? Or is it the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit?

Through today's word let us look together at how important it is to know our sins rightly before God and to believe rightly the remission of sins God has given.

We must not put our own judgment first but stand before the word

In verses 1–2, God spoke to Moses and Aaron and commanded that a person in whose skin an abnormality had appeared be brought to Aaron or to one of his sons the priests.

The matter did not end with the patient declaring himself clean. The word of the people around him that he looked all right

could not be the basis of the verdict either. He had to be examined by the priest according to the word God had appointed.

In the matter of sin, too, we easily put our own thinking first. 'I have not done great harm to others. I have lived conscientiously. With this much, God will also acknowledge me.' But the standard that determines what righteousness saves a person, and whether a person has sin, is the word of God.

Verse 3 says this: *"The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean."*

The priest did not pronounce by looking at the patient's reputation or position. He had to examine the evidence God had spoken of. When we hear the word, we too must not try to hide our own appearance. We must hear what God says about our hearts.

Jesus also said in Mark 7:21–23, *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*

This word shows where the root of sin lies. We think only of the few wrongs revealed in our actions, but the Lord spoke of the heart from which those wrongs come. It is not that the root of sin came into being only when the sin was revealed outwardly. The evil that is in the heart has come out in action.

Therefore the person who wants to receive the remission of sins must not stop at making excuses for a few of his actions. 'Lord, when I look at myself in the light of the word, there is this sin in me. I am a person who cannot make myself clean.' We must acknowledge the word in this way.

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This does not mean that we are to judge a person who has a disease in the flesh as a greater sinner than other people. Jesus, too, did not conclude that the man blind from birth was so because of his own sin or that of his parents. We read this word not in order to point a finger at other people, but in order to know our own sins and the salvation of the Lord.

There is discernment in the word that required him to wait seven days

From verse 4 on appear the cases in which the person was not pronounced immediately to have leprosy. If the bright spot on the skin was white but not deeper than the skin, and the hair had not turned white, the priest had the person isolated for seven days. It was to have him stay apart for a fixed period and observe the course of the disease.

In verse 5, if on examination after seven days the sore had not changed and the disease had not spread, He had him isolated for another seven days. And in verse 6 He speaks of the verdict after that: *"Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore has faded, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean."*

He did not confirm the person to be unclean on the mere fact that something had risen at first. God had the priest wait and examine again. If the sore had faded and had not spread, He had him pronounced clean and had him wash his clothes.

Conversely, in verses 7–8 He said that if the disease spread after the person had been shown to the priest, he had to be examined again. One could not look only at the first appearance and ignore the change that came afterward.

Here there is a word that makes us look back on our attitude toward sin. Even a saved saint is weak and can do wrong. At that time he must acknowledge his own wrong, and engrave again in his heart the word of the gospel, how the Lord bore even that sin.

But insisting that one's own wrong is right and drawing other people into the same sin must be dealt with sternly. 'I do this too, so you may do it as well. I have received the remission of sins, so it does not matter.' We must not spread sin with such thinking.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that has resolved our sins. Therefore the person who believes this gospel has no reason to hide or rationalize sin. He must acknowledge his wrong and turn back, and help other saints also to rely on the righteousness of the Lord. The Church is not a place where sin is justified together, but a place where the Lord who bore sin is believed in and followed together.

We must see the deeper problem rather than a few revealed sins

Verses 9–11 speak of the case in which a white swelling has risen, the hair has turned white, and raw flesh has appeared. God called this an old leprosy and had the person pronounced unclean.

The word of verse 11 that says *"shall not isolate him, for he is unclean"* means that there was no need to wait for a verdict as in the unclear cases before. It was because the evidence for pronouncing him unclean had already been revealed.

When we hear the word of God, too, our own appearance, for which we can no longer make excuses, is revealed. We thought, 'If only I handle this one matter well, I will become an all right person,' but the same heart rises up again. When we suppress covetousness, pride appears, and when we try to hide pride, the

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heart that deceives other people is sometimes revealed.

Why is this so? It is because we have the root that commits sin. We are people born with sin as the descendants of Adam. Therefore we cannot become perfectly righteous before God by correcting a few wrongs with our own strength.

Doing good is necessary. Correcting wrong conduct is also necessary. But such efforts cannot become the power of redemption that removes our sins. In order to resolve the sins already committed and the problem of the sin seated deep in the heart, a Savior is needed.

God gave us the word that reveals our sins in order to make us know ourselves as those who need salvation. To the person who knows that he cannot save himself by his own strength, how urgent and precious is the salvation of Jesus Christ!

Think of the meaning of His saying that the person whose whole body has turned white is clean

Verses 12–13 are the word we must examine deeply in today's passage: *"If leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the one who has the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, then the priest shall consider; and indeed if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. It has all turned white. He is clean"*

It is the word to pronounce clean the person over whom the leprosy has spread from head to foot and who has all turned white. Think of this together with the gospel of the remission of sins.

If a person thinks he has even a little righteousness to put forward, he holds on to it. 'I am on the whole a good person, but

there have been a few mistakes. If God helps me only with that part, I can do the rest myself.' This is how he thinks.

But when he comes to know himself wholly before the word of God, what he says changes.

'Lord, I am not a person who can be saved if only I correct a few wrongs. There is sin in my heart, and there is sin in my conduct. Not only my past but also my life to come I cannot make righteous by my own strength. You, Lord, must resolve all my sins.'

To the person who has laid down his own righteousness, the salvation of the Lord becomes everything. He escapes from the contradiction of acknowledging that he is insufficient while on the other hand holding on to his own merit as the ground of salvation.

Here we must not think that one must commit more sins in order to be saved. Nor does the confession acknowledging sin itself become a merit that washes away sin. The word is that we must know our own actual state, already under sin, and believe the perfect salvation the Lord accomplished.

We are not people who need a Savior who will bear only a part of our sins. We are people who need a Savior who will bear all our sins. Jesus came to save exactly such people as us.

Jesus bore our sins with His baptism and the Cross

Then how did Jesus resolve all our sins?

Matthew 3:13 says that Jesus came to the Jordan River to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent this, Jesus said, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

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The baptism Jesus received from John is not something separate from our salvation. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by laying hands on the sacrificial offering, so Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John. He fulfilled the righteous will of God to save sinners.

John 1:29 also testifies this way: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

The sin Jesus bore away is the sin of the world. Our sins are also in it. The Lord bore not only the sins others know of but also the sins we have hidden, not only the sins revealed in action but also the sins committed in the heart. The Lord bore even the sins we will commit as we live.

Jesus, who had those sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He received in the sinner's place the judgment a sinner must receive. And Jesus rose again from death and became our living Savior.

Therefore, when we believe in the blood of Jesus, we must also believe together the fact that Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John. We must accept into our hearts the baptism by which He bore sin and the Cross on which He received the judgment of that sin.

Our cleanness is not determined by the amount of tears we have shed. Its ground is the salvation of the Lord, who bore sin in our place and was judged. By believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit we receive the remission of sins and become the children of God.

Think of Naaman in 2 Kings chapter 5. He expected Elisha to act according to his own thinking. But Elisha told him the word to go to the Jordan River and wash his body seven times. When Naaman laid down his own thinking and did according to

the word of the man of God, he became clean.

We too must not try to fit salvation to our own thinking. We must lay down the thought that sin will disappear only when some feeling arises, and the thought that God will accept us only when we have achieved some great merit. We must believe the word that Jesus has saved us with the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

He distinguished between when raw flesh appears and when it turns white again

In verses 14–15 He said that if raw flesh appears, the person is unclean. Even if he had received the verdict of clean because his whole body had turned white, the state in which raw flesh had appeared could not be called clean as it was.

But the word does not end with the verdict of unclean. It says, *"Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. And the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. He is clean" (Leviticus 13:16–17).*

If the raw flesh changed and turned white again, the person had to go to the priest, and the priest had to examine that state and pronounce him clean. God did not have the priest merely repeat the past verdict mechanically. He had him examine the state that appeared now, according to the word.

Reading this passage, we realize how precisely we must hear the word of God. We must not mix up the case where the whole body has turned white with the case where raw flesh has appeared. Nor must we say that the person in whom raw flesh once appeared can never again receive the verdict of clean.

Our faith, too, must be clear. We must not regard relying on

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our own righteousness and believing in the righteousness of the Lord as the same thing. We must also distinguish acknowledging sin and believing the gospel from justifying sin and rejecting the gospel.

At the same time, we must not think that because a saint has committed sin through weakness, Jesus must receive baptism again and die on the Cross each time. The salvation the Lord accomplished is the salvation He accomplished once and for all.

When we have done wrong, we must acknowledge that wrong. And we must believe again how the Lord bore that sin and was judged. Neither covering up the wrong nor regarding the salvation of the Lord as insufficient is right faith. Faith is relying on the perfect righteousness of the Lord while acknowledging our weakness.

He did not regard the scar of a boil and a spreading sore as the same thing

Verses 18–23 deal with the case in which an abnormality appears again in the place where a boil had formed and healed. If a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish-white, appeared in the place of the boil, it had to be shown to the priest.

In verse 20 He had the priest examine the state of the sore and the change in the hair and pronounce the person unclean. In verse 21, if there was no white hair, and the case fell under the other conditions appointed in the word, and it had faded, He had him isolated for seven days. And in verse 22 He had him pronounced unclean if the disease had spread widely.

On the other hand, verse 23 says this: *"But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread, it is the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean."*

He did not say the person was unclean merely on the ground that a scar remained. He distinguished whether it was a spreading sore or the scar of a boil that had healed. He did not draw the same conclusion merely on the ground that something was visible on the outside.

When we recall our own past, our hearts can grow heavy. Shameful actions may come to mind, and things we did wrong to people may come to mind. But the fact that that memory remains is not in itself evidence that the Lord's remission of sins has failed.

It is not that the person who has received the remission of sins is changed into a person who did not commit sin in the past. Jesus saved us who had actually committed sin. We have become righteous not because our past is not shameful, but by faith, because the Lord bore even those sins.

That does not mean, though, that we may take wrong lightly. What we have done wrong to people we must acknowledge and set right. Nor must we recommend the same wrong to other people. Only, even in that whole process, the ground of our salvation must be in the baptism of the Lord and the Cross.

The Lord has saved us who are insufficient. Therefore, whenever we discover our own insufficiency, we must not leave the Lord but rely all the more on the righteousness of the Lord.

Let us abide in the gospel that has made us clean

Dear beloved saints, in today's passage, being shown to the priest, being examined, and being pronounced clean or unclean are repeated. Through this word we learn that we cannot resolve the problem of sin with our own thinking alone.

The word of God reveals our sins. At the same time, the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit tells us how Jesus resolved those sins. We must accept both of these words into our hearts.

If we acknowledge our own sins but cannot believe the perfect salvation of the Lord, we still remain in fear. Conversely, if we hold on only to the word "salvation" without acknowledging our own sins, we end up not knowing why we need the Lord.

We were sinners who could not save ourselves. For such people as us, Jesus received baptism from John. Bearing the sin of the world, He shed His blood and died on the Cross. And He rose again from death. The Lord has saved us perfectly.

Therefore let us not put forward our own righteousness. Let us not doubt even the righteousness of the Lord because of our own weakness. Let us hear and believe the word of the gospel that has saved us, acknowledge our wrong and turn back, and preach this gospel to one another.

That a person who had been living hiding his sins comes to believe the salvation of the Lord and comes boldly before God, and that a person who had been trying to make himself clean by his own strength comes to give thanks for the remission of sins the Lord has given—this is the grace the gospel of the water and the Spirit has given us.

We give thanks and glory to Jesus Christ, who bore all our sins and made us the children of God. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Believe the word of the Lord, who has cleansed us

< Leviticus 13:24-39 >

"Or if the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, then the priest shall examine it; and indeed if the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it is leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore. But if the priest examines it, and indeed there are no white hairs in the bright spot, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days. And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore. But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar from the burn. If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard, then the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears deeper than the skin, and there is in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a scaly leprosy of the head or beard. But if the priest examines the scaly sore, and indeed it does not appear deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale seven days. And on the seventh day the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if the scale has not spread,

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and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear deeper than the skin, he shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale another seven days. On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed if the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean. But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing, then the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He is unclean. But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean. If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, specifically white bright spots, then the priest shall look; and indeed if the bright spots on the skin of the body are dull white, it is a white spot that grows on the skin. He is clean."

Dear beloved saints, by what can we know whether or not we are clean people before God? Some people feel at ease thinking of their own good conduct. Some people condemn themselves endlessly, recalling past wrongs. But with our thoughts and feelings alone we cannot rightly know our state before God. We must hear the word of God.

In today's passage three cases appear: a sore that has formed in a place burned by fire, a sore that has formed on the head or the beard, and white bright spots that have formed on the skin. God did not treat all of these as the same thing. He gave standards for examining the state of each, and had the priest pronounce whether the person was clean or unclean according

to that word.

Through this word we learn that we must know sin precisely and believe the salvation of the Lord, who makes sinners clean. We must not take our own sins lightly, nor must we take lightly the remission of sins the Lord accomplished. What we need is to know ourselves before the word of God and to believe in Jesus Christ, who has brought salvation with the water and the Spirit.

He did not say the person was unclean merely because he had been burned

Verse 24 speaks of the case in which the skin has been burned by fire and a bright spot, reddish-white or pure white, has formed in that place. In the following verse 25, if the hair of the bright spot had turned white and the place was deeper than the skin, He had it pronounced a leprosy that had broken out from the burn.

What we must see well here is the point that the fact itself of having been burned by fire did not become the basis of a verdict of unclean. The priest had to examine what had appeared in the burned place.

In verse 26, if there was no white hair, and the place was not deeper than the skin, and it had faded, He had the person isolated for seven days. It was to have him stay apart for a fixed period and observe the course of the disease. And if after seven days the disease had spread widely, He had him pronounced unclean.

But verse 28 speaks of a different case: *"But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar from the burn."*

He distinguished the fact that there was a scar from the fact

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that there was a leprous sore. Even if a bright spot remained, if it had not spread and had faded, He said it was the scar from the burn. The priest had to pronounce that person clean.

The word of God is this detailed. There had to be a basis when pronouncing a person unclean, and there had to be a basis when pronouncing him clean. He did not let the verdict be made by vague fear or by the impression seen on the outside.

We too must follow the word of God when we examine our own souls. Both the thought 'I have lived this good a life, so I am all right' and the thought 'I have such a shameful past, so I cannot come before God' must be examined before the word. We must know what God has called sin, and how He has resolved that sin.

The sore on the head or the beard also had to be examined according to the word

Verses 29–30 speak of the case in which a man or a woman has a sore on the head or the beard: *"The priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears deeper than the skin, and there is in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a scaly leprosy of the head or beard"*

In the ordinance concerning the burn before, white hair was examined. Here He speaks of thin yellow hair. God told the priest specifically what he had to examine according to the part where the sore had formed and its state.

Verse 31, too, must be read with care. If the sore was not deeper than the skin and there was no black hair in it, He had the person isolated for seven days. He did not have him pronounced clean immediately on the one fact alone that it was not deeper than the skin.

If after seven days the scale had not spread, and there was no yellow hair in it, and it was not deeper than the skin, what had to be done? Verse 33 says this: *"He shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale another seven days."*

He had to shave his hair, but not shave the sore. And he had to wait another seven days. Neither the priest nor the patient could change the procedure according to his own thinking.

After that, on examining again, if the scale had not spread and was not deeper than the skin, He had the person pronounced clean. In verse 34 He said that the person was to wash his clothes.

In this process we learn the attitude of hearing the word of God to the end. It is not right to hear only one part of the word and hastily draw a conclusion favorable to oneself. One must not hold on only to the word that the sore is not deeper than the skin, nor hold on only to the word to wait and put off the verdict forever. One must accept together the standard God gave and the conclusion that follows from it.

The word of the gospel, too, must be heard in this way. We must hear the word by which God reveals a person's sins, and hear as well the word that Jesus bore those sins. If we have come to know our sins, we must now clearly know the work of the Savior who has removed those sins.

He did not ignore a sore that had spread, and He also acknowledged the person who had been healed

Verses 35–36 speak of the case after the person has received the verdict of clean: *"But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing, then the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need*

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not seek for yellow hair. He is unclean."

The fact that a person had already received the verdict of clean did not mean that the state that appeared afterward could be ignored. If the scale had spread widely, he had to be examined again, and once it was confirmed that it had spread, he had to be pronounced unclean without the need to seek for yellow hair.

It was not that a person could be pronounced unclean only when all the conditions examined at the first examination appeared again in exactly the same way. In this case God gave a clear standard for the verdict concerning the fact that it had spread.

Conversely, verse 37 says this: *"But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean."*

If the scale had not spread and black hair had grown up in it, He said that the scale had healed and that person was clean. The priest had to acknowledge that fact and pronounce him clean.

It was not that the sore healed because the priest said certain words. He confirmed the healed state according to the standard God had appointed and declared the person clean. Nor could he go on saying the person was unclean on the ground that there had once been a sore.

Here we must look back on two attitudes toward the word of God: the attitude of covering over with one's own thinking the problem revealed in the word, and the attitude of refusing to the end to accept what God has said is clean.

It is the same when we examine the problem of sin. We must not insist that we are righteous people while committing sin. Also, while believing the gospel that Jesus bore all sins, we must not regard the salvation of the Lord as imperfect on the ground that our own conduct is not perfect.

We must not match the changes of the sore in today's word one by one with the daily mistakes of a saint and think that each time we do wrong we are saved and then lose salvation. What our salvation is grounded on we must know through the work Jesus accomplished. The salvation of the Lord is not something that is completed or collapses according to our day-to-day record.

Not everyone with white bright spots receives the same verdict

Verses 38–39 speak of the case in which white bright spots have formed on the skin of a man or a woman: *"The priest shall look; and indeed if the bright spots on the skin of the body are dull white, it is a white spot that grows on the skin. He is clean"*

White bright spots appeared before as well, but here He called the dull white bright spots a white spot and said the person was clean. The same verdict as for the sores before could not be given on the one common point alone that they were white.

Also, in this case He did not command two periods of isolation as in the ordinance concerning the scale before. God said the person who was pronounced to have a white spot was clean.

When we read the Bible, we must abandon the habit of trying to tie all the words together in the same meaning on the ground that a single word is similar. The scar from a burn and a sore that has spread are different, the symptoms of the scale and the healed state are different, and even for white bright spots the verdict differs.

This is discernment that is also needed when dealing with people. We cannot rashly conclude even the state of a person's soul on the ground of what his outward appearance is like. When

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we examine the matter of salvation, we must hear whether that person knows his own sins before the word of God, and on what basis he believes in the remission of sins Jesus accomplished.

Suppose a person says that he is righteous. The basis of that statement may be his own conduct, or it may be the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit. Saying the same words does not mean having the same faith. What matters is on what basis he says those words.

The word reveals our sins and makes us seek the Savior

Dear beloved saints, why do we need the remission of sins? It is because a person has a deeper problem than a few wrongs revealed in action.

We are people born with sin as the descendants of Adam. We commit sin because there is sin in our hearts. In Mark chapter 7, Jesus said that from a person's heart come evil things such as evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, covetousness, and pride. And He said this: *"All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:23).*

A person easily thinks he is an all right person as long as he does not reveal his wrongs. But God speaks of the sin that comes out of the heart. Merely correcting a little the actions revealed on the outside does not make the sin of the heart and the sins already committed disappear.

The person who tries to become righteous by his own strength is at some moment discouraged because of what he himself is like. It is because the same heart rises up again though he resolved never to do so again. He tried to live a good life, but from within comes the heart that envies and hates other people.

The more he discovers the sin within himself, the more he comes to know the fact that he cannot save himself.

At that time we must not avoid the word. We must hear what the Lord did in order to save us.

Acknowledging sin is necessary in order to open one's heart toward the Savior. But sin is not washed away merely by feeling deeply that one is a sinner. The remission of sins is received through the salvation Jesus accomplished. However clear our sins may be, we must also clearly believe the fact that the Lord bore those sins.

The baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross have resolved our sins

Jesus came to this earth to save us who were under sin. And He received baptism from John in the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:15 says, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by laying hands on the sacrificial offering, so Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John. He obeyed the will of God the Father to save sinners.

Next, listen to the testimony of John: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Jesus bore away the sin of the world. Our sins are also contained in that sin of the world. The revealed sins and the hidden sins, the sins committed in the heart and the sins committed in action, all the sins we commit throughout our lives

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the Lord has borne.

And Jesus, who bore those sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He received in our place the judgment of sin we should have received. Jesus rose again from death and became our living Savior.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has resolved our sins. We must believe together the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. We must accept into our hearts the work by which the Lord bore sin and the work by which He received the judgment of that sin.

Naaman in 2 Kings chapter 5, too, came to the man of God with a problem he could not resolve by his own strength. At first he was angry when he heard a word different from the method he had expected. But when he laid down his own thinking and dipped his body seven times in the Jordan River according to the word, he became clean.

We too must lay down our own thinking about salvation. 'Only after I have made this much effort can I receive the remission of sins. Only when some special feeling arises have I become clean.' Such thoughts cannot be made the standard of salvation. We must hear what Jesus accomplished, and believe that word.

Romans 5:19 says, *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."*

The ground on which we are made righteous is the obedience of Jesus Christ. Jesus obeyed the will of the Father and bore our sins and was judged. By believing in that salvation, we are justified.

Let us serve God in the grace that has made us clean

Dear beloved saints, in today's passage God did not let an unclean state be called clean. Nor did He let a clean person go on being called unclean. The priest had to pronounce rightly according to the word of God.

Let us too accept the word of God just as it is. Let us acknowledge our sins in the light of the word, and believe in the Lord, who has removed those sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, we discover our own insufficiency. At such times we must acknowledge our own wrong. If there is something we have done wrong to a person, we must set it right. But we must not deny even the salvation Jesus accomplished because of that insufficiency.

That we have become righteous is not a boast that all our actions have become perfect. It is the confession of faith that Jesus has saved us who are sinful and insufficient. The righteousness we have received is the gift the Lord has given.

Romans 8:1–2 says, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*"

The person who believes this word has no need to live hiding his sins. It is because the Lord bore even those sins. Nor has he any reason to leave God, weighed down by his own insufficiency. It is because the Lord has saved us who are insufficient and made us the children of God.

Let us rely on the Savior who has made us clean. Let us learn the word of God, set our own thinking right with that word, and

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preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the people who are still suffering because of sin. The grace that has saved us must be delivered to them as well.

Jesus resolved our sins by receiving baptism from John and shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. And He rose again from death. I hope that you will become saints who believe in this Lord who has made us clean and serve Him with thanksgiving. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Do not hide your sins, but be washed with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 13:40-59 >

"As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he is bald, but he is clean. He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he is bald on the forehead, but he is clean. And if there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white sore, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead. Then the priest shall examine it; and indeed if the swelling of the sore is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, as the appearance of leprosy on the skin of the body, he is a leprous man. He is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his sore is on his head. Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. Also, if a garment has a leprous plague in it, whether it is a woolen garment or a linen garment, whether it is in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, and if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest. The priest shall examine the

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plague and isolate that which has the plague seven days. And he shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather or in anything made of leather, the plague is an active leprosy. It is unclean. He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, for it is an active leprosy; the garment shall be burned in the fire. But if the priest examines it, and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which is the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days. Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed if the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it is unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, whether the damage is outside or inside. If the priest examines it, and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather. But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a spreading plague; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague. And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean. This is the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean."

Dear beloved saints, in today's word appear the ordinance

for examining a sore that has appeared on a person's head and the ordinance for examining a leprous plague that has formed in a garment. God did not have only a person's body examined. He had the uncleanness that appeared in the clothes people wore and the leather articles they used examined as well.

When we read the passage, the same word is repeated several times. The priest examines, waits for a fixed period and examines again, and pronounces whether it is clean or unclean. Some things He has them wash, from some things He has the part with the plague torn out, and some things He has them burn.

These differences are all according to the word God appointed. One could neither say carelessly by human thinking that it was all right, nor say that everything was unclean merely on the ground that it was suspicious.

Before this word we must look back on how we are dealing with our own sins. Are we hiding the sins that have been revealed? Are we trying to remove our sins by our own efforts? Or do we believe the gospel that Jesus has resolved our sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross?

When God reveals our sins, we must accept that word. And we must also accept into our hearts the word of salvation that has made us clean.

He distinguished the falling out of hair from a leprous sore

Verses 40–41 say this: *"As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he is bald, but he is clean. He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he is bald on the forehead, but he is clean."*

God said that the man whose hair has fallen out is clean. It is

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the same in the case where the hair has fallen from the forehead. The fact itself of having no hair did not become evidence of uncleanness.

But from verse 42 on He speaks of a different case. If a reddish-white bright spot formed on the bald head or the bald forehead and was like leprosy that has broken out on the skin, the priest had to pronounce him surely unclean.

Here the basis of the verdict is not how much or how little hair there is. It is whether there is the sore God spoke of. One could not say a person was unclean because his hair had fallen out, nor could one ignore an actual sore by thinking it was mere baldness.

We too must follow the standard of the word when we examine ourselves before God. We cannot judge our souls to be clean on the basis of the appearance seen by people or of reputation alone. Conversely, we must not judge a person to be unclean on the ground that his appearance or circumstances are different from those of other people.

The sin God reveals to a person is a problem of the heart and of life. Even if we look neat on the outside and receive good evaluations from people, we cannot remove the covetousness, pride, and evil thoughts that come out of the heart. Therefore we must go beyond the evaluation of people and stand before the word of God.

When the word reveals our sins, let us not make excuses. Only the person who knows his own sins comes to know how much he needs the Savior who will resolve those sins.

The unclean person could not hide his state

Verses 45–46 say what the person who has been pronounced

unclean must do: *"Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp."*

That person had to reveal his state. He had to tear his clothes, let his hair hang loose, cover his mustache, and cry out that he was unclean. While he had the disease, he had to live apart outside the camp.

What a heavy ordinance this is! Uncleanness was not a matter to be thought of only in one's own heart and let pass. It affected even the life lived together with people. One could not go about behaving like a clean person just because one wanted to.

Think of this word together with the problem of sin. A person wants to hide his sins. It is because if he reveals his sins, it seems he will lose face and people will look at him differently. So instead of acknowledging his wrong, he sometimes blames his circumstances or shifts the responsibility to other people.

But does hiding sin make that sin disappear before God? Just because we have forgotten, has it been resolved before God as well? It has not. Sin must actually be resolved.

Romans 6:23 says, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Sin is the problem that brings us death. Therefore acknowledging our own sins is not merely speaking words lightly with the mouth. 'Lord, I am exactly the person who needs Your salvation. I cannot remove my sins by myself.' It is knowing oneself before God in this way.

Nevertheless, we must not end at the point of acknowledging sin. God sent Jesus Christ to save sinners. We must know our unclean selves and believe in the Savior who washes away that uncleanness.

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Even a plague that formed in a garment had to be shown to the priest

From verse 47 on begins the ordinance concerning garments. It is the case in which a plague has formed in a woolen garment or a linen garment, in the warp or the woof of linen or wool, or in leather or an article made of leather. He had not only the cloth but also the thread that makes it up and leather articles examined.

Verse 49 says this: *"If the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest"*

It did not end with the owner of the garment looking and judging by himself. It had to be shown to the priest. The priest had to examine the plague, keep it for seven days, and examine it again.

In verses 51–52, if the plague had spread, He had it pronounced an active leprosy and had the garment or article concerned burned.

This ordinance does not allow an unclean thing to be left as it is and used. However familiar the article and however cherished the garment, one could not call clean at will what God had pronounced unclean.

When we deal with sin, too, we must be this clear. Sin does not cease to be sin on the ground that we have grown used to it. Nor does a wrong become right on the ground that we have done it for a long time. The words that other people do it too cannot resolve our sins.

In particular, we must not rationalize our own wrong and lead other people to take part in the same sin. If we have committed sin, we must acknowledge it before God and return to the word of the gospel. We must abandon the attitude of

insisting that our own wrong is right and spreading it.

The word that the Lord has remitted our sins is not permission to justify sin as we please. It is the word of grace that the Lord has saved us who were to perish because of sin. The person who believes that grace can acknowledge his own sins honestly rather than hiding them.

Merely not having spread does not make it clean

Verse 53 speaks of the case in which, on examination after seven days, the plague has not spread. Here He did not have it pronounced clean immediately. According to verse 54, the thing with the plague had to be washed and kept for another seven days.

The verdict after that is important. Verse 55 says, *"Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed if the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it is unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, whether the damage is outside or inside."*

He said it was unclean even though it had not spread. It was because even after being washed, the plague had not changed its color and remained. Whether it was outside or inside, He had it burned.

We must read this word precisely. 'As long as it does not spread any further, it is all right' is not the standard of the verdict in this case. The plague actually remaining had to be examined.

In the problem of our sins, too, we cannot be satisfied simply with having become better than before. Reducing a bad habit a little does not make the sins already committed disappear. Even if we live carefully without letting sin show outwardly, we cannot obtain justification before God by that alone.

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Jeremiah 2:22 says, *"For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, Yet your iniquity is marked before Me, says the Lord GOD."*

By human effort the sin that is before God cannot be washed away. Even if one restrains oneself, does good, and repents with tears, that act itself cannot take the place of the price of sin.

We need the Savior who actually bore sin. The remission of sins is not grounded on the fact that we have made an effort. It is grounded on how Jesus Christ resolved our sins.

He dealt differently with a plague that had faded and a plague that had disappeared

Verse 56 speaks of the case in which the plague has faded after being washed. In this case He had the part with the plague torn out of the garment or the leather.

But in verse 57, if the plague still appeared in the garment or article, He had it pronounced a spreading plague and had it burned. The fact that a part had once been removed did not mean that the state that appeared afterward could be ignored.

Verse 58 is yet another case: *"And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean."*

In the case where the plague had faded, He had that part torn out, and in the case where the plague had disappeared, He had it washed again and made clean. He distinguished each of the cases: where the color had not changed, where it had faded, where it appeared again, and where it had disappeared.

The priest had to examine these differences precisely. The owner of the garment also had to accept the treatment God had

appointed. He could not choose only the part convenient to himself.

We too must hear the word to the end when we hear it. Even after hearing the word that reveals sin, we must not cover over that problem carelessly. Also, even after hearing of the salvation of the Lord who speaks of the remission of sins, we must not judge endlessly by our own thinking alone.

Here there is no need to think that the garment's being washed twice means that a person must be saved twice. The passage speaks of the ordinance of cleansing for garments. Our salvation and the faith that follows it must be known in the light of the salvation Jesus accomplished.

The Lord bore our sins once and for all. We must believe that salvation, and engrave that gospel in our hearts again whenever our own insufficiency is revealed as we live.

The baptism of Jesus and the Cross have resolved the problem of sin

Dear beloved saints, the way by which we can become clean before God is in Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, when a sinner offered the sacrifice of atonement, he passed on his sins by laying his hands on the sacrificial offering God had appointed. And the offering that had received the sins passed on to it shed its blood and died. The transfer of sin and the judgment of sin were accomplished together.

Jesus came to this earth to accomplish this salvation. And He received baptism from John in the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:15 says, "*But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all*

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righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."

The baptism Jesus received from John is the baptism by which He bore the sin of the world. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by the laying on of hands, so Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He fulfilled the will of God the Father to save sinners.

John 1:29 testifies this way: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

In the sin of the world Jesus bore away, our sins are also included. There are not only the sins we committed openly but also the sins we have hidden. There are not only the sins we ourselves remember but also the sins we have forgotten. All the sins we commit in weakness throughout our lives the Lord has borne.

Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and because of those sins He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He received in the sinner's place the judgment a sinner must receive. And Jesus rose again from death and became our living Savior.

Therefore, when we believe in the blood of Jesus, we must also believe together the baptism Jesus received from John. We must accept into our hearts the work by which He bore our sins and the work by which He received the judgment of those sins.

God did not overlook our sins as if nothing had happened. Jesus bore those sins and paid their price. Therefore our believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and confessing that we have no sin is not a boast of our own goodness. It is a confession of belief in the remission of sins the Lord has given.

Romans 4:5 says, *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for*

righteousness."

The righteousness we have received is the gift the Lord has given. We come before God by faith in this grace of salvation.

The saint who has received the remission of sins must ruminate on the gospel every day

In Exodus chapter 30 appears the word in which God had a laver placed between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. When Aaron and his sons performed their duties before God, they had to wash their hands and feet with that water.

Even the priests who served God needed washing. This word makes us think of how a saved saint must live by faith.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, we are weak. There are times when we do wrong with our words, harbor evil thoughts in our hearts, and make mistakes in our actions. At that time we must not deny our own wrong. We must acknowledge sin as sin.

But it is not that Jesus must receive baptism again and die on the Cross again in order to resolve that sin. The Lord has already borne even the sins we will commit as we live.

Therefore, while acknowledging our own sins, we must believe again the word that Jesus bore those sins too through the baptism He received from John. We must engrave in our hearts the fact that He received the judgment of those sins too on the Cross in our place.

1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Confessing our sins is honestly acknowledging our own wrong. At the same time, it is believing how the Lord resolved

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those sins. It is not that our confession or tears become a new sacrificial offering of atonement. The salvation the faithful and righteous Lord accomplished is the ground of our faith.

With this faith we must wash away the qualms of conscience and serve God. We must avoid both dulling our hearts by hiding sin and doubting the salvation of the Lord because of our own insufficiency. It is acknowledging our own sins and believing in the righteousness of the Lord, who bore those sins.

Here too is the reason we preach the gospel to other people. We do not preach it because we are people who were originally clean and excellent. We preach this grace because the Lord has saved us who are sinful and insufficient.

Let us accept the word of cleanness to the end

Verse 59 says that today's ordinance is the ordinance for pronouncing clean or unclean.

God had uncleanness discerned. He did not allow an unclean thing to be left as it was, and He had what had become clean acknowledged as clean. We too must be honest before this word.

Let us not hide our sins. Let us not regard ourselves as righteous, comparing ourselves with other people. Let us accept into our hearts the word of the baptism and the Cross by which Jesus bore our sins.

If we have received the remission of sins, let us live in that grace. Let us acknowledge our wrong and turn back, set right the wrongs we have done to people, and believe all the more clearly the gospel that has saved us. The Lord did not save us in order to keep us bound in the fear of sin. He has made us live serving God with a clean conscience.

We believe in Jesus, who received baptism from John in

order to bear all our sins, Jesus, who shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin in our place, and Jesus, who rose again from death.

We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has made us clean with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 13

[Question] 1. Leviticus 13:2—how does the word concerning leprosy show a person's sin?

Leprosy spiritually shows the sin that is within a person and the state of having become distant from God because of that sin. Just as the sore revealed on the skin is examined, so a person must examine his own heart and conduct before the word of God. It is easy to think that it is enough to correct only the few wrongs revealed on the outside, but from a person's heart evil thoughts, covetousness, and pride keep coming out. The problem of sin is not resolved by dressing up one's outward appearance neatly.

A person, a descendant of Adam, cannot escape from sin and become righteous by his own efforts alone. Therefore through this word he must realize the fact that he needs a Savior. Rather than hiding his sins or regarding them as small by comparing himself with others, he must seek the grace of God, who saves sinners, and believe the remission of sins the Lord accomplished. The word that reveals sin sets us before the need of salvation.

This spiritual analogy must not be applied to an actual patient to judge that that person is more evil than other people. Jesus, too, corrected the question that concluded, concerning the man blind from birth, that it was because of his own sin or that of his parents. What is to be learned in this chapter is not the attitude of condemning another person's disease, but the faith that knows one's own sins before the word and relies on the Savior.

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 13:2—when a symptom suspected of being leprosy appeared on the skin, by whom did the person have to be examined?

The person had to be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. It was not that the person himself or his family confirmed it to be leprosy at will just because something had risen on the skin or a scab or a bright spot had formed. The priest had to examine the sore and pronounce whether the person was clean or unclean according to the standard God had appointed.

This was because in those days whether the people of Israel were clean was connected with the life of the community. Since a person who received the verdict of unclean had to live outside the camp, the judgment could not be made on vague suspicion or the rumors of people alone. The priest confirmed the color of the hair, the depth of the sore, whether the disease was spreading, and so on, and in cases that were not clear, examined again after a fixed period.

That He entrusted such judgment to the priest shows that the people of God cannot decide cleanness by their own standard. Nor had the priest received the authority to decide according to his own thinking; he had to follow the ordinance of God. Also, the work the priest was charged with in this chapter was examining the disease and declaring whether the person was clean. That declaration itself was not an act of treatment that healed the disease.

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[Question] 3. Leviticus 13:3—when what change appeared in the sore did the priest pronounce the person unclean?

In verse 3, when the hair on the sore had turned white and the place had become deeper than the surrounding skin, it was pronounced a leprous sore. The priest had to examine the skin directly, confirm these two signs, and then declare that person unclean. It was not that this verdict was given merely on the ground that a white spot was visible on the skin.

The following verse 4 has the person set apart for seven days and examined if the bright spot on the skin is white but not deeper than the skin and the hair has not turned white either. Therefore the standard of the verdict in verse 3 and the object of observation in verse 4 must be distinguished. Even symptoms that looked similar on the outside were handled differently according to the conditions the text presents. Also, verse 3 explains the standard for this case, and does not mean that all the sores appearing in this chapter are to be judged only by these two conditions.

In this way the priest's judgment did not depend on impression or conjecture but involved examining concrete evidence. We too, when we deal with the word, must examine the conditions given together with it and the context before and after, rather than drawing a conclusion by detaching a single expression. When we discern sin by the word of God, too, we must not make our own preconceptions the standard.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 13:4–8—if the sore was not deeper than the skin and the hair was not white either, what procedure was followed instead of pronouncing immediately?

Even if there was a white bright spot on the skin, if the sore was not deeper than the skin and the hair was not white, the priest set that person apart for seven days and observed him. Here the word isolate refers to the measure of setting apart for a fixed period and examining a person for whom the verdict is not yet clear. It is distinguished from confirming him as a leper from the start and driving him out.

When he was examined again after seven days had passed, if the sore was unchanged and the disease had not spread on the skin, he was not pronounced clean immediately but was observed for another seven days. If after the second period had passed the sore had faded and had not spread further, it was judged to be an ordinary skin disease and he was declared clean. That person had to wash his clothes. Therefore, if this ordinance is explained simply as a procedure that ends when there is nothing wrong after seven days, the second period of observation that is in the text is left out.

Even after receiving the verdict of clean, if the disease spread on the skin, the person had to be shown to the priest again. When the priest confirmed that it had spread, he pronounced him unclean. This process shows a careful discernment that does not hastily judge a person to be unclean, while not ignoring the change revealed afterward.

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[Question] 5. Leviticus 13:14–17—why was it said that a person whose body had turned white was unclean when raw flesh appeared on him, and what was done when it turned white again?

Raw flesh refers to the live flesh exposed in the sore. In the preceding verses 12–13, in the case where the disease had spread over the whole body and it had all turned white, He had the priest examine and then pronounce the person clean. But if raw flesh appeared on that person, he had to be pronounced unclean. It is because verse 15 defines that raw flesh as a sign of leprosy. Even if he had previously received the verdict of clean, the newly appearing state had to be examined again.

That does not mean, though, that a person in whom raw flesh had once appeared was confirmed as an unclean person forever. If the raw flesh changed and turned white again, he had to go to the priest, and the priest confirmed that the sore had turned white and then pronounced him clean. Whether one was clean was not decided by a person's wish or the previous verdict alone; the present state had to be examined according to the standard God had appointed.

This passage shows that the standard of cleanness in the text cannot be judged by our common sense about outward appearance alone. It also makes us think that spiritually we must not hide our state before God but accept the judgment of the word. Only when the verdict of clean in the case where the whole body has turned white and the verdict of unclean in the case where raw flesh has appeared are read together can the meaning of this ordinance be understood precisely.

[Question] 6. Leviticus 13:29–37—when examining a sore in the area of the head or the beard, what did the priest confirm and how did he pronounce?

The priest examined the depth of the sore, the color and thickness of the hair, and whether the disease was spreading. If the sore was deeper than the skin and there was thin yellow hair in it, he pronounced the person unclean. The text calls this a scale, and defines it as a leprosy that has formed on the head or the beard.

In cases where the verdict was not clear, he observed as follows.

• If the sore was not deeper than the skin and there was no black hair in it, the person was set apart for seven days.

• If after seven days the disease had not spread, there was no yellow hair either, and the sore was not deeper than the skin, the hair other than that on the sore was shaved and he was observed for another seven days. At this time the sore itself was not to be shaved.

• If even after the second period had passed the disease had not spread and the sore was not deeper than the skin, he was pronounced clean. That person had to wash his clothes.

Even after receiving the verdict of clean, if the disease spread widely, the person had to be examined again. When the fact that it had spread was confirmed, he was pronounced unclean without any further need to seek whether there was yellow hair. Conversely, if the disease had not spread further and black hair had grown in that place, he was regarded as healed and declared clean.

Therefore judgment must not be made on the one fact alone that hair has fallen out or changed color. The immediately following verses 40–41 also distinguish mere baldness as clean.

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The priest had to examine together the several conditions given in the text and the changes over time.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 13:45, 46—where, and in what appearance, did the leper who had received the verdict of unclean have to live?

That person had to tear his clothes, let his hair hang loose, cover his mustache, and make known aloud that he was unclean. Also, while he had the disease, he was regarded as being in an unclean state and had to live alone, outside the camp. Unlike the procedure of observing for seven days at a time a person for whom the priest had still reserved the verdict, this was the provision applied to a person confirmed to be unclean.

Having to live outside the camp meant being separated from the daily life enjoyed within the family and the community. The clothing and the state of the hair, the act of covering the lip, and the cry revealed that that person was in an unclean state. God had the clean and the unclean clearly distinguished within the community of Israel.

However, the text fixes that period as the days he has the disease. It does not mean that he could never return for the rest of his life even if the disease healed. In the following chapter 14 is presented the way in which, when the sore has healed, the priest goes outside the camp, examines, and proceeds with the rite of cleansing. Spiritually, the separation outside the camp makes us think that sin is a serious problem that blocks fellowship with God. At the same time, the fact that there is a way to become clean and return makes us look to the grace of salvation that makes sinners clean.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 13:45—what does the appearance of the patient tearing his clothes and letting his hair hang loose signify?

The appearance of tearing the clothes and letting the hair hang loose expressed sorrow and grief, and was a sign revealing that the person was in an unclean state. The leper could not live within the community in the same appearance as before. The painful situation of having to stay outside the camp appeared in his outward appearance as well.

This action was given together with the provision of covering the mustache and crying out that he was unclean. Therefore, rather than thinking of the tearing of the clothes in isolation, it must be understood within the whole provision of not hiding one's state but making it known to other people. The act itself of tearing the clothes or letting the hair hang loose did not heal the disease or make that person clean. Whether he was clean had to receive the judgment of the priest according to the standard God had appointed.

Spiritually, it makes us think of the attitude of acknowledging one's own situation without taking sin lightly or hiding it. If a person who needs the remission of sins insists that he has no problem, it is difficult for him to accept the grace of the Savior. But putting on a sorrowful expression or performing outward actions does not become the merit of the remission of sins. What is important is to acknowledge one's own sins and believe the salvation God gives.

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[Question] 9. Leviticus 13:55—what can be learned from the provision that a garment in which the plague remained unchanged even after being washed had to be burned?

The priest had the garment with the plague washed, observed it again for seven days, and then, if the plague had not changed its color, pronounced it unclean even though it had not spread further and had it burned. This provision applied whether the plague was on the outside or the inside. It could not be used again like a clean garment merely on the ground that, seen from the outside, it was not spreading further.

This ordinance shows that one must not regard a thing as clean while something unclean remains in it, or leave it as it is because it seems a waste. At the same time, He did not have every garment with a plague burned unconditionally from the start. Verse 56 has the part torn out if the plague has faded after being washed, and verse 58 has the garment washed again and made clean if the plague has disappeared. Through observation and washing, each was handled according to its state.

Spiritually, we gain the lesson that we must not regard sin as a trifle, but acknowledge the wrong that has been revealed and not encourage it to spread even to other people. The person who believes the grace of the remission of sins must turn back before the word rather than hold on to sin by making excuses for it. Acknowledging and setting right one's own wrong, and recommending to other people as well the faith that follows the word, is the attitude befitting this lesson.

[Question] 10. When the ordinance for the patient in Leviticus chapter 13 and Jesus' cleansing of the leper are looked at together, what can be known?

In Leviticus chapter 13 the priest examined the patient according to the standard God had appointed and pronounced whether he was clean. The person pronounced unclean had to live outside the camp while he had the disease. This ordinance clearly reveals the unclean state, but the priest's examination or declaration itself did not heal the disease.

In the New Testament, Jesus touched the leper who had come to Him and spoke, and thereby made him clean immediately. Then He told him to show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony. The Lord first healed the disease, and that person had to show his body, which had become clean, to the priest. This event does not mean that Jesus disregarded the ordinance of cleansing; it shows that He has the power and compassion actually to make an unclean person clean.

Naaman in the Old Testament, too, could not resolve his disease with his position or his wealth, but washed his body in the Jordan River according to the word given through the man of God and became clean. In this way, the ground of salvation lies not in a person's qualifications or self-confidence, but in the grace God bestows.

Spiritually, the law reveals our sins and the need of salvation. Jesus came to resolve those sins, bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. We do not remove sin by repeating outward rites of cleansing; we receive the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord accomplished. That a person who had become distant from God because of sin comes to God through the salvation of the Lord is the grace of the gospel that we can see through this word. ✉

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CHAPTER

14

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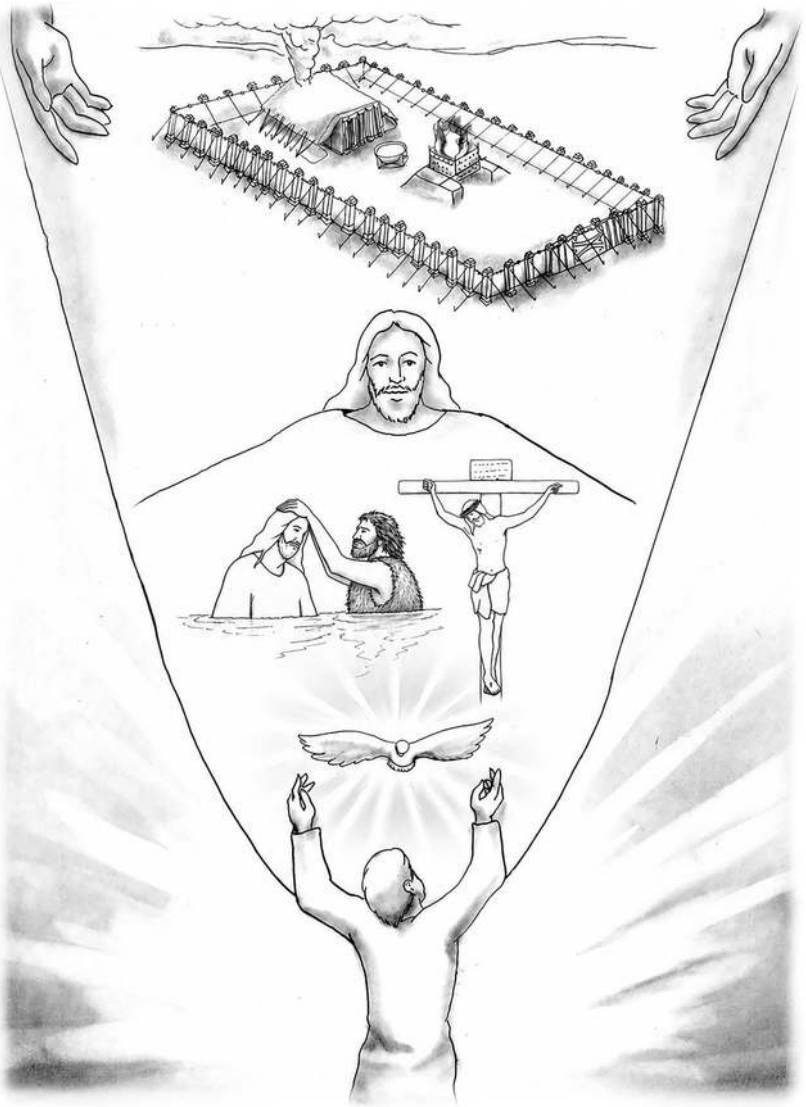

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Leviticus Chapter 14 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 14:1–9—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall flow of the text

Leviticus 14:1–9 is not an ordinance for diagnosing a person whose disease is in progress, but the procedure by which a person whose sore has already healed is declared clean and restored into the community of Israel.

The flow may be summarized as follows.

—The priest goes out of the camp and confirms whether the sore has healed.

—Two clean living birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop are prepared.

—One bird is killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

—The living bird and the remaining materials are dipped in the blood of the dead bird.

—The blood is sprinkled seven times on the person who is to be cleansed, and he is declared clean.

—The living bird is let loose in the open field.

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—The person who has been cleansed washes his clothes, shaves off his hair, and washes his body.

—He comes into the camp, but spends seven days outside his own tent.

—After seven days he shaves his hair again and washes his clothes and body, completing the procedure of cleansing.

This ordinance is the word of restoration by which the person who had been isolated outside the camp escapes from a separation like death and returns to live together with the people of God.

2. *"The day of his cleansing"*—the distinction between healing and the declaration of cleanness

Verse 2 calls this word *"the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing."*

Looking at verse 3, it is already written, before the priest arrives, *"If the leprosy is healed in the leper."* It was not the priest who healed the disease. He confirms whether the sore has healed and declares cleanness according to the ordinance God appointed.

The standard of the remission of sins, too, is not one's own feeling or judgment, but the word in which God declares the way by which He has removed sin and the result of it.

It is also necessary for people to forgive and be reconciled with one another, but the final verdict on the problem of sin belongs to God. Because sin is established before the law of God, the remission of sins, too, must be accomplished and declared by God.

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3. The priest goes out of the camp

It is verse 3.

"The priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him"

Since the patient was still outside the camp, the priest went out and met him. Like this appearance, the Son of God put on flesh and came to sinners. It is not that human beings reached the holy God by their own efforts.

Hebrews, too, says that Jesus suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people.

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

Jesus did not merely condemn the unclean person from afar. In the Gospels, when a patient said, *"If You are willing, You can make me clean,"* Jesus touched him and said, *"I am willing; be cleansed."* And He told that person to show himself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded. This event is recorded together in Matthew 8:2–4, Mark 1:40–44, and Luke 5:12–14.

The priest of Leviticus confirmed whether the person had healed, but Jesus is the One who has the authority actually to make clean.

4. Two clean living birds

In verse 4 the priest has two clean living birds brought. The words *"the living bird"* mean a bird that is alive. Of the two, one dies and the other is let loose alive into the field.

These two birds were used in the cleansing ceremony God appointed.

Faced with the appearance of one bird shedding its blood and

dying, the sinner must acknowledge that he is one who must die because of sin. The appearance of the other bird being let loose in the field shows that God has moved sin far away.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and shed His blood and died on the Cross. But He did not remain in death; Jesus rose again from death. Through the death and resurrection of Christ our sins were completely dealt with before God.

The sinner receives the remission of sins not by removing his sins little by little, but by believing the fact that those sins were passed on to Jesus Christ and completely dealt with.

5. Cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop

In verse 4, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop appear together with the two birds.

The cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop were dipped in the blood together with the living bird and used to sprinkle the person who was to be cleansed. God made the unclean person clean by the ordinance of cleansing with water and blood that He Himself had appointed.

Hyssop is used for sprinkling blood or water in other cleansing ceremonies of the Bible as well. Here, too, it serves to ensure that the blood does not merely end with being shed, but is actually applied to the person who is to be cleansed.

The gospel, too, does not end merely with knowing a historical event. One must not know only as knowledge the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and died on the Cross, but believe in one's heart that that salvation is precisely for my sins.

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6. The bird is killed in an earthen vessel over running water

It is verse 5.

"The priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water"

An earthen vessel is a vessel made of earth. The appearance of the bird being killed in this earthen vessel shows that a human being, made of earth, is a sinner before the word of God and one who must die for that sin.

The sinner must acknowledge, not by his own thinking or the evaluation of other people but before the word of God, that he is one who must die for sin. Since the wages of sin is death, the penalty of sin is not resolved without the shedding of blood and death.

The bird is killed in an earthen vessel over *"running water."* In this cleansing ceremony water and blood are used together. From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the running water shows that our sins were passed on to Jesus with the baptism He received from John, and the blood shows that Jesus received the judgment of sin on the Cross in our place.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood – ASV" (1 John 5:6).

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said this.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Because Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He could shed His blood on the Cross and receive the penalty of that sin. The baptism and the Cross are not events of salvation separated from each other.

Jesus completed salvation by rising again from death, and the Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is true.

7. The living bird, too, is dipped in the blood of the dead bird

"As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water" (Leviticus 14:6).

The living bird is not a separate bird unrelated to the blood of the dead bird. After being dipped in the blood of the dead bird, it is let loose into the field. Thereby death and life, the shedding of blood and freedom, are joined within one ceremony.

The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death are one gospel that completes the salvation of sinners. The Lord bore our sins and died, and became the living Savior who rose again from death.

8. The blood is sprinkled seven times and he is declared *"clean"*

It is verse 7.

"Sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean"

The blood was not merely looked at from afar, but was sprinkled on that person. And the priest declared him clean.

The number seven shows the meaning of faithfully carrying out the complete procedure God appointed. The core lies in the fact that the person did not change the number of times or the method according to his own thinking, but did exactly as God had commanded.

The assurance of the remission of sins does not come from feelings or the amount of prayer. The word of God that Jesus

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dealt with all my sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is the ground of salvation.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

9. The living bird is let loose in the field

In the latter part of verse 7, the living bird stained with blood is let loose in the field.

This shows the freedom of having escaped from the threat of death, and the appearance of uncleanness having been removed far away. Just as the living bird is let loose into the field to show that sin has been moved far away, the sin passed on to Jesus cannot come back to the person who believes and condemn him.

The sinner does not escape from sin by forgetting or hiding his sins. Following the way of salvation God has prepared, he must believe that sins were passed on to Jesus Christ and that the Lord received that judgment.

Therefore the person who has believed the gospel must not keep holding on to his past sins in his heart and condemn himself as a sinner. His own conduct is insufficient, but if the word of God says he is clean through the salvation of Christ, he must believe that declaration.

10. He washes his clothes, shaves off all his hair, and washes his body

It is verse 8.

"He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean"

Washing the clothes, washing the body, and shaving the hair are actual hygiene and ceremonial procedures of cleansing. This must not be applied as a command that today one must actually shave off one's hair and eyebrows in order to be saved.

The word about shaving the hair shows that one must abandon one's own thinking that becomes a hindrance to receiving the remission of sins. As one shaves the hair of the head, one must lay down one's own thoughts and experience; as one shaves the eyebrows, one must abandon the heart that puts forward human authority, and believe the word of God.

The word about washing the clothes and washing the body makes us ruminate every day on the gospel that Jesus has already washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. With this faith we must acknowledge our own wrongs and set our lives right.

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit must abandon falsehood and lewdness, set right what he obtained dishonestly and the rumors he spread to others, and live a life of apologizing and being reconciled. He must exalt the word of God above his own thinking.

Such actions do not complete the remission of sins. It is the person who has already been cleansed putting his life in order in a way befitting that cleanness.

11. He comes into the camp but does not enter his own tent immediately

It is the latter part of verse 8.

"After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days"

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The person who had received the verdict of clean returned into the camp, but waited another seven days outside his own tent.

This shows that the return to the community was accomplished according to the order God appointed. Even though he had received the verdict of clean, he had to follow the period and procedure God had commanded.

The standard of faith is not a method a person has decided on for himself or his own judgment, but the word God has appointed. The remission of sins, too, is not obtained according to one's own thinking, but received by believing the word of salvation God has prepared.

Therefore the saints must not put forward their own experience and judgment, but believe the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and live according to the word of God.

12. Washing again after seven days

In verse 9, after seven days he shaves the hair of his head, his beard, and his eyebrows, washes his clothes, and washes his body. After that the procedure of cleansing is completed.

This repeated washing must not be interpreted as repeated salvation in the New Testament. The cleansing ceremony of Leviticus was carried out in stages as time passed, but the salvation of Jesus Christ was completed once and for all.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood and died once and for all on the Cross, and accomplished eternal salvation by rising again from death.

However, as the saints live on this earth, they must remember

and believe again the already completed gospel whenever they do wrong through the weakness of the flesh. This is not a matter of newly receiving the remission of sins, but of confirming through the word the remission of sins already received, while acknowledging the wrongs in one's life and turning from them.

13. Cleanness is restoration to the community

The purpose of cleansing is that the person who was outside the camp returns to his own tent and lives together with the people of God. Sin separates God and people, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit brings reconciliation with God and restores one to a life of having fellowship with the saints and serving the gospel. The person who believes lives as a child of God in the hope of the kingdom of God.

Therefore the church, too, must not keep the person who has been made clean standing outside the camp. It must not attach past sins like a permanent label to the person who God has said is clean. The gospel not only makes sinners clean but also brings them back to the life of the people of God.

14. The overall meaning of the gospel

The flow of the gospel in Leviticus 14:1–9 may be summarized as follows.

First, a sinner cannot resolve his unclean state by himself. The method of salvation God has appointed is needed.

Second, just as the priest went out of the camp, Jesus came to us sinners.

Third, the blood of the dead bird and the running water show

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the salvation in which Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross.

Fourth, the appearance of the living bird dipped in the blood being let loose in the field shows the fact that our sins have been removed far away.

Fifth, just as the blood was sprinkled seven times and the person was declared clean, the remission of sins is grounded not on human feelings but on the salvation God accomplished and the verdict of the word.

Sixth, the word about shaving the hair teaches laying down one's own thinking and authority and believing the word, and the word about washing the clothes and the body teaches the faith that ruminates every day on the gospel that has already washed away sin.

Seventh, returning into the camp and to one's own tent shows the fact that the remission of sins restores one's relationship with God and with the community.

Conclusion

Leviticus 14:1–9 is the word in which the person who had been cast outside the camp comes back into the camp through the cleansing ceremony of blood and water that God appointed.

The fulfillment of this word is in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of that sin, and Jesus saved us forever by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation accomplished with water and blood is true.

Therefore one must acknowledge that one is a sinner who is

to be judged, and believe the word that Jesus has removed all sins. The saints who have been made clean ruminate on this gospel and set right their thoughts, habits, and relationships. This is not an effort to be saved again, but the life of faith that gives thanks for the grace already received.

Leviticus 14:10–20—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall flow of the text

If Leviticus 14:1–9 was the procedure of examining outside the camp the person whose sore had healed and declaring cleanness in the first instance, verses 10–20 are the process by which that person is restored through sacrifice as a clean member of the covenant people before God.

The fact that the disease has healed and being accepted as a clean person before God are distinguished. He did not enter the tabernacle of meeting by his own judgment; only after the priest had offered the offerings God appointed and applied the blood and the oil did he receive the verdict, *"He shall be clean."*

This shows the principle of the gospel that a sinner does not become clean by himself through his own efforts and feelings, but obtains cleanness through the sacrificial offering and the method of atonement God appointed.

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2. The offerings without blemish offered on the eighth day

"And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil" (Leviticus 14:10).

"On the eighth day" is literally the day on which the person who has stayed outside his tent for seven days performs the next stage of the cleansing ceremony. Therefore this number must not be directly concluded to be the resurrection. He had to come before the LORD on the day God appointed, with the offerings appointed for him.

One male lamb is offered as the trespass offering, the ewe lamb as the sin offering, and the remaining male lamb as the burnt offering. The grain offering is offered together with the burnt offering. That not just one kind of sacrifice is offered, but the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering are offered together, shows that the meaning of cleansing does not end simply with escaping punishment.

It goes as far as sin and uncleanness being removed, the relationship with God being restored, and the restored person offering his life to God and living in thanksgiving and obedience.

The point that all the offerings had to be *"without blemish"* is connected with the sinlessness of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:14 testifies that Christ is the One who offered Himself without spot to God. A person with sin cannot take the place of another sinner. Only Jesus, who has no sin, can become the perfect sacrificial offering that bears the sins of all people.

3. Being presented before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting

"Then the priest who makes him clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting" (Leviticus 14:11).

The person who had stayed outside the camp now stood *"before the LORD"* together with the offerings. The standard of cleanness is not the evaluation or feelings of people but God. The gospel, too, does not stop at putting the heart at ease for a moment. The ground for coming before God is not our good deeds but the salvation in which Jesus Christ bore sin and was judged.

Hebrews 10:19 says, *"Having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus."* The boldness to come before God does not come from our conduct but from the atonement of Jesus.

4. The trespass offering and the wave offering

The priest offered one male lamb and a log of oil as the trespass offering, and waved them before the LORD as a wave offering.

The trespass offering shows the fact that a damaged relationship and responsibility before God are not simply ignored. For the person who had been unclean to return to the community, the price of atonement God appointed was needed.

The wave offering, waving the offering before the LORD, signifies that this offering and the oil have been offered to God. Cleanness was not completed by people agreeing among themselves, "It is all right now," but was confirmed through the sacrifice God accepts.

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Verse 13 calls the trespass offering *"most holy."* This does not mean that the offering or the ceremony has magical power. It means that dealing with sin and uncleanness belongs to the command of the holy God, and is a solemn matter that human beings cannot change at will.

But the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament could not make a person's conscience perfect forever. They were a model pointing to the redemption of Jesus Christ, who was to come. Hebrews 9:12 testifies of Jesus: *"With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

5. Blood put on the ear, the hand, and the foot

"The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot" (Leviticus 14:14).

Such an application of blood also appears in Leviticus chapter 8, when Aaron and his sons were consecrated as priests. That does not mean, though, that the person who has been cleansed has become a priest. The two ceremonies are not completely the same. Only, the common point that blood is put on a person's ear, hand, and foot shows the fact that that person's whole being is restored and set apart to a life that belongs to God.

The ear is related to what one hears and receives. The person who has received the remission of sins must live as a person who hears the word of God, not following only the falsehood of the world and his own thinking.

The hand signifies action and service. The person who believes the gospel must not present his members again as

instruments of sin, but present them as instruments for doing righteousness.

The foot signifies the way and the direction of life. The person who has received the remission of sins must not justify the way of sin he used to walk, but walk the way that pleases God.

But this order must be noted. It is not that he received the blood because he used his ear, hand, and foot rightly. First the blood of the sacrificial offering was applied, and on the ground of that blood a new life began. That is, obedience is not the condition of salvation, but the fruit that the saved person must bear.

The word of Romans 6:13 also shows this principle.

"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

6. The oil put on the blood

Here the oil was used in the cleansing ceremony, and from the perspective of the gospel it is connected with the Holy Spirit given to the person who has received the remission of sins. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The priest poured the oil into the palm of his left hand, dipped his right finger in it, and sprinkled it seven times before the LORD. After that he put the remaining oil on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person who was to be cleansed.

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The especially important expression is as follows.

"On the blood of the trespass offering" (Leviticus 14:17).

First the blood was applied, and on that blood the oil was applied. This order is connected with the order of salvation in which the person who has received the remission of sins through the redemption of Jesus Christ receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and lives a life that belongs to God.

The blood signifies the death and vicarious atonement of the sacrificial offering, and the oil shows the Holy Spirit given to the person who has received the remission of sins. The person who believes the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross lives a life set apart to God, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This does not mean that a person first accumulates merit in order to receive the Holy Spirit. It means that the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the redemption of Jesus Christ is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and comes to live following the guidance of that Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 says of those who heard and believed the gospel of salvation that *"you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."*

Putting the remaining oil on the head shows that not only a part of that person but his whole being has been set apart to belong to God. This means offering to God even one's thoughts and judgment, one's plans, and the sovereignty over one's life.

7. The meaning of the blood seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The blood of this sacrificial offering is fulfilled in the New Testament by the blood of the Cross of Jesus Christ. But the blood of the Cross must not be understood by itself, in separation

from the baptism Jesus received from John.

Jesus received baptism from John as He began His public ministry. When John the Baptist tried to prevent this, Jesus said as follows.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is the righteous work by which He bore all the sins of the world. Jesus, with the sin of the world He had thus borne upon Him, went to the Cross and shed His blood and received the judgment.

The water and the blood make up one work of redemption. Jesus showed the completion of the work of salvation by rising again from death, and the Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel is true.

1 John 5:6–8 testifies that Jesus Christ is *"he that came by water and blood,"* and says that the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify together.

Just as the priest applied the blood to the person who was to be cleansed, the sinner receives the remission of sins not by his own good deeds, but by believing in the salvation of water and blood that Jesus Christ completed.

8. The sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering

In verse 19 the sin offering is offered.

"The priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness"

Here the fact that that person was unclean must not be interpreted directly as the result of a specific personal

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transgression. The law of cleansing in Leviticus deals with ceremonial uncleanness that arose from disease or bodily condition. Therefore judging, on seeing an illness or disability today, that that person has committed a special sin does not fit the purpose of the text.

Only, the whole system of cleansing teaches that one cannot come before the holy God in an unclean state. A sinner cannot participate in the holiness of God with his nature as it is. The atonement God has prepared is needed.

Next the burnt offering is offered. The burnt offering is the sacrifice in which the whole offering is burned on the altar. This shows the total devotion of the person who has received atonement. The person who has received the remission of sins must now live a life of offering himself to God, not leaving himself to his own desires.

The grain offering is a bloodless offering of grain, but it was offered together with the burnt offering. This does not mean human works for obtaining salvation. It signifies the appearance of the person who has already been cleansed by the sacrifice of blood offering his labor and his life to God with thanksgiving.

Therefore, when the flow of the sacrifices is summarized from the standpoint of the gospel, it is as follows.

—The blood of the trespass offering: the price of the sacrifice and the restoration of the relationship

—The sin offering: the removal of uncleanness and atonement

—The burnt offering: the total devotion of the saved person

—The grain offering: a life offered in thanksgiving and service

—The oil: the Holy Spirit given to the person who has received the remission of sins, and the life lived following the guidance of that Spirit

The final declaration is *"he shall be clean."* He was declared clean not because of a person's feelings, but because the sacrifice God appointed had been completed.

9. The meaning for believers today

This text does not teach that the born-again person must offer sacrifices repeatedly. Jesus completed once and for all the atonement that the various sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadowed.

Hebrews 10:14 says as follows.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

Therefore the person who believes does not sacrifice Jesus repeatedly in order to be saved again each time he commits sin. He must return to the gospel that Jesus bore all his sins with the baptism He received from John, received the penalty of all those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death.

The person who believes this gospel does not live in self-indulgence, but presents his ear, hand, and foot to God as instruments of righteousness. He must accept the word and exhortation, serve the gospel and help his neighbors, and turn from the habits of sin.

Oil must be put on the head as well. One must not make one's own thinking absolute, but live following the truth the Holy Spirit makes one realize through the word. One first receives the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the blood, and after that lives following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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Conclusion

Leviticus 14:10–20 is the word in which the person who had been unclean is established again before God through the sacrifices God appointed, and begins a new life, set apart with blood and oil from his ear, hand, and foot even to his head.

This law of sacrifice was fully fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus became the offering without blemish and bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin, and saved us by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel is true, and leads the person who believes to a life that belongs to God.

It is not that we obtain the remission of sins by living holy lives. Because we are people who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we now live offering our whole being to God.

Leviticus 14:21–32—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The central meaning of the text

Leviticus 14:21–32 is the ordinance in which God adjusted the rite of cleansing of verses 10–20 so that a poor person could also afford it.

The kind of offerings and the amount of the grain offering were adjusted to fit his circumstances, but the procedure of coming before the LORD on the eighth day, applying the blood of the trespass offering, sprinkling the oil, and offering the sin

offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering was maintained. Even though economic circumstances differed, there was no difference in the status of cleanness God gives.

Seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this shows the truth that all people receive the remission of sins by believing the same salvation Jesus accomplished, not by their own property or merit.

2. *"But if he is poor and cannot afford it"*

"But if he is poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take one male lamb as a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, a log of oil" (Leviticus 14:21).

In the preceding general ordinance, two male lambs without blemish and one ewe lamb, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, and a log of oil had to be prepared. But for the person who was poor and could not afford such offerings, it was adjusted as follows.

Item	General ordinance	Ordinance for the poor person
Trespass offering	One male lamb	One male lamb
Sin offering	One ewe lamb	One turtledove or young pigeon
Burnt offering	One male lamb	One turtledove or young pigeon
Grain offering	Three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour	One-tenth of an ephah of fine flour
Oil	One log	One log

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The poor person could substitute doves for the lambs to be offered as the sin offering and the burnt offering, and the amount of the grain offering was also reduced to one-third. But the male lamb of the trespass offering and the log of oil remained as they were.

While adjusting the part that was economically hard to bear, God maintained the core structure of the rite of cleansing. The poor person, too, could be cleansed by following the offerings and the procedure God appointed.

God did not say, "You are poor, so you cannot be cleansed." Poverty was not a condition that blocked the way of coming before God. God knew each person's circumstances and opened a way that he could bear.

3. The price of the offerings differs, but the need for atonement is the same

"Two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering" (Leviticus 14:22).

God permitted the poor person the doves he could obtain, but the sacrifice of the sin offering and the burnt offering was still necessary. The doves, too, were accepted because they were offerings God had appointed. The effect of cleansing depended not on the market price of the offering but on the word and promise of God.

The same principle appears in Leviticus 5:7–10 as well. The person who could not afford a lamb could offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons. In that case, too, one was offered as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and after the priest made atonement, that person received remission.

4. Even the poor come equally *"before the LORD"*

"He shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before the LORD" (Leviticus 14:23).

The poor person, too, stood on the same day before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting and received the service of the priest. The offering differed according to circumstances, but his life and his cleanness were not regarded as less important. In the New Testament, too, all who believe become the same children of God in Christ.

"Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference" (Romans 3:22).

The righteousness of God is not given more abundantly to the rich and insufficiently to the poor. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ receives the same righteousness and the same remission of sins.

5. The lamb of the trespass offering is offered as it is

The priest waved the lamb of the trespass offering and the log of oil before the LORD as a wave offering, and killed that lamb. Then he put the blood of the sacrifice on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person who was to be cleansed.

In the rite for the poor person, too, the procedure of applying the blood was not omitted in the least.

"The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of

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his right foot" (Leviticus 14:25).

The blood applied to the rich person and the blood applied to the poor person had the same meaning. The ear, the hand, and the foot of the poor person, too, were cleansed with the blood of the sacrifice and set apart to a life that belongs to God.

The ear may be meditated on in connection with the life of hearing the word of God, the hand with the life of serving God and doing righteousness, and the foot with the life of walking the way of God.

But this order must not be reversed. It is not that the person received the blood because he heard well with his ear, did good with his hand, and walked rightly with his foot. First the blood of the sacrificial offering was applied, and on the ground of that blood the ear, the hand, and the foot were set apart to God.

This is the same in the gospel of the New Testament. It is not that a person receives the remission of sins because he has lived a holy life. One receives the remission of sins by believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished, and after that lives offering one's members to God.

6. Jesus Christ is the same Lamb for all people

In the Old Testament a lamb or doves were offered according to circumstances, but in the New Testament Jesus Christ, the same sacrificial offering, has been given to all people.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said as follows.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is the righteous work by

which He bore the sins of all the people of the world. Jesus, bearing those sins, went to the Cross and received the penalty of sin by shedding His blood and dying.

So John the Baptist testified of Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

In *"the sin of the world"* are included all the sins of the rich and the sins of the poor, the sins of Jews and the sins of Gentiles, the sins of the well educated and of the uneducated. It is not that Jesus bore more of someone's sins and only a little of someone else's.

Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of all those sins with the blood of the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

7. The offering of the poor person does not lower the value of the gospel

That the poor person offered doves did not make the atonement cheap. The sacrifice of life and the blood were still necessary. Only, God permitted an offering that fit that person's circumstances.

That we receive the remission of sins freely in the New Testament does not mean, either, that salvation cost nothing at all.

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

It was given to us freely, but God gave up His only begotten Son, and Jesus gave up His own life. Salvation is a gift of grace

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to us, but to Christ it was a sacrifice in which He gave up His life.

Salvation is not bought with money or good deeds. Offerings and property, one's record of faith or social position cannot be the price of the remission of sins. We receive by faith the salvation of Jesus Christ that God has given.

8. The oil sprinkled seven times before the LORD

"The priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. Then the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the LORD" (Leviticus 14:26–27).

Seen from the perspective of the gospel, the oil used in the rite of cleansing shows the Holy Spirit given to the person who has received the remission of sins. Whether rich or poor, when a person receives the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The priest poured the oil into his palm as God had commanded and sprinkled it seven times before the LORD. The repetition of seven times shows that the cleansing ceremony was carried out sufficiently according to the command of God.

The Holy Spirit testifies of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and sets apart and leads to God the person who has received the remission of sins. But the work of the Holy Spirit does not take the place of the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:8).

9. The oil put *"on the place of the blood of the trespass offering"*

"The priest shall put some of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering" (Leviticus 14:28).

In the preceding passage it said that the oil is put *"on the blood,"* and here it says that the oil is put *"on the place of the blood."* The order is the same.

First the blood is applied, and on it the oil is applied.

This order is important for understanding the salvation and life of the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

—Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John.

—He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin.

—Jesus rose again from death.

—The Holy Spirit seals and leads the person who believes this gospel.

—The person who has received the remission of sins lives offering his ear, hand, and foot to God. The life led by the Holy Spirit is built on the atonement of Christ.

10. The remaining oil put on the head

"The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD" (Leviticus 14:29).

The oil being put on the head makes us think of the meaning that that person's whole being is set apart to belong to God. Not

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only the ear, the hand, and the foot, but one's thoughts and judgment, one's plans and the whole sovereignty over one's life are offered to God.

Here, too, the fact that a person was poor did not mean that only a little oil was applied or that the procedure of putting it on the head was omitted. God accepted the poor person, too, as a full member of the covenant people.

This is connected with the gospel that the same Holy Spirit and the same status as a child of God are given to the poor person as well. Ephesians 1:13 says of those who heard and believed the gospel of salvation that *"you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."*

11. Offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering

The poor person offered one of the two doves as the sin offering and the other as the burnt offering together with the grain offering.

The sin offering is the sacrifice that deals with that person's uncleanness. This shows that an unclean state cannot be accepted as it is before the holy God, and that a sacrifice is needed for cleansing.

The burnt offering is the sacrifice in which the whole offering is offered to God. Seen from the standpoint of the gospel, it is connected with the devotion of the person who has received the remission of sins offering his whole being to God.

The grain offering is a sacrifice offered with grain. The poor person offered a smaller amount than in the general ordinance, but that grain offering, too, was accepted by God. God did not look only at the amount offered, but looked at whether he offered

it believing and obeying the word of God.

Therefore the words *"such as he is able to afford"* must be understood in two directions.

On the one hand, God does not require of the poor person the same material things as of the rich person. On the other hand, He does not say either that because a person is poor he can offer nothing to God. He could offer the sacrifice God appointed within his own circumstances.

The saints of the New Testament, too, do not pay the price of salvation with money or service, but serve God by faith within their own circumstances, giving thanks for the grace already received.

12. "To make atonement for him before the LORD"

The one who actually carried out the sacrifice for the person who was to be cleansed was the priest. That person brought the offerings, but applying the blood, sprinkling the oil, and offering the sin offering and the burnt offering were performed by the priest.

This shows that a sinner cannot deal with his own problem by his own strength. In the New Testament, Jesus is at the same time the sacrificial offering and the High Priest who accomplishes atonement for us.

Hebrews 9:12 says of Jesus: *"With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

The poor person of the Old Testament had to prepare doves amid repeated sacrifices, but we of the New Testament believe the eternal sacrifice that Jesus offered once and for all with His own body.

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"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

The one sacrifice of Christ perfects forever all who believe, without distinction between rich and poor.

13. Jesus Himself came to the place of the poor

Looking at Luke 2:24, when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to God, they sacrificed with *"A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."* Since this was according to the ordinance of purification for a new mother in Leviticus chapter 12, not the ordinance of cleansing from leprosy in Leviticus chapter 14, the two texts must not be directly identified with each other.

But the two ordinances have in common that they permit doves to the poor. This fact shows that Jesus did not come to a rich and high place, but came within the circumstances of the poor.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Jesus came in the low and poor circumstances of human beings, and by receiving baptism from John bore all the sin of sinners once and for all. And He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and rose again from death.

The riches we have received do not mean only the wealth of the world. They are the spiritual riches of having received the remission of sins and righteousness, the status of a child of God, and eternal life.

14. The lesson for the church and the life of faith

This text teaches the fact that the church must not evaluate people by property and social position. God had the poor person, too, stand before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and had him receive the same rite of blood and oil.

The church must not evaluate faith and the right to speak by offerings or social position, nor conclude that poverty is a spiritual deficiency or the result of sin. Material contribution does not determine salvation or spiritual status.

Also, the skin disease and ceremonial uncleanness of Leviticus chapter 14 must not be mechanically identified with a specific modern disease or a personal transgression. This text is not a word given to condemn the patient, but a word showing how God makes clean and accepts again the person who was outside the community because of uncleanness.

The church must not keep branding the person who has returned through the gospel with his past wounds and circumstances. The person whom God has accepted as clean, the community, too, must accept as a full brother or sister.

Conclusion

Leviticus 14:21–32 is a word saying that God did not exclude the poor person from the grace of cleansing. The kind and quantity of the offerings differed according to circumstances, but the atonement through blood and the status of cleanness received before God did not differ.

This word has been fulfilled all the more clearly in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore the sins

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of all the people of the world, including the rich and the poor. Bearing those sins, He shed His blood and received the judgment on the Cross, and completed eternal salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

All people receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit and become the children of God by believing in the same Jesus Christ. Though circumstances differ, there is no distinction in the grace of salvation given in Jesus Christ.

Leviticus 14:33–57—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The whole flow of the text

Leviticus 14:33–57 prescribes how to judge and deal with *"the leprous plague"* that appears in a house in the land of Canaan, and how to restore before God a house that has become clean.

The progression of the text is very orderly.

—The owner of the house discovers the plague and tells the priest.

—The priest has the house emptied and then inspects the plague.

—The suspected house is shut up for seven days.

—If the plague has spread, the contaminated stones and plaster are removed and the house is repaired.

—If it spreads again even after the repair, the whole house is broken down.

—If the plague has not spread, the priest pronounces that house clean.

—The rite of cleansing is performed by sprinkling the blood of a bird and running water seven times.

—Finally it is made clear that the purpose of this ordinance is to teach the discernment of what is clean and what is unclean.

This word is first of all an ordinance of cleansing concerning the actual houses of ancient Israel. Seen in the light of the gospel, it shows the fact that uncleanness does not stay only with the individual but can spread to the house and the living sphere of the community, and the principle that cleanness is obtained only through the atonement of water and blood that God appointed.

2. The land and the houses God gave are also under the holiness of God

"When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession" (Leviticus 14:34).

This ordinance was given while the people of Israel were still in the wilderness, but the time of its application was after they entered the land of Canaan. Canaan is *"the land of your possession"* that God gives. Therefore that land and the houses in it were the possession of the people of Israel and at the same time under the rule of God.

That God gave the land as a gift did not mean that they might live in that land as they pleased. The gift of God had to be enjoyed within the holiness of God. A house is a private space, but it was not a sphere unrelated to the word of God.

In the text God says, *"I put the leprous plague in a house."* This expression shows the fact that even what happens in the

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land of Canaan is not outside the sovereignty of God. Through the plague that appeared in a house, God revealed uncleanness that had been unseen, and had the people learn holiness.

But on this basis one must not conclude that if mold or a defect appears in some house today, God has punished the owner of that house because he has committed sin. Leviticus chapter 14 is a special ordinance given within the covenantal system of cleansing of Israel. Interpreting every problem of buildings today as a direct divine punishment goes beyond the scope of the text.

3. The owner of the house does not pronounce, but tells the priest

"He who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, It seems to me that there is some plague in the house" (Leviticus 14:35).

The owner of the house did not give the final verdict, "Our house has leprosy." He only reported that *"there is some plague in the house."*

This is an important attitude. The owner of the house neither hid the plague nor, conversely, concluded by his own judgment alone that the whole house was unclean. He told the facts to the priest and waited for the judgment according to the word of God.

The person who believes the gospel, too, must not unconditionally cover up strange signs when they appear in his life or community. When signs of sin and falsehood, greed and hatred, and division appear, they must be brought out before the word. But it is not right, either, hastily to condemn other people as unclean without sufficient facts.

4. The reason He had the house emptied first

"The priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes into it to examine the plague, that all that is in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house" (Leviticus 14:36).

Before inspecting the plague, the priest had the things in the house moved outside first. It was because if the things were taken out after the house had been pronounced unclean, all the things in the house, too, could be treated as unclean.

While strictly distinguishing what was unclean, God had the things that could be protected before the verdict be protected. The law of cleansing was not a law for unnecessary damage or excessive punishment.

The same wisdom is needed when a problem arises within the community today. What is actually wrong must be dealt with clearly, but people and matters that are not involved must not be unconditionally condemned or destroyed. Holiness must be practiced together with precise discernment.

5. Shut up for seven days and examined again

If the plague had greenish or reddish streaks and appeared deeper than the wall, the priest did not immediately break down the house. He shut up that house for seven days and then examined it again.

The priest did not draw a conclusion from the first impression alone, but confirmed whether the plague actually spread as time passed.

In the application from the standpoint of the gospel, too, one of the characteristics of sin is that it spreads. Sin does not stay

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only in the heart of the individual, but affects the family and the community through words and actions. One falsehood gives birth to another falsehood, and the hatred of one person can expand into the division of many people.

1 Corinthians 5:6 says as follows.

"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"

That does not mean, though, that every suspicious matter is to be immediately concluded to be active. Just as the priest examined again after seven days, one must discern carefully according to the word and the facts.

6. Removing the stones and the plaster with the plague

If the plague had spread, the stones were taken away and the plaster all around the inside of the house was scraped off and thrown into an unclean place outside the city. After that, other stones were put in and the house was plastered again with new mortar.

God did not say merely to plaster new mortar over it even though the plague was spreading. It was not resolved by only making the outside look beautiful. The stones with the plague had to be taken out and the contaminated plaster scraped off.

This makes us think that the problem of human sin cannot be covered over with outward self-cultivation or religious decoration. The sin of the heart does not disappear because a sinner behaves in a cultured way outwardly or lives a religious life.

The repair of the house was a measure for removing the actual contamination. Following it, a separate rite of cleansing was needed. In other words, repair is repair, and atonement is

atonement.

Correcting wrong habits and receiving the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished are distinguished. Correcting one's behavior does not produce the remission of sins, but neither is it fitting to leave harmful habits as they are on the ground that one has received the remission of sins.

7. If the plague appears again

"If the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered" (Leviticus 14:43).

If the plague appeared again and spread even though the house had been repaired, the priest pronounced it *"an active leprosy."* At that time it could not end with a partial repair. The house had to be broken down and its stones, its timber, and its plaster all carried to an unclean place outside the city.

Here we can see the holiness of God. What could be restored He repaired, but what kept spreading and made the whole house unclean He did not preserve to the end.

In the application from the standpoint of the gospel, this becomes a warning that sin and falsehood must not be dealt with lightly. If one hides sin and repairs only the outward form, it can appear again. Wrong teaching, greedy structures, violent relationships, and repeated falsehood must not simply be covered over with words alone.

Nevertheless, on the basis of this word one must not call people one dislikes *"the stones in which is the plague"* and rashly drive them out of the community. When dealing with the problems of the community, too, one must discern not by

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people's likes and dislikes but by the word of God and confirmed facts.

The church of the New Testament is not a place that destroys people, but a place that gives life to people through the gospel. Only, even in order to give life to people, sin and falsehood themselves must be dealt with clearly. Leaving sin alone on the ground that one loves people is not love, either, and cruelly condemning people while speaking of holiness is not the gospel, either.

8. The influence of uncleanness

While the house was shut up, the person who went into it was unclean until evening. The person who slept or ate in that house had to wash his clothes.

This shows the fact that uncleanness can affect other people through individuals and the environment. A person could not say, "I am not affected," while staying within an unclean environment.

The saints must examine what they repeatedly hear and see and the influence of relationships and environment. One must not be confident that one is unaffected while staying in an environment that takes falsehood and lewdness, greed and violence for granted.

Jesus came among sinners in order to save sinners, but He did not take part in sin. The person who believes, too, must approach people in order to preach the gospel, but must not be assimilated to the ways of sin.

9. If the plague has not spread, it is pronounced clean

"If the priest comes in and examines it, and indeed the plague has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed" (Leviticus 14:48).

The priest confirmed that the plague had not spread and pronounced the house clean. But the procedure did not end with the restoration of the hygienic state alone; from verse 49 the rite of cleansing follows. In the gospel, too, one must not judge the remission of sins by one's own feelings, but confirm through the word the salvation God accomplished through Jesus Christ.

10. The two birds and the materials of cleansing

"And he shall take, to cleanse the house, two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop" (Leviticus 14:49).

The two birds, the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop are the materials God appointed in order to make that house clean. Just as when a person is made clean, water and blood were used when a house was made clean as well.

In particular, hyssop was used in connection with the ceremony of dipping and sprinkling blood or the water of cleansing. In Exodus, hyssop was used when the blood of the Passover lamb was put on the lintel and the doorposts. David, too, prayed, *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean."*

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11. The bird killed in an earthen vessel over running water

"Then he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water" (Leviticus 14:50).

One bird had to die. Cleansing required the sacrifice of life and the shedding of blood. But that bird was killed not in a dry vessel but *"in an earthen vessel over running water."*

The earthen vessel shows that a human being, made of earth, is one who must die for sin before the word of God. The running water shows that our sins were passed on to Jesus with the baptism He received from John.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, and shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of those sins. The word about making a house clean with water and blood teaches that people and the community must obtain cleanness by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said as follows.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

So the Bible testifies that Jesus is *"he that came by water and blood."*

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood" (1 John 5:6).

Neither the water nor the blood must be left out. The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore sin, and the blood of the Cross is the event in which He received the penalty of that sin.

12. The blood and the running water sprinkled on the house seven times

"Dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times" (Leviticus 14:51).

The priest dipped them in the blood of the dead bird and the running water and sprinkled the house seven times. Sprinkling seven times signifies that the rite of cleansing God commanded was carried out sufficiently and completely.

This does not mean that sin is washed only seven times, nor that the saints of the New Testament must sprinkle water and blood on their houses seven times. The ceremony of the Old Testament is a shadow showing in advance the perfect redemption of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus received baptism from John once, He bore all the sin of mankind once and for all, and bearing that sin He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and was judged once and for all.

"With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

When the gospel of the water and the Spirit is applied to the heart, the sinner receives cleansing from all the sin he could not wash away by his own efforts. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

13. The dead bird and the bird let loose alive

"Then he shall let the living bird loose outside the city in the open field, and make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean" (Leviticus 14:53).

One died, and the other was let loose alive into the field. These two were used together within one cleansing ceremony.

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The appearance of the bird shedding its blood and dying and of the living bird dipped in the blood being let loose into the field shows the judgment of sin and the fact that sin has been removed far away.

—Seeing the appearance of the bird shedding its blood and dying, the sinner must acknowledge that he is one who must die for sin before the word of God.

—The appearance of the living bird dipped in the blood being let loose into the field shows that God has moved our sins far away.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death and became our Savior. The saints believe this salvation already accomplished and live in the assurance of the remission of sins.

The declaration of cleanness is *"it shall be clean."* That house did not become clean by itself; it was acknowledged as clean because the rite of sacrifice, blood, and water that God appointed had been performed.

14. Both repairing the house and making atonement were necessary

Looking closely at the order of the text, neither the repair of the house nor the rite of cleansing was omitted.

First the stones and the plaster with the plague were removed. After that the blood of the bird and the running water were sprinkled.

This order helps us understand the relationship between faith and life. Receiving the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not accomplished by human good

deeds and repair work. It is received only by believing the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

But that does not mean that the person who says he has received the remission of sins may preserve as it is the wrong that is spreading in his life. He must abandon false habits, set right the harm he has done to other people, and put in order the environment that lets sin spread.

15. The ordinance of cleansing for a house teaches the cleanness of people and the community

The ordinance of cleansing concerning a house in Leviticus chapter 14 teaches that people and the community must obtain cleanness through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Not only the individual but also the community cannot become clean by hiding sin or correcting only the outward appearance.

In the New Testament, too, believers and the church are likened to the house of God.

"You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).

Ephesians also says that the saints, with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, are joined together and being built into *"a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."*

In this way both people and the community must examine themselves before the word of God. The sin and falsehood of one person can spread into the culture of the community, and if the community departs from the gospel, the whole structure can be contaminated.

Therefore the church must not hide the signs of the gospel becoming blurred, but discern them by the word and the facts, and set right false teaching and the culture that rationalizes sin.

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It must strive to build again on the truth of the gospel and to restore people with the water and the blood of Christ.

People must not be rashly cast away in the name of making the church clean. The primary object to be removed is not people themselves but sin, falsehood, and evil structures. The person who repents and returns to the gospel must be given life and restored.

16. The final purpose of the law of cleansing is to teach discernment

"To teach when it is unclean and when it is clean. This is the law of leprosy" (Leviticus 14:57).

Verses 54–56 sum up the ordinances concerning the various leprous sores and the scale, the leprosy of a garment and of a house, and a swelling, a scab, and a bright spot.

Verse 57 makes clear the educational purpose of all these ordinances. It is to teach *"when it is unclean and when it is clean."*

The people of Israel could not decide cleanness and uncleanness according to their own feelings. They had to learn the word of God and discern.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, needs such discernment. Condemning everything as sin is wrong, and saying that nothing is sin is also wrong. Through the word of God one must discern sin and righteousness, the thoughts of the flesh and the will of the Spirit, the false gospel and the true gospel.

In particular, the following three things must be distinguished.

First, the fundamental remission of sins for a sinner is received by believing the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus completed.

Second, since the weakness of the flesh and wrong habits can appear even after receiving the remission of sins, one must examine oneself before the word and ruminate on the gospel.

Third, the effort to correct the wrongs of one's life is necessary, but one is not saved again by it. The eternal atonement of Jesus is not repeated.

Conclusion

Leviticus 14:33–57 shows that uncleanness can spread not only to a person's body but even to his living space. Sin, too, does not stay only in the heart of the individual, but affects the family, relationships, and the community.

But the problem of sin is not resolved by human beings repairing the outside. Even after the stones and the plaster with the plague had been removed, the rite of cleansing in which the blood and the running water were sprinkled was needed.

Jesus came to this earth in order to wash away our sins. By receiving baptism from John He bore all the sins of the world, and bearing those sins He shed His blood and was judged on the Cross. And Jesus gave us new life by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this gospel of the water and the blood, and builds those who believe it into a holy dwelling place in which God dwells.

We must not hide the wrongs of our lives, but neither must we try to wash away sin by our own efforts. We must receive the remission of sins by believing in our hearts the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished, and on that faith remove the habits of sin that spread in our lives, our families, and our communities, and live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has cleansed sinners with water and blood

< Leviticus 14:1-9 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper, then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field. He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean."

Dear beloved saints, there are times when a person looks at

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himself and thinks he has become all right. When he has not done for some time the wrong he used to do, or when the distress in his heart has subsided, he regards all his problems as now resolved. But the matter of receiving the remission of sins before God must be confirmed by the word of God. We must know how God has washed away our sins, and believe the salvation He accomplished.

Today's passage is the ordinance by which a person who had suffered from leprosy obtains cleanness. Speaking to Moses, God told him concretely the way by which that person was to return. He appointed one by one what the priest had to do and what the person to be cleansed had to do.

God has appointed the way of obtaining cleanness

It is the word of verses 2–3: "*This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper*"

The passage begins with confirming whether the sore has healed. The priest had to go out of the camp and examine that person. It was not that all the procedure ended merely with that person looking at his own body and thinking he had been healed. The priest had to examine him and perform the rite of cleansing God had commanded.

Here we must see the healing of the disease and the rite of cleansing as distinguished from each other. God had two clean living birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop brought if the sore had healed. For the person confirmed to have healed, the rite of cleansing followed.

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Through this word we learn the faith that receives the remission of sins before God. We cannot be sure of the remission of sins merely by the thought that I have changed. Being reconciled with people and setting right wrongs is also necessary, but the sins committed before God must be remitted by God. We need the salvation God has prepared and the word that testifies of that salvation.

Even for the person outside the camp, the way of return was opened

Think of the word that the priest went out of the camp. The priest went out to the place where the person who had to be cleansed was, and examined his state. That person could not yet come into the camp and live there as he pleased. But God did not leave him as he was. He had him examined, had him obtain cleanness, and gave the procedure by which he could come into the camp again.

In the word of God there is the sternness that judges uncleanness. At the same time there is the grace that lets the unclean person obtain cleanness. Today's passage shows the fact that God prepared the way of return for the person who was outside the camp.

We too were people who could not come boldly before God because of sin. While saying that we loved God, we went against His will, and while knowing that we should love our neighbors, we put our own gain first. When we look in the light of the word at what we thought in our hearts, what we said with our mouths, and what we actually did, we come to know the fact that we need salvation.

For such people as us, God sent Jesus Christ. The Son of God

came to this earth, bore our sins, and received the judgment. It is not that we removed our sins by ourselves and went up to God. The Lord came in order to save us, and opened the way by which we can come before God.

Therefore there is no need to draw back farther from the Lord because we have realized our sins. Acknowledging those sins rather than hiding them, we must turn our hearts toward the Lord, who came to save sinners.

Before the bird that is killed, we must acknowledge our own sins

Verses 4–5 speak of what is needed for the rite of cleansing and what is to be done first: *"The priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water"*

God had two clean living birds prepared. One of them was killed in an earthen vessel over running water. Before the person who was to be cleansed, the death of a sacrifice was set.

Seeing this scene, we must think of our own appearance before God. Who is the one who must receive the judgment of sin? It is we, who have transgressed the word of God. We, who have committed sin, must take responsibility for that sin and stand before the holy judgment of God.

A person easily takes his own wrong lightly by comparing it with the wrongs of others. If he thinks he has not committed sins as serious as other people's, he regards himself as having no great problem. But the One who judges sin is God. We must examine ourselves before the word God has given.

There are also sins that are not revealed outwardly. There are

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the hatred and greed harbored in the heart, the thought of deceiving others, and the pride that seeks to exalt oneself. A sin does not cease to exist before God on the ground that it was not caught by people.

The person who acknowledges this fact comes to know why the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is necessary for him. He does not hear the word that the Lord died for sinners as if it were the story of someone far away. He realizes the fact that the Lord received the judgment I should have received, and accepts that grace.

Psalm 51:17 also says, *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise."*

A broken spirit is different from the heart that puts forward its own righteousness. It is the heart that acknowledges its own sin and inability before God. It is the heart that accepts the salvation the Lord gives, because it cannot remove its own sins.

It is not that one has to commit more sins in order to know one's own appearance. It is enough to stand honestly before the word of God now. We must acknowledge what God calls sin, and acknowledge ourselves as those who must be judged for that sin. We must believe what the Lord has done for such people as us.

In the running water and the blood of the sacrifice we see the salvation of Jesus

Speaking of the place where the bird is killed, the passage mentions the running water and the earthen vessel together. And God has the blood of the bird that was killed used in the rite of cleansing. Water and blood are together within this ordinance.

Here we look to the baptism Jesus received from John and

the sacrifice of the Cross. Jesus received baptism from John in order to bear our sins. Because our sins were borne by the Lord, the Lord went to the Cross bearing those sins.

Matthew 3:15 says, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

In the baptism Jesus received from John there is the will to fulfill all the righteousness of God. In order to save us from sin, God had His Son bear our sins. Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment for that sin on the Cross.

When we think of the Cross of Jesus, we must believe this work of baptism together with it. It is because it then becomes clear why Jesus died for our sins and how He bore our sins. The Lord is the sinless Son of God, but by receiving baptism from John He had our sins laid upon Himself. And on the Cross He shed His blood and died in our place.

After that, Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who bore our sins and received the judgment of those sins, came back to life and became our Savior. We receive the remission of sins by believing this salvation.

1 John 5:6–8 testifies this way: *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).*

The Holy Spirit testifies of the salvation the Son of God accomplished. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross. The gospel of the water and the Spirit tells us clearly this fact of salvation.

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Therefore faith is not a matter of vaguely bracing up one's heart. It is accepting into one's heart the fact that Jesus bore my sins and the fact that He received the judgment for my sins. It is believing what God accomplished through His Son as salvation for me.

The blood is sprinkled and he is pronounced clean, and the living bird is let loose in the field

Verses 6–7 say what is to be done with the other, living bird: *"As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field."*

The living bird is taken together with the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop and dipped in the blood of the bird that was killed. And it is sprinkled seven times on the person who is to be cleansed, and he is pronounced clean. After that the living bird is let loose in the field.

In this rite the person who is cleansed enters into a relationship with the blood of the sacrifice. He does not stop at hearing the news that a bird died somewhere else, but has that blood sprinkled on himself as God commanded. He receives the declaration that he is clean according to the rite God appointed.

Today we too must believe the salvation of Jesus Christ as salvation for ourselves. If, while knowing the word that Jesus bore the sin of the world, we think as if our own sins were excluded, assurance does not arise in the heart. We must believe that my sins are included in the sin of the world the Lord bore.

The sins that are shameful to tell others are also my sins. The sins committed long ago but still remaining in the heart are also my sins. The Lord bore those sins through the baptism He received from John and was judged for them on the Cross. We receive the grace of the remission of sins by believing that fact.

The scene of the living bird being let loose in the field makes us think of the grace by which God has made sin depart from us. Our sins were borne by the Lord, and the judgment of those sins the Lord received. The person who places the ground of salvation in Jesus Christ can confess the remission of sins without hiding his own sins.

What makes that person sure of his cleanness is the word God has given. We too need the same faith. We must believe the fact that the salvation the Lord accomplished is sufficient, and accept the word that He has made us clean.

Washing the clothes and shaving the hair, we lay ourselves down before the word

The person who was cleansed also had things to do. Verse 8 says, *"He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days."*

That person had to wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water. Although he had already had the blood sprinkled on him and heard himself declared clean, he also had to follow the procedure of washing that God commanded.

Here we learn the attitude of faith that follows the word of God. It is not choosing and doing only the parts one judges necessary, but accepting what God has commanded. It is

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respecting the word of the One who gives cleanness.

When we look at the word about shaving the hair in the light of our faith, we gain the lesson that we must lay down our own thinking and boasting before the word of God. A person does not easily lay down the thinking he has held on to for a long time. He regards what he has experienced as certain, and sometimes makes it the standard of salvation on the ground that there was a strong feeling in his heart.

But the assurance of salvation must be placed on what God accomplished through Jesus Christ. On some days the heart may be fervent, and on some days the feelings may be dull. The baptism Jesus received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross do not change because feelings change.

We must lay down our own judgment that hinders us from believing the word. We must lay down the thought that since I have become this good, God will accept me, and also lay down the thought that since I am so insufficient, even the salvation the Lord accomplished will be insufficient. We must confirm how God has saved us and set our hearts on that word.

The person who was cleansed did not stop at washing only his body, but washed his clothes as well. He washed himself as God commanded, and returned to the place God permitted. We too must become people who believe the word of the remission of sins and live following that word.

Even after coming into the camp, he follows the word of washing

Let us look again at the order of verse 8. The person who had washed his clothes, shaved his hair, and washed his body could come into the camp. Only, he had to spend seven days outside

his own tent. It was not waiting seven more days outside the camp, but staying outside his own tent after coming into the camp.

And on the seventh day there was something to be done again. It is the word of verse 9: *"On the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean"*

God spoke concretely even of the hair of the head, the beard, and the eyebrows, and had him shave off all his hair. He had him wash his clothes again and wash his body in water as well. Even the person who had performed the first rite of cleansing had to follow the word that came after it.

Through this word of washing we must also think of the faith after receiving the remission of sins. Even though we have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, our flesh is still weak. As we live, wrong thoughts, words, and actions are revealed. At such times we must engrave again in our hearts the salvation Jesus accomplished.

While acknowledging our own wrong, we must believe that the Lord bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John. We must believe that He received the judgment of that sin, too, on the Cross. It is applying the salvation the Lord has already accomplished to the problem of our own sin revealed today, and believing it.

From the laver of Exodus, too, we learn this lesson of washing. Even the priests who served God needed water for washing. Today we, too, cannot ignore our own weakness on the ground that we serve the Lord. We must acknowledge our wrongs before the word and rely on the grace of the remission of the sins the Lord bore.

This does not mean that Jesus must receive baptism again

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and be crucified again for our sins. The Lord has accomplished our salvation. What we must believe every day is that salvation already accomplished.

Hebrews 10:18 says, *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin."*

The atonement of the Lord has been completed. We must not forget that fact, but live by faith. The more our own insufficiency is revealed, the more clearly we must look to what salvation the Lord accomplished. With that faith we can wash away the qualms of conscience and come before God with thanksgiving.

Set your hearts on the word that says you are clean

Dear beloved saints, in today's passage the person who was cleansed followed the way God appointed. The priest went out of the camp and examined that person, and prepared the offerings God commanded. One bird was killed and its blood was sprinkled, and the living bird was let loose in the field. That person washed his clothes and his body, and returned into the camp following the word.

Before all these words, what we must hold on to is the cleanness God gives. We cannot resolve the problem of sin with an assurance we have made up by ourselves. We must know how God has washed away sin and believe that salvation.

Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins. Bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of salvation. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the salvation God accomplished as his own salvation.

Acknowledge your sins. And believe in Jesus Christ, who

bore those sins. Do not hesitate, looking only at your insufficient selves, but accept into your hearts what the Lord has done for you.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, let us live keeping this gospel close. Let us acknowledge our wrongs before the word, believe the salvation already accomplished, and serve the Lord with thanksgiving. Let us preach to other people, too, the grace of the Lord, who has made us clean and enabled us to come before God.

We give thanks and glory to God, who has washed away our sins with the baptism and the blood, and has given the assurance of the remission of sins to us who believe. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The gift of the Holy Spirit given to those who have received the remission of sins

< Leviticus 14:10-20 >

"And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil. Then the priest who makes him clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And the priest shall take one male lamb and offer it as a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. Then he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering and the burnt offering, in a holy place; for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering. It is most holy. The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD. And of the rest of the oil in his

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hand, the priest shall put some on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering. The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD. Then the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean."

Dear beloved saints, what is the purpose for which God has saved us from sin? It is to make us clean, who had been pressed down under the burden of sin, and to make us His own people who live together with God. It is to make us stand before God, and to have us believe His grace and serve Him.

In today's passage is recorded the person who has been healed of leprosy coming before God on the eighth day of the rite of cleansing. Before this he had washed his clothes, shaved his hair, and washed his body. After coming into the camp he had spent seven days outside his own tent, and on the seventh day he had shaved his hair again and washed his clothes and his body. And now he comes before the door of the tabernacle of meeting with the offerings God commanded.

At this time the trespass offering and the sin offering, the burnt offering and the grain offering are offered. The blood of the trespass offering is put on the person being cleansed, and oil is also put on the place where that blood was put. Through such a procedure God made known the way by which that person

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becomes clean.

In this word we intend to look together at the remission of sins Jesus accomplished and the grace of giving the Holy Spirit. We will engrave in our hearts how the Lord has made us stand before God, and what we, who have received that grace, must believe and live by.

On the eighth day he stood before God with the offerings

Verses 10 and 11 say this: *"On the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil. Then the priest who makes him clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting"*

What was to be prepared on the eighth day was concrete. He had to bring two male lambs without blemish and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, a grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and a log of oil. The priest presented the person who was to be cleansed and those offerings before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Here we see the fact that that person and the offerings are set before God together. That person did not stand before God with only his appearance of having become healthy. He came with the sacrifice and the offerings God appointed.

We too must examine what we rely on when we stand before God. If we feel at ease because our lives have become a little better, or give up coming to God because we have made many mistakes, we are making our own appearance the standard. But

the ground of salvation God has given us is Jesus Christ.

When we think of the sacrificial offering without blemish, we must look to Jesus, who has no sin. We ourselves are people who have committed sin, but Jesus came as the holy Savior who would save us. The Lord bore our sins and gave up His own life.

God did not tell us to remove our sins by ourselves and then come to Him. He had us come by believing in Jesus Christ, who bore our sins. Therefore, when we stand before God, we must rely on the Lord's vicarious atonement rather than on my own goodness. We must know and believe what salvation He has prepared for me.

The sacrifice of the trespass offering makes us think of the salvation that bears the responsibility for sin in our place

In verse 12 God has one male lamb taken and offered as the trespass offering together with the log of oil, waved before the LORD as a wave offering.

The trespass offering is the name of the sacrifice offered, and the wave offering refers to the way of offering by waving before the LORD. Here the male lamb to be offered as the trespass offering and the oil are presented before the LORD. Then He had that male lamb killed in a holy place, that is, in the place where the sin offering and the burnt offering are killed.

Verse 13 says that the trespass offering belongs to the priest as the sin offering does, and is most holy. Since it was an offering God had appointed, even the place of killing and the handling of that offering had to follow the command of God.

Through the trespass offering we come to think of the responsibility for sin and the sacrifice that bears that

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responsibility in our place. In Leviticus chapter 5, dealing with trespass concerning the hallowed things and faults committed unintentionally, God commanded the trespass offering. He made known that even if a person thinks lightly of a wrong, before God there is responsibility for sin.

In today's passage the trespass offering is offered for the person being cleansed. On the way of becoming clean before God lies the death of a sacrifice. Through this word we must look to Jesus, who bore the responsibility for sin for us.

Jesus is not One who covered over our wrongs and pretended not to know them. He Himself bore our sins and received the judgment for those sins. The responsibility for sin that we should have borne, the Lord bore.

Therefore, when our sins are revealed, we must acknowledge those sins and believe the vicarious atonement the Lord accomplished. There is no need to remain sitting down, thinking that we are too insufficient, while having the heart to return to God. It is because the Lord sacrificed Himself precisely for such insufficient people as us.

In our salvation there remains no part where we must make up a lacking price of sin. The Son of God gave up His own body. Because we believe that sacrifice, we can return to God with thanksgiving.

The blood of the sacrifice points to the death of the Lord, who bore our sins

In verse 14 He has the blood of the trespass offering put on the person who is to be cleansed: *"The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb*

of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot."

The places where the blood was put were the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot. The priest put the blood of the sacrifice on the places God had designated. The blood of the sacrifice is put on the body of the person being cleansed.

Seeing this blood, we must think of the fact that there was a sacrifice for that person. The offering died and shed its blood, and that blood was put on the person who was to be cleansed. That person's cleanness was related to the sacrifice God had appointed.

When we understand the sacrifices of the Old Testament, we must also know how the sacrificial offering comes to take the place of the sinner. In the ordinance of the burnt offering God also said this: *"He shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4).*

Sin was passed on by laying hands on the sacrificial offering, and the offering that bore the sin died. The sacrificial offering receives in the sinner's place the judgment the sinner should have received.

In order to accomplish this salvation, Jesus came to this earth. Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins. Just as sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, the Lord had the sin of the world passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John.

Look at the word Jesus spoke when He received baptism from John: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

With the baptism He received from John, the Lord accomplished the work of bearing our sins. And bearing those

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sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross. The penalty of sin we should have received, the Lord received. Jesus rose again from death and became our Savior.

Therefore, when we think of the blood of the sacrifice, we must believe it together with the baptism Jesus received from John. Because the Lord bore our sins, He died in our place. The blood of the Lord is the blood of life He gave up while receiving the judgment for our sins.

Dear saints, believe this vicarious atonement as your own salvation. The Lord did not sacrifice Himself vaguely for some sinner. He bore my sins and your sins. Through that sacrifice we have become able to come before God.

The oil was put on the place where the blood of the sacrifice had been put

After the blood is put on, oil is used. In verses 15 and 16 He has the priest pour the oil into the palm of his own left hand, dip his right finger in that oil, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD.

Next, the oil remaining in his hand is put on the person being cleansed: *"Of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put some on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering" (Leviticus 14:17).*

Speaking again of the place where the oil is to be put, God makes clear that that place is on the blood of the trespass offering. First the blood was put on, and on that blood the oil was put.

Seeing this order, we can think together of the grace of the remission of sins and the faith that receives the Holy Spirit. When we look at the oil in connection with the Holy Spirit, what

we need is both the salvation that has washed away sin and the grace of the Holy Spirit who is with us.

A person wants to obtain the power of God. He wants assurance to arise in his heart, and wants to know that God is with him. Then he must first know how God has resolved his sins. He must believe in his heart the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

The Holy Spirit is not some power obtained apart from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He is the gift given to the person who believes the salvation God accomplished through Jesus Christ. The Lord, who has washed away our sins, makes us His own people and gives us the Holy Spirit.

Titus speaks of this grace this way: *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5–7).*

Our righteous works cannot be the ground of salvation. The mercy God has bestowed and the washing away of sin accomplished through Jesus Christ save us. God gives the Holy Spirit through Christ, and makes us children who have the hope of eternal life.

Therefore we must not connect the faith that receives the Holy Spirit only with our own zeal or some special sensation. We must believe the word that the Lord bore my sins. We must accept the fact that He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. In the heart that believes that salvation, there is the grace of the Holy Spirit whom God gives.

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Oil was put on the head as well, and atonement was made for him

In verse 18 He has the oil remaining in the priest's hand put on the head of the person being cleansed. And the priest makes atonement for that person before the LORD.

Now blood and oil have been put on the ear, the hand, and the foot, and oil has been put on the head as well. The rite of cleansing God appointed is being performed on that person. He stands not as a person who produces cleanness by his own judgment, but as a person who receives the grace God commanded.

When we read this word, we must think of our own lives as saved people. If the Lord has saved us, our lives are now related to the grace of that salvation. Since God has given us life, we must believe in the One who gave that life and live.

Our hearing the word with our ears, our helping other people with our hands, and our moving our steps to preach the gospel must all be done within the grace of the Lord. When we keep the grace of salvation in our hearts, we come to want to turn from the heart that lived only for its own gain and to serve the Lord.

This is not a matter of accumulating merit in order to be saved. It is living in thanksgiving for that grace because we believe that the Lord gave up His life for me. We must know rightly the ground of salvation and the life of the saved person.

We receive the remission of sins by believing the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. And as people who have received the remission of sins, we learn the word, serve the gospel together with the saints, and deliver the grace of salvation to other souls as well.

God is not One who made us clean and then left us far away. He is the One who is with us and makes us live by faith. We who

have received the Holy Spirit must keep His word in our hearts and seek His guidance.

We must look at the meaning of the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering that follow

Even after the blood of the trespass offering and the oil have been put on, the rite continues: *"The priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean" (Leviticus 14:19–20).*

In verse 19 He has the sin offering offered to make atonement for that person because of his uncleanness. After that the burnt offering is killed, and in verse 20 He has the burnt offering and the grain offering offered on the altar. The offerings prepared at first are offered according to the order God appointed.

What appears repeatedly in this word is the fact that atonement is made for that person. In verse 18, too, atonement is made for him, and in verses 19 and 20, too, atonement is made for him. The duty of the priest and the grace of the sacrifice for the person being cleansed appear again and again.

In the trespass offering we come to think of the sacrifice that bears the responsibility for sin. In the sin offering we see the vicarious atonement that washes away uncleanness. In the burnt offering we come to think of the sacrifice and the judgment offered to God in the sinner's place. The grain offering, too, is offered together as an offering God commanded.

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Through these sacrifices we learn the abundance of the salvation Jesus accomplished. The Lord bore our sins, received the judgment for those sins, and made us stand clean before God.

That several sacrifices are recorded does not mean that today we must be saved several times. Jesus Christ accomplished perfect salvation with His own body. It says, *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).*

The grace of vicarious atonement revealed in the various sacrifices of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ has accomplished. The Lord received baptism from John and bore the sin of the world, and gave up His body on the Cross and received that judgment. And He rose again from death.

Therefore we must not try to produce a new salvation each time our sins are revealed. We must engrave again in our hearts the salvation the Lord has already accomplished. While honestly acknowledging our sins, we must believe the word of the Lord, who bore even those sins.

Do not end with becoming used to the words that you have received the remission of sins. Think of the love of the Lord, who gave up His life for me. When you believe that love in your heart, thanksgiving comes alive, and you obtain boldness to come to God.

Believe the word that He has made you clean, and serve God

Today's passage ends with the word of God that he shall be clean. The result that person obtains through the sacrifice God appointed is clearly recorded.

The priest did what God commanded. He put the blood of the

sacrifice and the oil on him, and offered the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering for that person. Through all these things the person being cleansed had to accept the promise of cleanness God gave.

We too have the word of salvation we must believe. Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins. He shed His blood and died on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death. God has given the remission of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit to us who believe this gospel.

We may still be weak. But the salvation the Lord accomplished is not weak. Even when our hearts waver, the vicarious atonement of the Lord does not change. Therefore, instead of hiding ourselves or making excuses, we must come before the word and believe again the salvation the Lord accomplished.

Pray to God with that faith. Set right the wrongs revealed in your lives, and ask for the strength to live following the word. Rather than being bound alone in your own thinking, learn the word together with the saints and serve the gospel.

The Lord, who has made us clean, has given us life. He has given us the Holy Spirit and made us live calling God our Father. We who have received this grace can deliver the salvation of the Lord to other souls as well.

Let us give thanks to Jesus, who has washed away our sins with the baptism and the blood. Let us live believing in God, who has made us clean and given us the Holy Spirit. I hope that you will become saints who keep in your hearts the salvation the Lord has bestowed and serve God in a way befitting that grace. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The grace of the remission of sins that even the poor receive by faith

< Leviticus 14:21-32 >

"But if he is poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take one male lamb as a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, a log of oil, and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. He shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before the LORD. And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. Then he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. And the priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. Then the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the LORD. And the priest shall put some of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering. The rest of the oil

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that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD. And he shall offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, such as he can afford—such as he is able to afford, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before the LORD. This is the law for one who had a leprous sore, who cannot afford the usual cleansing."

God knows the circumstances of the person who must be cleansed

Dear beloved saints, today's passage is the word given to the person who cannot sufficiently prepare the offerings for the rite of cleansing. God spoke in detail before this of the offerings the person seeking to be cleansed had to offer and of the duty of the priest. But there were also people who lacked the ability to prepare those offerings. God looked even at the circumstances of such a person, and appointed an ordinance by which he could come before God.

Verse 21 begins this way: *"If he is poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take one male lamb as a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, a log of oil"*

Being poor here means first of all lacking the economic means to prepare the offerings. God thought of the person whose livelihood was actually hard and who had no ability to prepare all the appointed offerings. In this word is contained the careful consideration of God, who knows people's circumstances.

A person easily draws back because of his own insufficiency.

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When he has not got what other people have, he sometimes thinks as if he had not even the qualification to come before God. But look at today's word. God, knowing that person's insufficient circumstances, spoke separately of an ordinance for him. Even the poor person could be cleansed by following the way God appointed.

Through this word we come to think of the grace of salvation. Who is there who has the ability to resolve his own sins before God? Even with much wealth one cannot remove one's own sins, and even with much learning one cannot escape by oneself from the judgment of sin. What we need is the way of salvation God has prepared. The Lord is not One who tells us to produce an ability we do not have and puts off salvation. He sent Jesus Christ, had Him bear our sins, and had us receive by faith the salvation He accomplished.

Though the offerings differ according to circumstances, the way of atonement is kept

When we compare the offerings appointed earlier in verse 10 with the offerings in today's passage, we can know what God reduced and what He had them offer unchanged.

Before, He had two male lambs and one ewe lamb, a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, and a log of oil prepared. But for the poor person He had one male lamb for the trespass offering, one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, and a log of oil prepared. And for the sin offering and the burnt offering He had two turtledoves or two young pigeons offered instead of lambs.

It is the word of verse 22: "*Two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering*

and the other a burnt offering"

The amount of flour going into the grain offering was reduced. The offerings of the sin offering and the burnt offering also changed to fit his circumstances. But the one male lamb of the trespass offering and the log of oil remained as they were. While considering that person's circumstances, God had the order of the sacrifice for atonement clearly kept.

Here we must see together the mercy of God and the need for atonement. That He showed consideration for the poor person does not mean that that person did not need atonement. He too had to be cleansed before God. So God appointed offerings for him so that he could follow.

The salvation given to us today is the same. God knows that we cannot bear the price of sin. That is why He sent the Savior who would pay that price. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. In our receiving the remission of sins freely there is the sacrifice of the Son of God.

Therefore we cannot think lightly of the salvation received by grace. Because we were people who could not pay the price of salvation, the Lord Himself gave Himself up. Faith is accepting that sacrifice into one's heart.

On the same day, at the same door of the tabernacle of meeting, he stands before God

Verse 23 says when and where that person had to come: *"He shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before the LORD."*

The poor person, too, came on the eighth day. That person, too, stood before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of

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meeting. The priest performed for him the duty God commanded. There was a difference in the circumstances for preparing the offerings, but he too was a person who had to be cleansed before God.

We must engrave this scene in our hearts. The worth of the person who comes before God is not decided by the size of the things he has brought. It is not an ordinance that the person who can prepare many offerings stands closer to God, and the person who has prepared few must stand far away. It is coming with the offerings God appointed to the place God appointed.

The hearts of us who believe the gospel, too, must stand here. Some people think they are more righteous before God on the ground that they have served more than others. And some people lose even the assurance of the remission of sins on the ground that what they have offered is little. But the One who washed away our sins is Jesus Christ. Our service does not complete the salvation of the Lord for Him. Thanksgiving and service come from believing the salvation the Lord has completed.

Galatians 3:26 also says, *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."*

The way of becoming a child of God is faith in Jesus Christ. The saint who has little also becomes a child of God by that faith. The person who has long lived boasting of himself must also lay down his own righteousness and believe the same gospel. The Savior we all need is Jesus Christ alone.

Seeing the blood of the lamb, we believe the baptism and the sacrifice of Christ

In verse 24 the priest waves the lamb of the trespass offering and the log of oil before the LORD as a wave offering. Then he

kills the lamb and puts its blood on the person who is to be cleansed.

It is the word of verse 25: *"He shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot"*

For the poor person, too, there was the sacrifice of the lamb. The priest put its blood on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot. The procedure of cleansing spoken of before was carried out for that person just as it was.

That person did not present his own body as the offering. The lamb died, and the blood of that sacrifice was put on that person. Through the word of this sacrifice we must look to Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself for us.

In order to believe the Cross of Jesus rightly, we must also know, together with it, how Jesus bore our sins. Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. Matthew 3:15 also says, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

The baptism Jesus received from John is the work of salvation by which He bore our sins. The Lord had the sin of the world laid upon Himself and went to the Cross. In John 1:29, John testified of Jesus this way: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Because He bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, He received the judgment of sin on the Cross in our place. And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

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Therefore we believe together the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. It is believing the fact that my sins were borne by the Lord, and the fact that the Lord received the judgment for those sins. The assurance of salvation becomes clear when we accept into our hearts this work the Lord did.

In today's passage the procedure of laying hands on the birds is not recorded. In explaining the acts of sacrifice in this passage, there is no need to add actions that are not recorded. We examine the procedure of sacrifice and blood that God commanded, and believe the fulfillment of salvation through the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ made known in the New Testament.

For the poor person, too, the procedure of putting the blood and the oil on him is carried out fully

From verse 26 the procedure using the oil follows. The priest pours the oil into the palm of his own left hand. And with his right finger he dips a little of that oil and sprinkles it seven times before the LORD.

Next, oil is put on the person who is to be cleansed. It is the word of verse 28: *"The priest shall put some of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering"*

The place where the oil is put is the place where the blood of the trespass offering has already been put. Then the priest puts the oil remaining in his hand on that person's head, and makes atonement for him before the LORD.

This word shows how concrete the duty of the priest is. The priest could not be careless with the procedure of cleansing on

the ground that the person was poor. The parts where the blood was put were the same, the number of times the oil was sprinkled before the LORD was the same, and putting the remaining oil on the head was carried out as well. God told that person one by one the procedures he needed.

Here we see the will to have even the person in difficult circumstances be fully cleansed before God. That his offering became smaller did not mean that his cleanness was reduced by that much. According to the word of God, atonement is made for that person.

Think of the grace we have received within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord washes away the sins of the person who believes, and gives him the Holy Spirit. One is not pushed out of the grace of becoming a child of God on the ground that one has little property. The Holy Spirit, too, is not One we can obtain with material things or merit.

Titus 3:5–6 says, *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," "whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:6).*

Our salvation came from the mercy of God. When we believe the gospel that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment on the Cross, we receive the remission of sins. God gives the Holy Spirit to the one who believes that gospel.

Therefore, in order to receive the Holy Spirit, there is no need to be discouraged, comparing your circumstances with others'. We must believe the grace God has bestowed through Jesus Christ our Savior. Accept into your hearts the fact that the Lord bore my sins too, and received the judgment for my sins too.

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The sacrifice offered with two doves is also atonement for that person

Verses 30–31 speak of the sacrifice offered with the birds. In verse 30 the expression one of the birds appears, but this must not be read to mean that only one bird is to be prepared. In verse 22 before, He had two prepared, and in verse 31 He explains the use of each again: *"Such as he is able to afford, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before the LORD."*

One is offered as the sin offering. The other is offered as the burnt offering together with the grain offering. The kind of offering was appointed to fit that person's circumstances, but the priest had to make atonement for him before the LORD.

From this word we can clearly know the purpose of the ordinance for the poor person. God opened the way of atonement to that person as well. He saw to it that the way of obtaining cleanness would not be cut off on the ground that his means for preparing the offerings were lacking.

When we apply this grace to our faith today, too, we must not lose the center. Poverty itself does not wash away a person's sins. The circumstance of having gone through many hardships cannot take the place of Jesus Christ, either. The rich person and the poor person alike must believe the salvation Jesus accomplished.

In the sin of the world Jesus bore with the baptism He received from John, our sins are contained. The sins we wanted to hide out of shame, the sins we could not tell others, and the sins we tried to correct by ourselves but which were revealed again and again, the Lord bore. Bearing those sins He died on the Cross, and rose again from death. We receive the remission

of sins by believing that salvation.

Hebrews 10:18 also says, *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin."*

He is not telling us to prepare the sacrifices of the Old Testament again. He has us believe the atonement Jesus Christ accomplished. Therefore we must not think of the material things and service we offer today as the price for obtaining the remission of sins. It is offering our lives in thanksgiving for the salvation already received from the Lord.

Believing the salvation received, we serve the Lord within our own circumstances

Dear saints, even the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit may have difficulties in life. His body may grow weak so that he cannot work as much as before, or he may have many family members to care for so that he cannot make time as he wishes. There are also times when the heart to serve the gospel is great, but what one can actually do feels small.

At such times, do not connect your circumstances with the size of salvation. The salvation we have received is the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished with His own life. It is not that the sacrifice of the Lord is applied less to the saint who has little. The Lord we believe in is the same Lord, and the baptism and the sacrifice of the Cross by which He bore our sins are the same ground of salvation.

Therefore the saint in difficult circumstances must not be daunted. It is enough to believe the grace the Lord has bestowed and serve the gospel in the place now permitted to him. The saint in comfortable circumstances, too, must not make his own labor his righteousness, but serve with the heart of one who has

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received the same grace.

The church, too, must stand on this faith. When dealing with a person, it must look at what word that soul must hear and believe, rather than at how much he can offer. It must treasure the saint who is in the difficulties of life, and help him, too, to confess boldly the grace he has received from the Lord and serve the gospel together.

The faith that one has received the remission of sins is not a faith that makes us take our wrongs lightly. It makes us rely on the Lord, who bore those sins, while acknowledging our own wrongs. Because we know the love of the Lord, who gave Himself up for us, we too want to live following the word within that love.

Believe the word prepared for the one whose means are lacking

Verse 32, the last verse of the passage, says this: *"This is the law for one who had a leprous sore, who cannot afford the usual cleansing."*

God gave an ordinance for the person whose means were lacking. He appointed offerings so that he could come before God, and also told in detail what the priest was to do for him. That person's insufficiency could not push him outside the mercy of God.

Today we too were people who could not resolve our sins by our own ability. For such people as us, the Lord came to this earth. He received baptism from John and bore our sins, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. And He has given the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to us who believe this gospel.

Now do not hesitate, looking only at your own circumstances. Believe what the Lord has done for you. Accept the fact that my sins, too, are in the sins the Lord bore, and the judgment of my sins, too, is in the judgment the Lord received.

The grace of the Lord, who makes us clean, is not bound to our property or position. The one who believes the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished receives that grace. God, who looked even at the circumstances of the poor and opened the way of obtaining cleanness, has given us today the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Let us live with the assurance of the remission of sins within that gospel. Let us serve the Lord with thanksgiving in the place of life permitted to us. We give thanks and glory to God, who accomplished salvation for us and had us receive it by faith. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The gospel of the washing away of sin that cleanses an unclean house

< Leviticus 14:33-53 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession, and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, It seems to me that there is some plague in the house, then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes into it to examine the plague, that all that is in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house. And he shall examine the plague; and indeed if the plague is on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish, which appear to be deep in the wall, then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days. And the priest shall come again on the seventh day and look; and indeed if the plague has spread on the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which is the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city. And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside, all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour out in an unclean place outside the city. Then they shall take other stones and put them in the place of those

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stones, and he shall take other mortar and plaster the house. Now if the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered, then the priest shall come and look; and indeed if the plague has spread in the house, it is an active leprosy in the house. It is unclean. And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry them outside the city to an unclean place. Moreover he who goes into the house at all while it is shut up shall be unclean until evening. And he who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes, and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes. But if the priest comes in and examines it, and indeed the plague has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed. And he shall take, to cleanse the house, two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. Then he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water; and he shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and the running water and the living bird, with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet. Then he shall let the living bird loose outside the city in the open field, and make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean."

Even in the land God has given, we must live in cleanness

Dear beloved saints, today's passage says what is to be done

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when a leprous plague appears in a house. Before this God spoke of the leprosy that appears on a person's body and of the rite of cleansing, and now He deals with the uncleanness of the house in which a person dwells.

God said this to Moses and Aaron: *"When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession" (Leviticus 14:34).*

This word is an ordinance given in anticipation of the time when the people of Israel would enter the land of Canaan and live there. While giving them that land as a possession, God also taught the people who would live there how they were to deal with uncleanness. He gave together the grace of giving the land and the word to be kept in that land.

That the people of Israel had entered the land they received from God did not mean that they could ignore the uncleanness that arose in a house. Even a house God had given, they had to examine the state of. When a problem arose, they had to follow the procedure God appointed.

We too, after believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and becoming the people of God, must examine our lives before the word. The confession that we have been saved does not mean that we need not look back on our own wrongs. Rather, because we believe in the Lord who saved us, we must honestly acknowledge our weakness and sins and live relying on the grace of the Lord.

Today's passage begins with discovering the plague in a house, but ends at the last with the word of making that house clean. God not only reveals and judges uncleanness but also makes known the way of becoming clean. Through this word we must see together the holiness of God in dealing with sin, and the grace of Jesus Christ, who has saved us with water and blood.

The owner of the house who has discovered the plague must tell the priest

Verse 35 says what the owner of the house is to do: *"He who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, It seems to me that there is some plague in the house"*

The owner of the house, on seeing the plague that had appeared in his house, had to tell the priest. He was not to judge by himself that it was all right, or hide it so that it would not be seen by other people. He had to have the priest come and examine that house.

But look carefully at what the owner of the house says, too. Instead of giving the final verdict on what state his house is in, he makes known the fact that a plague has appeared. After that the priest examines according to the ordinance God gave. Making known the fact discovered and judging according to the word are distinguished.

We, too, need such honesty. Even while seeing our own wrongs, we are apt to set our hearts on hiding those wrongs. Having told a lie, we say the circumstances could not be helped, and having hurt another person, we say the other person did wrong first. While defending ourselves in this way, we come not to acknowledge our own sins as sins.

But sin does not cease to exist before God because we rationalize it. We must acknowledge before the word of God what sin we have committed. We must examine how our hearts, words, and actions have departed from the will of God.

Acknowledging sin is necessary for coming to the Lord, who has saved us. The person who thinks he has no sin does not know why the grace that washes away sin is necessary. But the person who has realized his own sins and the judgment he will receive for those sins comes to accept into his heart the salvation Jesus

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Christ accomplished.

We must not seek the strength to hide our wrongs, but have the heart to be honest before God. The Lord knows even the sins we are ashamed to reveal, and came to this earth in order to bear those sins.

God does not judge hastily but has things examined precisely

Before the priest examined the house, there was something to be done first. In verse 36 He has the house emptied so that the household goods in the house may not be made unclean. After that the priest goes in and examines the house.

In this order there is the careful consideration of God. While dealing strictly with uncleanness, He had them prevent the things in the house from being made unclean unnecessarily.

The priest examines whether there are greenish or reddish streaks on the wall, and whether that part appears deeper than the wall. If there is such a plague, he goes out of the house and shuts it up for seven days. And on the seventh day he comes again and confirms whether the plague has spread.

It was not that He had the whole house broken down immediately because the plague had been seen at first. He had it examined, a fixed period set, and confirmed again. The judgment of the priest did not depend on his own mood or on his impression of the owner of the house. He had to look at the actual state according to the standard God appointed.

We too must learn this point when we preach the word of God and look after one another. We must not judge a person's faith by his outward appearance alone, or conclude about the whole person by words heard only once. At the same time, we

must not cover up a clearly revealed wrong out of personal feelings, either. We must examine the facts according to the word, and help that person stand rightly within the gospel.

In the holiness of God there is precise judgment, and in His mercy there is the heart that looks carefully at people.

Uncleanness that spreads must not be covered over but removed

When the priest came again after seven days and the plague had spread on the wall, he had the stones with the plague taken out and thrown into an unclean place outside the city. He also had the inside of the house scraped all around and that plaster, too, thrown into an unclean place outside the city. And he had other stones brought to fill the empty places, and had the house plastered with other mortar.

It was not a matter of merely plastering new mortar over the unsightly part. The stones with the plague had to be taken out, the inside of the house scraped all around, and then repaired with other stones and mortar. God did not have them change only the outward appearance while leaving the unclean thing as it was.

When we look at this word in the light of our lives, we come to look back on our attitude in dealing with wrongs. There are cases in which, when a sin is revealed, one lets it pass for the moment with good words, and repeats the same thing when time has passed. Sometimes one changes only the expression so that other people will not notice, while leaving as it is the thinking that justified one’s own actions.

But before God we must honestly acknowledge our wrongs. We must lay down the heart that held on to wrong words and actions as right. The grace of the Lord, who has given us the

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remission of sins, cannot become an excuse for hiding sin.

Here we must also know clearly where the power that removes our sins lies. A person can try to correct his wrong actions, but he cannot by himself remove the price of the sins he has already committed. That is why we need the salvation of Jesus Christ. We must honestly acknowledge our sins and believe in the Lord, who bore those sins. It is setting right, while relying on the grace of the remission of sins, the life that has gone against the word.

A house in which it spreads again must be broken down, and the person who went into that house must also wash

There were cases in which, after the stones had been changed and the wall scraped and plastered again, the plague appeared again. At that time, when the priest came and examined it and the plague had spread in the house, God had that house judged an unclean house with an active leprosy.

Verse 45 says, *"He shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry them outside the city to an unclean place"*

This time it did not end with taking out only a few stones with the plague. The house had to be broken down, and its stones, its timber, and all its plaster carried outside the city to an unclean place.

To the owner of the house, that house must have been precious property. He must already have put labor into repairing it. But the judgment of God could not be changed on the ground that it was a pity to lose it. God did not let them live leaving the spreading uncleanness as it was.

Also, the person who went into that house during the period it was shut up was unclean until evening. The person who slept in that house and the person who ate food there had to wash their clothes. The uncleanness of the house was not a problem unrelated to the people who lived in it.

Here we must guard against the heart that takes sin lightly. A person's wrong often does not stay with that one person alone. The attitude that takes falsehood for granted affects the family, and words that defend one another's wrongs can blur the judgment of many people. When people do wrong together and tell one another it is all right, even the heart that realizes sin grows dull.

Therefore we must not become people who rationalize one another's sins. We must stand before the word together, acknowledge our wrongs together, and believe the salvation of the Lord together. The church must be not a place that helps hide sin, but a place that clearly preaches the gospel of the remission of sins.

Even the house in which the plague has healed needed the rite of cleansing

In verse 48 a different case appears: *"If the priest comes in and examines it, and indeed the plague has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed"*

If, when the priest examined it again, the plague had not spread, he acknowledged that the plague had healed and pronounced that house clean. Then he performed the rite of making that house clean.

This order must be looked at well. There is the process of

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examining and confirming that the plague has healed, and there is the process of performing the rite of cleansing God commanded. Repairing the wall alone did not complete all the procedure of the passage.

The priest had to prepare two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. The owner of the house could not change the materials according to his own thinking, or omit the rite thinking that this much was enough. It was because God had spoken the way of becoming clean.

Our remission of sins, too, must be received from God. Apologizing to other people and being reconciled is necessary. Correcting wrong actions is also necessary. But the sins committed before God must be remitted through the way of salvation God has prepared.

We cannot say that our sins have disappeared before God merely by the thought that we have become better than before. We cannot confirm the remission of sins by the feeling alone that our hearts have become at ease. We must know how God has removed our sins, and believe that word.

The water and the blood that make the house clean make us look to the salvation of Christ

Verses 50–51 show the center of the rite of cleansing: *"He shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water" "he shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times" (Leviticus 14:51).*

Of the two birds, one was killed. The other, alive, was dipped together with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet in the

blood of the slain bird and the running water. And that water and blood were sprinkled on the house seven times.

In the rite of making the house clean there was a sacrifice, and the blood of that sacrifice and the running water were used. Through this rite God makes us look to the truth of salvation by which He will make us clean.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the water refers to the baptism Jesus received from John. Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River in order to bear our sins. If our sins remained on us as they were, we would have to receive the judgment of those sins. But by receiving baptism, Jesus had our sins laid upon Himself.

Matthew 3:15 says, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

Jesus received baptism from John in order to fulfill all the righteousness of God. It was the will of God that He Himself bear the sin of the world and save us. The Lord fulfilled that will.

And in the body with which He had borne our sins, He was hung on the Cross. The shedding of the blood of Jesus is the sacrifice in which He received the judgment for our sins in our place. The penalty of sin we should receive, the Lord received.

Therefore the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are the truth of salvation that must be believed together. With the baptism He bore our sins, and on the Cross He received the judgment of those sins. And He rose again from death and became the Lord who has saved us.

1 John 5:6–8 testifies this way: *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood" (1 John 5:6). "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth" (1 John 5:7). "For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water,*

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and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

The Holy Spirit testifies of the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. What we believe is not an assurance produced by our own feelings. It is the word saying that the Son of God bore our sins and received the judgment. By believing this gospel of the water and the blood, of which the Holy Spirit testifies, we receive the remission of sins.

Seeing the living bird let loose in the field, we believe the grace of having escaped from sin

Verse 53 speaks of the end of the rite of cleansing: *"Then he shall let the living bird loose outside the city in the open field, and make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean."*

The living bird was let loose in the open field outside the city. It was not that both were killed, nor was the living bird kept shut up in the house. After the rite God appointed had been performed, that bird was let loose in the field.

In this scene we think of the grace by which God has made sin depart from us. That Jesus bore our sins does not mean that the problem of sin remains on us as it is, unresolved. It means that the Lord received those sins passed on to Him, and received even the judgment for those sins.

In John 1:29 John testified of Jesus this way: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is Jesus. In that sin of the world our sins are also contained. The sins committed in childhood and the sins committed as we have lived until now, the sins committed in words, thoughts, and actions, the Lord bore. The Lord did not save us without knowing our

insufficiency. He knew all our sins and bore those sins.

The person who believes this fact has the assurance that the Lord received the judgment of his sins. It is because the ground of the remission of sins does not lie in the goodness within himself. Because he believes the salvation the Lord accomplished, he can come before God.

At the end the passage says that it shall be clean. It is the promise according to the rite God commanded. Today we too obtain the assurance of the remission of sins by believing the salvation God accomplished through His Son. We must set our hearts on the promise of the Lord.

Reflect every day in your hearts on the salvation already accomplished

Dear saints, even after we have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, our weakness is revealed. Self-centered words come out, we get angry at other people, and there are times when we turn away from what we know we should do.

At such times we must acknowledge our wrongs. We must not brush aside lightly the wrong committed now, putting forward the words that we have received the remission of sins. At the same time, we must not forget the salvation the Lord accomplished while looking only at our own wrongs.

While acknowledging our wrongs, we must think again of the baptism Jesus received from John. We must believe that the Lord bore even this sin revealed now. We must engrave in our hearts the fact that He received the judgment for this sin, too, on the Cross, and rose again from death and became my Savior.

It is not that the Lord must receive baptism again and be hung

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on the Cross again every day. The Lord has accomplished salvation. We believe today, too, that salvation already accomplished.

Hebrews 10:18 says, *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin."*

To ruminate on the gospel of the remission of sins is not to produce a new atonement. It is to confirm again what the Lord has done for me, and to accept that grace into one's heart. It is to escape with that faith from the qualms of conscience and come to God with thanksgiving.

In the family, too, and in the church, we must share this gospel clearly with one another. We must not think that our own problem of sin has been resolved merely on the ground that we have long been in the church, or on the ground that our parents believe. Each person must know his own sins and believe that the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are salvation for himself.

Dear beloved saints, today's word makes us, when we discover uncleanness, not hide it but follow the way God appointed. And it shows the grace by which He makes us clean through the water and the blood.

Let us, too, honestly acknowledge what we are before the word. Let us believe in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John in order to bear our sins, shed His blood and received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death. Let us live with the assurance of the remission of sins within this gospel, of which the Holy Spirit testifies.

We give thanks to the Lord, who has made us clean and enabled us to come before God. I hope that you will become saints who engrave this word of salvation in your hearts every day and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the people who are under the same burden of sin. ✉

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 14

[Question] 1. Leviticus 14:1–7—what does the fact that even the person whose disease had healed had to go through the rite of cleansing teach?

It was not that a person became clean by his own judgment alone because the leprous sore had healed. The priest had to go out of the camp and confirm that it had healed, and the rite of cleansing God commanded had to be performed. Only after receiving the declaration that he was clean according to the method God appointed could he return into the community. This shows that the One who decides whether one is clean is God.

This rite was not a procedure of treatment performed first in order to heal the disease. Verse 3 states that the next procedure begins only after the sore has healed. The fact that the disease has healed and the restoration through the rite of cleansing must be distinguished. God prepared the way by which the person who had stayed outside the camp could return among the people again.

Spiritually, it gives the lesson that the remission of sins, too, must be received from God. Together with people remitting one another's wrongs and being reconciled, one must know how one's own sins have been resolved before God. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Therefore the assurance of the remission of sins lies not in the feeling of regarding oneself as all right, but in believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given.

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 14:1–7—what procedure was followed until the person who had been healed of leprosy was declared clean?

First the priest went out of the camp, examined that person, and confirmed whether the leprous sore had healed. When it was confirmed to have healed, he had two clean living birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop brought. It did not begin with the person still in an unclean state coming into the tabernacle of meeting at his own will and starting the rite, but with the priest going out and examining him.

Next, according to the command of the priest, one bird was killed in an earthen vessel over running water. The other was taken alive and, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop, dipped in the blood of the bird killed over the running water. And after the priest had sprinkled it seven times on the person who was to be cleansed and declared him clean, the living bird was let loose in the field.

Therefore this procedure proceeds from the confirmation of the healed state, the preparation of the appointed materials, the death of one bird, dipping in the blood and sprinkling seven times, to the declaration of cleanness and the release of the other bird. It was not that both birds were killed, or that the dead bird was brought back to life and let fly away. Verses 1–7 are the ordinance of this stage, and after this the washing of the clothes and the body, staying seven days outside one's own tent, and the procedure of offering sacrifices on the eighth day followed.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 14:4—in what sense should the cedar wood used in the rite of cleansing be understood?

Cedar wood is the wood God commanded to be used in the rite of cleansing. The priest took the cedar wood together with the scarlet, the hyssop, and the living bird, dipped them in the blood of the dead bird, and used them. Therefore the meaning of the cedar wood must be examined within the whole rite of sprinkling blood and making a person clean, rather than by thinking of this wood alone in isolation.

The text does not separately explain a symbolism of the cedar wood by itself. Therefore it is difficult to fix a specific spiritual meaning by characteristics such as the size or fragrance of the tree alone. What is clear is the fact that the cedar wood was not a material added according to people's taste, but a material God appointed. The person being cleansed and the priest had to follow that command.

Through this rite we learn the fact that we obtain cleanness by the method God has prepared. It is not that the power of salvation lies in the nature of the cedar wood itself; what is important is the grace of God, who makes clean, and believing that word. Therefore the cedar wood can be understood as one element of the rite of cleansing that, together with the other materials, makes us look to the grace of the washing away of sin that God bestows.

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[Question] 4. Leviticus 14:4—what work of Christ can be thought of through the scarlet of the rite of cleansing?

Scarlet is a thread of a red color. Just as the scarlet of the tabernacle is understood in connection with the sacrifice of Christ, in the rite of cleansing, too, this thread can be understood as a sign that makes us look to the sacrifice of Christ, who shed His blood for sinners. However, since verse 4 itself does not directly explain that symbolism, we must also examine how blood is used in the rite.

The priest prepared the scarlet together with the cedar wood and the hyssop, and used it dipped, together with the living bird, in the blood of the dead bird. In this rite for cleanness there was the death of a bird and the shedding of blood. When we think of the remission of sins, too, we must not take lightly the price of sin and the sacrifice that bears it.

Jesus is One who has no sin, but by receiving baptism from John He bore the sin of the world, and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross. That shedding of blood was the vicarious sacrifice for saving us from sin. What is to be remembered through the scarlet is not a special power in the thread or the color itself, but the salvation of the Lord, who gave up His own life for sinners. We receive the grace of the remission of sins by believing that sacrifice.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 14:4–7—what does the fact that hyssop was used in the rite of sprinkling blood show?

Hyssop is a plant used in the rite of dipping in blood and making clean. In Leviticus chapter 14 it was used dipped in the blood of the dead bird, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the living bird. Seen with that role at the center, hyssop makes us think of the grace of washing away filth and becoming clean.

In other texts of the Bible, too, hyssop appears in the context of sprinkling blood or seeking cleanness. In Exodus 12:22 a bunch of hyssop was to be dipped in the blood of the Passover lamb, and the blood was to be sprinkled on the lintel and the two doorposts. In Psalm 51:7 appears the plea to make one clean with hyssop and wash away sin. In this way, when understanding hyssop, we must first look at the point that it was used in the matter of becoming clean before God, rather than at the outward form of the plant.

What is spiritually important is the fact that a sinner cannot declare himself clean, and that the washing away of sin that God gives is needed. The act of preparing hyssop or the nature of the plant itself does not remove sin. The faith that accepts the way of cleansing God has prepared is important. Rather than fixing, on the basis of this text alone, a symbolism that connects hyssop one to one with a specific person or virtue, it is appropriate to understand it according to its role in the rite of cleansing.

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[Question] 6. Leviticus 14:5—how is the killing of one bird over running water connected with the remission of sins?

The rite of killing a bird over running water spiritually makes us look to the salvation in which sin is transferred from us and the sacrifice that bore that sin is put to death. In the text, water and the blood of the bird are used together in the rite of cleansing. It is not declaring someone clean while leaving sin as it is, but following the procedure of cleansing God appointed.

This is connected with the baptism Jesus received from John and the shedding of blood on the Cross. Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, and bearing that sin He died on the Cross. Because the Lord received the judgment of the sin He bore, we receive the remission of sins by believing that salvation. Only when we know the baptism and the Cross of the Lord together does the meaning of the salvation accomplished with water and blood become clear.

Therefore what is to be learned from this rite does not stop at the everyday explanation that water simply washes away dirty things. The spiritual core is that the person who must be judged for sin is made clean by the vicarious atonement of the Lord. We must acknowledge our own sins and believe the gospel that Jesus bore those sins and was judged. The assurance of the remission of sins God gives is grounded on the salvation He accomplished.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 14:5—what does the use of an earthen vessel when killing the bird make us realize about ourselves?

An earthen vessel is a vessel formed of earth and fired. When we think of this vessel spiritually, we come to realize the fact that we are weak beings made by God, and people who must be judged because of sin. The rite in which the bird sheds its blood and dies in the earthen vessel makes us not take lightly the result of our own sins, but acknowledge that we need the grace of vicarious atonement.

The person who seeks to receive the remission of sins must not think that he is merely somewhat lacking and can become righteous by himself. When we examine our hearts and conduct before the word of God, the fact that we cannot remove sin by our own strength is revealed. Only when we acknowledge that we are sinners can we accept with thanksgiving the salvation God has given. Acknowledging one's own sin does not in itself pay the price of sin; the One who bore that price is Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4:7, too, through the word that we have the treasure in earthen vessels, teaches that the great power is not in us but of God. Although that verse does not directly interpret all the materials of Leviticus chapter 14, it helps in distinguishing human weakness from the power of God. The grace of cleansing, too, does not come from our weak selves, but comes from God, who saves sinners.

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[Question] 8. Leviticus 14:6, 7—what two aspects of the remission of sins do the bird that was killed and the bird let loose in the field show?

The bird that was killed makes us look to the sacrifice that bears the price of sin, and the bird let loose in the field to the fact that sin has departed. God had two clean living birds prepared, and had one killed and its blood used. The other He had dipped alive in that blood and then let loose in the field. The two birds took on different roles and were used in one rite of cleansing.

Through the bird that was killed we come to think of the fact that the price of sin is death and that a vicarious sacrifice is needed. A sinner must be judged because of his sin, but Jesus bore our sin by receiving baptism from John and died on the Cross in our place. Cleanness was not given by passing over sin lightly, but is the grace given through the sacrifice of the Lord.

The bird let loose in the field shows that sin has departed far away from us. We must not keep holding on to the sin Christ bore and was judged for as if it were still a debt we ourselves must pay, but believe in the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished. Since this rite is not a scene in which the dead bird comes back to life, the actual procedures of the two birds must not be confused. Here we can pay attention to the grace of cleansing, that the price of sin has been dealt with through the sacrifice and sin has departed.

[Question] 9. Leviticus 14:10–20—for which sacrifice was each of the two male lambs prepared on the eighth day used?

Of the two male lambs without blemish, one was used for the trespass offering and the other for the burnt offering. Verse 10 lists the things to be prepared together, but when verse 12 and verses 19–20 are read in sequence, the use of each offering can be distinguished. The two were not prepared in order to be used for the same sacrifice.

First the priest took one male lamb and a log of oil, waved them before the LORD as a wave offering, and offered the trespass offering. The blood of that sacrifice was put on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person who was to be cleansed. Then, after the procedure using the oil and the sin offering, the burnt offering was offered with the remaining male lamb, and the grain offering was offered together.

Therefore the reason there were two male lambs was that the rite of cleansing required two different sacrifices, the trespass offering and the burnt offering. God specifically appointed the procedure by which the person whose disease had healed came before Him. The subsequent sacrifices were not to be omitted on the ground that the body had healed, but had to be offered according to the word. Also, the fact that He required offerings without blemish shows that the sacrifice offered before God must not be chosen at will. Together with the grace that makes clean, we can learn the faith that respects His command.

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[Question] 10. Leviticus 14:10, 19—for what use was the ewe lamb of the first year without blemish offered in the rite of cleansing?

The one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish was offered as the sin offering. The things to be prepared in verse 10 were two male lambs and one ewe lamb, and they were used for the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the sin offering respectively. Of these, the ewe lamb is the offering for the sin offering that appears in verse 19.

The priest offered the sin offering because of that person's uncleanness and then killed the burnt offering. Therefore the order of this rite is to offer the trespass offering and go through the procedure using the blood and the oil, then offer the sin offering, and after that offer the burnt offering and the grain offering. When one asks the use of the ewe lamb, too, it becomes clear only when one reads not only verse 10, which lists the things to be prepared, but also verses 19–20, where the sacrifices are actually offered.

This sin offering shows the fact that even the person whose disease has healed must follow the way of cleansing God appointed. Since the text explains that atonement is made for his uncleanness, one must not conclude that the disease arose because the patient had committed some specific moral transgression. What is important is not to end the matter of becoming clean before God with one's own judgment, but to accept the grace He has prepared. Rather than adding a separate spiritual meaning to the distinction of the ewe lamb's sex, one must understand precisely its role in the text, namely that this offering was used for the sin offering. ✉

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CHAPTER

15

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Leviticus Chapter 15 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 15:1–12—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall meaning of the text

Leviticus 15:1–12 explains the ceremonial uncleanness that follows a man's continual discharge, and the extent to which it reaches people and things through contact.

The core of the text is as follows.

—By the discharge that comes out of his body, that person becomes unclean.

—The places where he lies, sits, or rides also become unclean.

—According to the ordinance, the person who touches that man or those things also becomes unclean until evening.

—In the cases where God commanded them to wash their clothes and bathe in water, that command must be followed.

—The vessel of earth must be broken, and the vessel of wood must be rinsed in water.

—The following verses 13–15 stipulate that even after the

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discharge has stopped, washing and a sin offering and burnt offering are necessary.

The *"unclean"* spoken of here means first of all a ceremonial state in which one cannot approach the tabernacle. The fact itself that a person had a discharge must not be interpreted as evidence that the person had committed some especially wicked sin. Nor does the text fix the name of a specific modern disease.

In the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this discharge shows the state of human beings who, born as descendants of Adam, leave traces of sin wherever they go. Jesus had all these sins of ours transferred to Him once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live believing and confirming the fact that he has no sin.

2. God speaks to Moses and Aaron

"And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying" (Leviticus 15:1).

This word was not a mere recommendation about hygiene, but an ordinance of cleansing the people of Israel had to keep before God. Moses delivered the word of God, and Aaron and the priests served by distinguishing between cleanness and uncleanness so that the people could come to God again.

The people of Israel could not judge, taking their own feelings as the standard, "I am clean." They had to confirm their own state according to the word of God.

This is the same in the gospel. A person cannot decide by emotion whether or not he has sin. Sin does not disappear because one feels peace of heart, nor does the sin Jesus has

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removed come into being again because a sense of guilt remains.

The verdict on sin and the assurance of the remission of sins must be received from the word of God.

3. The discharge and ceremonial uncleanness

"When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean" (Leviticus 15:2).

The discharge of the text is a state in which an abnormal secretion continues, and whether it flowed out, clotted, or was stopped up, it was unclean.

"Whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness" (Leviticus 15:3).

Even if what flowed outwardly was not visible for a while, if the source remained inside the body it was still unclean.

When we apply this to the problem of sin, it makes us think of the fact that sin does not mean only the deeds that appear outwardly. Even if a person has not actually committed murder, there can be hatred in his heart; even if he has not stolen, there is greed; and even if he has not committed a lewd act, there can be lust and evil thoughts within his heart.

Jesus said that what defiles a person is not so much what enters from outside as what comes out from within a person's heart.

"What comes out of a man, that defiles a man" (Mark 7:20).

Jesus went on to say that evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, pride, and the like come out of a person's heart. This means that the source of sin lies not merely in the environment but within the fallen heart of human beings.

A person did not become a sinner by learning sin a few times. Because he was born as a descendant of Adam and has the nature of sin, he commits sin.

"Just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin" (Romans 5:12).

4. The bed and the seat he sat on also become unclean

The bed on which the man who had a discharge lay and the seat on which he sat were all unclean. The person who touched these had to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and was unclean until evening.

Uncleanness thus affected not only the body but also the living space and even the people who came into contact with it.

Applied from the standpoint of the gospel, sin, too, does not remain only a personal matter.

—One person's lie makes another person tell yet another lie.

—One person's anger can change the atmosphere of a whole family.

—Lewdness and greed destroy relationships.

—Wrong teaching throws a whole community into confusion.

—Complaint and hatred plant the same feelings in the hearts of others as well.

The bed is the place of rest, and the seat is the place where one stays in daily life. Sin does not appear only at special moments; it can seep into the habits and relationships of daily life.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not think, "It is a matter within my own heart, so it has nothing to do with others." My words, deeds, and

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attitudes affect my family, my neighbors, and the church.

However, this does not mean that the person who had a discharge was himself to be despised or rejected. The purpose of this ordinance was not to shame a person, but to prevent the spread of uncleanness and to have him come before God again clean after he had recovered.

5. The washing of the person who touched what was unclean

If one touched the bed or the seat, or the body of the man who had a discharge, one had to wash one's clothes and bathe in water. This water is the water of the cleansing ceremony that actually washes the body and the clothes.

The washing with water in the Old Testament was an ordinance for dealing with bodily and ceremonial uncleanness. When we look at this washing in the light of the gospel, we can know the salvation by which Jesus bore all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John and made us clean.

But this washing with water teaches that a person cannot come before God while still carrying his uncleanness. To draw near to God, the uncleanness had to be washed away.

In the New Testament God has given the salvation that cleanses not merely the body but the heart and the conscience.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

Jesus has washed away all our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Even after receiving the remission of sins, when we do wrong in daily life,

we must acknowledge that wrong and confirm again the word that the Lord has already borne even that sin. The saints cleanse their hearts by believing this salvation, and serve God.

6. The case of spitting

"If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:8).

If the bodily fluid of the man who had a discharge touched a clean person, the clean person also became unclean. Uncleanness was not an abstract state; it affected daily life through actual contact.

Spiritually, too, sin spreads through words and deeds. The hatred in a person's heart comes out in words, greed comes out in deeds, and false thoughts can be passed to other people in the form of teaching and exhortation.

Therefore the believer must examine what he is sending out of his mouth. He must examine whether he is preaching the gospel and life, or spreading unbelief, hatred, and falsehood.

But the source of sin is not removed merely by trying to speak clean words. Even if one blocks for a while what comes out of the mouth, if the source in the heart is not made clean, it appears again in another form. Fundamental cleanness must begin from the remission of sins Jesus Christ has accomplished.

7. The saddle and the things that were under his body

The saddle on which the man who had a discharge rode and the things that were under his body were also unclean. The

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person who touched them was unclean until evening, and the person who carried them had to wash his clothes and bathe in water.

Even without directly touching the person's body, one was affected by uncleanness through those things.

In the application from the standpoint of the gospel, the influence of sin, too, does not necessarily spread only through direct command or compulsion. The influence of sin can be passed through the culture and habits people have made, through language and atmosphere, through the videos and writings one comes into contact with repeatedly, and through the values one takes for granted.

The believer must not easily say, "I have not committed sin directly, so it has nothing to do with me." He must also examine what he himself is carrying, passing along, and spreading.

—Does he carry unverified slander?

—Does he pass along another person's hatred?

—Does he spread a lewd or false culture?

—Does he share words that distort the gospel?

—Does he create an atmosphere that draws others into sin?

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live not as a transmitter of sin but as a transmitter of the gospel.

8. When he touches with unwashed hands

"And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:11).

If he touched someone without rinsing his hands in water, the other person also became unclean. Rinsing the hands was an

act of cleansing that prevented the spread of uncleanness through contact.

But in the New Testament Jesus taught that the outward washing of hands in itself does not make a person's heart clean.

"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man" (Matthew 15:19–20).

This word does not mean that the ordinances of hygiene and cleansing in Leviticus were wrong. Jesus was pointing out the hypocrisy of keeping the outward washing while failing to realize the sin within the heart.

Rinsing the hands is necessary, but the greed, hatred, and lewdness of the heart do not disappear merely by rinsing the hands. The sin of the heart requires a deeper washing.

That washing is given precisely within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

9. The vessel of earth is broken and the vessel of wood is rinsed

"The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water" (Leviticus 15:12).

The vessel of earth was to be broken and the vessel of wood rinsed in water; the method of dealing with uncleanness differed according to the material.

God had them deal with uncleanness by the method He had appointed for each, the vessel of earth and the vessel of wood.

What is clear is the fact that uncleanness was not left as it was. He had the vessel of wood rinsed in water, and the vessel

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of earth broken.

When we apply this to life, we can learn that not every problem can be dealt with in the same way. Some things must be set right and restored by the word, and some sinful habits or harmful environments must be cut off resolutely.

But what to throw away and what to restore must be discerned not by one's own feelings but according to the word of God and the truth.

10. Verses 1–12 alone do not complete the procedure of cleansing

Verses 1–12 deal with the uncleanness during the discharge and the ordinances of contact, and the following verses 13–15 deal with the procedure of complete recovery.

After the discharge had stopped, the following procedure was necessary.

—He counts seven days.

—He washes his clothes.

—He bathes his body in running water.

—On the eighth day he takes two doves.

—One is offered as a sin offering and one as a burnt offering.

—The priest makes atonement for him before the LORD.

Therefore the whole atonement was not completed merely by bathing the body in water. Even after the discharge had stopped, the above procedure of cleansing and the sacrifice were necessary.

This makes us distinguish, in the problem of sin as well, between mere correction of behavior and atonement. It is necessary to reduce bad habits and to try to live a good life, but that cannot take the place of the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ.

The sinner needs the sacrificial offering God has appointed. The eternal sacrificial offering of the New Testament is none other than Jesus Christ.

11. The cleansing power of Jesus revealed through the woman with the flow of blood

In the Gospels there appears the event in which a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years touched the garment of Jesus. Matthew 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34, and Luke 8:43–48 testify of this event together.

This woman's condition does not have exactly the same details as the ordinance of a man's discharge in Leviticus 15:1–12. A woman's continual discharge is dealt with in the latter part of Leviticus chapter 15. But the principle of the law of cleansing, that uncleanness is passed through contact, is the same.

The woman with the flow of blood believed that if she touched the garment of Jesus she would be saved.

When she touched the garment of Jesus with that faith, the fountain of the woman's blood was dried up.

"Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction" (Mark 5:29).

The life and holiness that are in Jesus are not defeated by uncleanness. Jesus is the One who can come near to an unclean person, bear that uncleanness, and make that person clean.

Jesus did not condemn that woman or add to her shame.

"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction" (Mark 5:34).

This event shows the power of the gospel, by which Jesus Christ makes clean the person the law had pronounced unclean.

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12. The fundamental washing seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The stopping of the source of the discharge shows the salvation by which Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and accomplished the remission of sins. A sinner cannot remove his own sins merely by correcting the deeds that appear outwardly.

God sent Jesus Christ in order to deal with our sins fundamentally.

Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore all the sins of the world. Bearing the sins He had thus borne, Jesus went to the Cross and received all the punishment of sin by shedding His blood and dying.

John the Baptist cried out, pointing to this Jesus.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the work of the water by which He bore sin, and the blood of the Cross is the work by which He received the judgment of that sin. Jesus completed salvation by rising again from death, and the Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:8).

In the Old Testament, the water alone with which the body was washed repeatedly could not make the human conscience

clean forever. But when one believes the gospel completed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, a sinner can receive the remission of sins before God and come with a clean conscience.

13. The exact meaning of the faith that "I have no sin"

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that Jesus bore all his sins. Therefore he is not under the condemnation of sin before God.

But this does not mean that the born-again person never again does any wrong in the flesh. Even after receiving the remission of sins, weakness and wrong thoughts, words, and deeds can appear.

There are things that must be distinguished.

—Jesus bore the punishment and condemnation of sin once and for all.

—The believer has been justified before God by the righteousness of Christ.

—But the flesh of the believer has not become perfect.

—Therefore he must acknowledge his wrong, turn back, and live according to the word.

—Yet this does not mean that he is saved again every time he does wrong.

—It is confirming again in his heart the already completed gospel of the water and the blood, and returning to faith.

The faith that one has no sin is not license that regards sin lightly. Rather, because one knows what sacrifice Jesus paid to remove sin, it makes one hate sin and offer one's body and life as instruments of righteousness.

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14. The work the Holy Spirit does in the person who has been made clean

In Ezekiel chapter 36 the promise of cleansing with water and the promise of giving a new spirit appear together.

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean" (Ezekiel 36:25). "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (Ezekiel 36:27).

To the person who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, the Holy Spirit testifies of the remission of sins he has received. He also leads the person who has received the remission of sins not to live spreading sin again, but to live according to the will of God.

Seen in the picture of the discharge, formerly a person left uncleanness wherever he went. But after believing the gospel, that person must become one who preaches the gospel and life wherever he goes.

—Rather than complaining with the mouth, he preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

—Rather than doing sin with the hands, he serves his neighbors.

—Rather than polluting relationships, he makes peace.

—He does not spread falsehood, but testifies of the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

—He does not despise sinners, but preaches the word of the salvation of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has accomplished.

This is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, not the price for obtaining the remission of sins.

15. The person suffering from disease must not be condemned

When applying this text today, disease or a bodily secretion must not be connected directly with a person's sin.

In Leviticus the verdict of being ceremonially unclean and the verdict of being morally evil are not the same thing. Cases such as childbirth, the monthly period, and contact with a dead body also caused ceremonial uncleanness, but that did not mean a personal evil deed.

Therefore, to say to a person who has a disease, "Your disease arose because of your sin," is a very dangerous judgment. Jesus did not put the woman with the flow of blood to shame; He called her *"Daughter"* and proclaimed peace.

Today, if there is a bodily abnormality or a continual secretion, it is necessary to receive appropriate medical care. Receiving treatment is not an act of unbelief. At the same time, the church must not reject a sick person as if he were unclean, but must care for him with love.

Conclusion

The uncleanness from the discharge in Leviticus 15:1–12 reached beyond the body to the bed and the seat, and to the people and things that were touched.

Seen from the standpoint of the gospel, this makes us think of how the sin that comes out of the human heart defiles not only oneself but even the surrounding relationships and the community. A person cannot remove the source of sin merely by correcting a little the deeds that appear outwardly.

In order to resolve the source of sin, Jesus bore all the sins of

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the world by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed eternal salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this gospel of the water and the blood.

The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of sins before God and becomes a clean person. He must confirm in his heart the fact that Jesus has removed all his sins, testify of it with his mouth, serve the Lord following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and wait for the Lord's second coming.

The core of the text may be summed up in one sentence as follows.

Though human beings are descendants of Adam who leave traces of sin wherever they go, since Jesus has removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and the blood He shed when nailed to the Cross, the person who believes this gospel must keep the faith that he has no sin and live testifying of this gospel.

Leviticus 15:13–18—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The structure and core of the text

Leviticus 15:13–18 deals with two kinds of situations.

—Verses 13–15: the procedure by which the person whose continual discharge has stopped recovers cleanness before God

—Verses 16–18: the temporary ceremonial uncleanness that arises from an emission or from marital relations, and the washing

For the person who had recovered from the discharge, a cleansing period of seven days, washing with water, and a sin offering and burnt offering were necessary. By contrast, after a normal emission or marital relations, without a sacrifice, the body and the things were washed with water and one was unclean until evening.

Therefore the word "unclean" in the text does not always mean "has committed a morally evil sin." It refers to the state of ceremonial cleanness God gave to the community of Israel centered on the tabernacle.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through this law of cleansing we can look into how a sinner receives washing and comes before God, and how the person who has received the remission of sins is to treat his body and sexuality in holiness.

2. *"Is cleansed of his discharge"*

"When he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean" (Leviticus 15:13).

The procedure of cleansing began after the discharge had actually stopped, and it had to be confirmed, after a set period had passed, that he had become clean. During the discharge one could not declare merely in one's heart, "I have been healed."

Even when the discharge had stopped, he did not come to the tabernacle immediately, but had to follow the following procedure.

—He counts seven days.

—He washes his clothes.

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—He bathes his body in running water.

—After that he is in a clean state.

—On the eighth day he comes to the tabernacle of meeting with the offerings.

The person whose discharge had stopped had to wash his body and his clothes after counting the seven days God had appointed.

But seen from the standpoint of the gospel, it makes us think of the fact that the problem of human sin is not solved by a mere self-declaration or a momentary feeling. One cannot say, "I have now resolved to live well, so I am clean." A ground of cleanness that God acknowledges is necessary.

3. The stopping of the discharge and the obtaining of cleanness are distinct

The stopping of the discharge was the ceasing of the activity of the disease, and to recover cleanness before God, washing and a sacrifice were further necessary.

This distinction is important for understanding the problem of sin and salvation. Just because a person has stopped his wrong conduct of the past does not mean that the judgment of the sins he had committed until then disappears of itself.

For example, just because a person who used to lie does not lie from today, his past lies do not become something that never happened. Stopping the habit of sin and paying the price of sin are distinct.

Correcting the habit of sin is necessary, but it cannot take the place of atonement. The sinner needs the sacrificial offering God has appointed. The eternal sacrificial offering of the New Testament is none other than Jesus Christ.

4. Washing his clothes and bathing his body in running water

The person who had recovered from the discharge had to wash his clothes and bathe his body in *"running water."* God had him wash away the uncleanness and come having become clean.

When we look at this washing in the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can know the salvation by which Jesus has washed away all our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. We can also look into the faith by which the saint who has received the remission of sins, whenever he does wrong in daily life, acknowledges that wrong, cleanses his heart with the word of the remission of sins already accomplished, and comes before God.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He spoke as follows.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is not a rite merely for setting an example. It is the righteous work by which Jesus bore the sins of all the people of the world.

If sin remains in us as it is, we must receive the judgment of that sin. But Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John. John the Baptist testified of Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus bore all our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Therefore, when the saints do wrong in daily life, they must not hide or rationalize that wrong, but must acknowledge

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it before God. And they must confirm again the word of the gospel that He has already washed away even that sin, and renew their hearts.

5. Coming before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting on the eighth day

"On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest" (Leviticus 15:14).

That person came on the eighth day with two doves before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

The eighth day was the day on which, after counting the seven days, he came before God with the offerings.

He did not sacrifice by himself at home, but gave the offerings to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting that God had appointed.

The remission of sins, too, is not something a human being produces by himself. It is received through the High Priest and the sacrificial offering God has established. Jesus is the High Priest who accomplishes atonement for us, and at the same time the sacrificial offering who offered His own body.

The person of the Old Testament came to the tabernacle of meeting with doves, but we of the New Testament come to God by believing the salvation Jesus Christ has completed.

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19).

The boldness to come to God arises not from a record of our having lived cleanly, but from the perfect redemption of Jesus.

6. The two doves—the sin offering and the burnt offering

When two turtledoves or two young pigeons were prepared, the priest offered the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.

The sin offering is the sacrifice that deals before God with the uncleanness from the discharge. That a sin offering was offered here does not mean that the discharge itself was a special moral transgression of the individual. The sin offering of Leviticus was used not only for moral sin but also for cleansing ceremonial uncleanness.

The burnt offering, too, is a sacrifice God appointed. It shows the work by which Jesus offered His own body to God and saved us. The person who has been made clean by believing that salvation offers his life to God in thanksgiving.

The order is important.

—First there is atonement.

—Then there is the life offered to God.

It is not that we receive the remission of sins because we have devoted ourselves to God. First we receive the remission of sins by believing the redemption of Jesus, and in thanksgiving for that grace we offer ourselves to God.

7. The priest makes atonement *"before the LORD"*

"Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge" (Leviticus 15:15).

The atonement was carried out not by the recovered person

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himself but by the priest.

This shows that a sinner cannot remove his own sin by himself. A person cannot pay the price of his own sin with good deeds, prayer, fasting, or service as a substitute. Because the wages of sin is death, a sinless life must be sacrificed in the sinner's place.

Jesus completed once and for all, with His own body, the sacrifice the priests of the Old Testament offered repeatedly.

"With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, and received the punishment of all those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross. And Jesus completed eternal salvation by rising again from death.

Therefore the water and the blood of Jesus cannot be separated from each other.

—The water shows that Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John.

—The blood shows that He received on the Cross the judgment of the sin He had borne.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

8. Why a sacrifice was still necessary after washing with water

Verse 13 says that he bathes his body in running water and *"then he shall be clean,"* but verses 14–15 go on to have him offer a sin offering and a burnt offering.

This is not a contradiction. Washing with water is the procedure that cleanses the body and ceremonial uncleanness, and the sacrifice is the procedure by which that person receives atonement before God and is restored to the worshiping community.

Seen from the standpoint of the gospel, it shows that one must not speak only of the water and leave out the blood, or speak only of the blood and leave out the baptism Jesus received from John.

Jesus did not suffer an unrelated death without having borne sin with the baptism He received from John. Because He bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment of that sin on the Cross.

1 John 5:6 testifies of Jesus as *"he that came by water and blood,"* and clearly says, *"Not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood."*

When we believe the gospel of the water and the blood, our conscience is cleansed from sin. The washing with water in the Old Testament cleansed the body, but the redemption of Christ cleanses the conscience and makes us serve the living God.

9. The washing of the man who has an emission

"If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:16).

Verse 16 deals with the temporary ceremonial uncleanness after a natural emission, as distinguished from the continual discharge.

There is an important difference.

—For the person who has recovered from the discharge,

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seven days and a sacrifice are required.

—In the case of a normal emission, it is enough to bathe the body and wait until evening.

—No separate sin offering or burnt offering is required.

Even a normal physiological function of the body brought temporary uncleanness in relation to the state of cleanness for approaching the tabernacle, but that did not mean that the person had committed a sinful deed.

God is not the One who made the human body evil. He only taught the people of Israel, who come before the holy God, to distinguish carefully between life and death, and between cleanness and uncleanness.

10. When semen has come on a garment or leather

"And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:17).

Not only the body but also the garment and leather on which there was semen had to be washed with water.

This ceremonial ordinance also contains the wisdom of keeping the body and the living environment clean. A life that serves God is not one that speaks only of faith in the heart while neglecting the body and daily life.

To the person who believes the gospel, the body and material things are not evil. The body of the person who has received the remission of sins is called the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells.

"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Therefore the person who believes the gospel must neither despise the body nor serve the desires of the body as an absolute master. He must keep the body clean, and must also treat the sexual sphere in holiness and with responsibility within the will of God.

11. When a man and a woman lie together

"Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:18).

This word does not define even normal marital relations as sin. The Bible speaks of the union of husband and wife within marriage as something God has given.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Hebrews 13:4 also says to honor marriage and not to defile the bed. This means that the sexual union within marriage is to be honored, but must not be defiled by fornication and adultery.

That Leviticus 15:18 says "unclean" after a man and a woman lie together is not moral condemnation but a temporary ceremonial state. When both bathed their bodies and waited until evening, they returned to the clean state, and no separate sacrifice was required.

It is also important that it said "*they shall bathe in water*"—that is, both of them. Both the man and the woman were under the same ordinance of cleansing.

Therefore, on the basis of this text, one must not regard sexuality itself as dirty, or cause marital relations to be treated with a sense of guilt and shame. The sexuality God has given

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within marriage is good, but it must be handled within cleanness, responsibility, and self-control.

12. The difference between ceremonial uncleanness and moral sin

To understand the text rightly, the following three must be distinguished.

—The discharge: a continual abnormal state; after it stopped, seven days, washing with water, and a sin offering and burnt offering were necessary.

—Emission and marital relations: normal bodily functions; without a sacrifice, the body and the things were washed with water and one waited until evening.

—Fornication and adultery: moral sins that go against the will of God. They cannot be treated the same as normal marital relations. 1 Corinthians clearly says, *"Flee sexual immorality."*

The person who believes the gospel must give glory to God with his body, while not regarding the body as shameful.

13. The washing of the Old Testament is a shadow pointing to Christ

The saints of the New Testament age do not have to keep periods of ceremonial uncleanness in the manner of Leviticus. These ordinances of cleansing were a shadow pointing to Christ who was to come and to the perfect cleanness He would accomplish.

"Which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17).

In the Old Testament, according to the kind of uncleanness, one had to wash the body and the clothes, or keep the appointed period and offer a sacrifice. But Jesus offered His own body once and for all and perfected forever those who believe.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Therefore the saints of the New Testament age do not wash the body repeatedly in order to obtain ceremonial cleanness, but believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has accomplished.

Of course, the cleanliness of the body is still important. But washing for hygiene and the gospel for the remission of sins must not be confused. Soap and water can wash away the dirt of the body, but they cannot remove the condemnation of sin. The condemnation of sin is resolved by believing the redemption of Jesus Christ.

14. The status of the person who has been washed with the water and the Spirit

1 Corinthians 6:11 tells how the people who believe the gospel have been changed.

"You were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit obtains washing, sanctification, and justification before God. This does not simply mean that "though sin is there, He has turned a blind eye as if it were not." Because Jesus actually bore that sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment on the Cross, the price of sin has been paid in full.

But having received the remission of sins does not mean that

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one will never again make a mistake or commit sin in the flesh. In the born-again person, too, the weakness of the flesh and wrong conduct can appear.

Each time that happens, one must acknowledge one's wrong and turn back, and return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross.

The faith that one has no sin is not permission to commit sin freely. Rather, it is the faith that makes one give glory to God with the body, because it is a body bought at a price.

15. The application for believers today

This text teaches us not to treat our body and sexuality in terms of either guilt or license.

First, the normal physiological functions of the body must not be condemned as sin. The body is what God made, and a physiological function in itself does not lower a person's spiritual worth.

Second, marital relations within marriage must not be regarded as dirty. At the same time, one must respect the body and the will of the other person and have relations within love and responsibility.

Third, fornication and adultery must be distinguished from normal marital relations. One must not rationalize the desires of the flesh with the words that one believes the gospel.

Fourth, the body, clothes, and living environment must be kept clean. Spiritual faith does not ignore everyday hygiene and responsibility.

Fifth, a person who has a physical illness or an abnormal discharge must not be branded as a sinner. One must help him

receive appropriate care and treatment, not shame him, and respect him.

Sixth, one must believe the fact that one's sins have been washed away completely by the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood. Rather than condemning oneself with repeated guilt, one must confirm the completed salvation on the basis of the word.

Seventh, the body that has received the remission of sins must not be used as an instrument of lewdness and greed, but must be offered to God following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Leviticus 15:13–18 distinguishes between the procedure of cleansing after recovery from the discharge and the temporary uncleanness after a normal emission or marital relations.

The person whose discharge had stopped was restored before God through the seven days of waiting and washing explained above, and the sacrifice on the eighth day. This shows the fact that a sinner does not become clean before God by mere improvement of conduct, but needs the washing and the sacrifice God has appointed.

This law of sacrifice was completed in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and accomplished eternal salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

Emission and marital relations within marriage are normal bodily functions, not moral sin, and they brought temporary ceremonial uncleanness. Therefore sexuality must not be

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regarded as dirty unconditionally, nor, on the contrary, must fornication and adultery be rationalized as normal.

The core of the text may be summed up as follows.

The washing of the body dealt with temporary uncleanness, but what cleanses the sinner's conscience forever is the salvation Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and the person who has been made clean by believing this gospel must live treating his body as precious, as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Leviticus 15:19–24—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall flow of the text

Leviticus 15:19–24 explains the ceremonial uncleanness that follows the normal monthly period, and the extent to which it reaches the bed, the seat, and the people who come into contact.

In understanding the text, three things must first be distinguished.

—The monthly period itself is not a moral sin committed by the individual.

—The word "unclean" means a ceremonial state in which, under the tabernacle law of cleansing of Israel, one cannot approach the sanctuary for a set period.

—Lying together during the monthly period, in verse 24, is distinguished from the monthly period itself, and is specified as a forbidden act in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit,

we can look together at the weakness and uncleanness the human body has, the uncleanness that spreads through contact, and the salvation of Jesus Christ, who came near to such people and instead gave them cleanness and life.

2. A woman's monthly period and the seven days of ceremonial uncleanness

"If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:19).

The text defines the period during which a woman has a discharge of blood as a state of *"impurity"* for seven days. Impurity here does not mean being morally evil, but means the state of ceremonial cleanness of Israel centered on the tabernacle.

The monthly period is not a transgression a woman chose to commit. It is a normal bodily function. In this passage no command appears that the woman confess sin or offer a sacrificial offering. When seven days have passed, she returns normally to the clean state.

This point is distinguished from the continual discharge earlier.

—When a man's continual discharge stopped, he counted seven days, washed in running water, and then offered a sin offering and a burnt offering.

—For the normal monthly period a cleansing period of seven days is necessary, but there is no separate sacrifice.

—A continual discharge outside the normal period is dealt with in verses 25–30, and a sacrifice is offered after it stops.

Therefore the normal monthly period and a discharge caused by disease must not be treated the same.

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3. Why a normal physiological function was called *"unclean"*

The text does not explain the reason in medical detail. Therefore the monthly period must not be interpreted as a direct result of sin, or as being because a woman is spiritually imperfect.

The law of cleansing of Leviticus teaches that the human body and life, blood and death, childbirth and discharge must all be discerned before the holy God. Even a normal bodily function could be set apart for a set period in relation to the state of cleanness for coming to the tabernacle.

In Leviticus, what is ceremonially unclean and what is morally evil sometimes overlap, but they are not always the same.

—Touching a dead body made one unclean, but that was not necessarily a transgression.

—A woman who had borne a child was also unclean for a set period, but childbirth is not sin.

—The monthly period, too, was unclean for seven days, but that does not mean a moral fault of the woman.

Such ordinances made people realize repeatedly the fact that, while living in the flesh, human beings are beings with weakness and limitations. No one could draw near to the holy God at will by his natural state alone.

4. The person who touched a woman during her monthly period

The person who had temporary contact with a woman during her monthly period was unclean until that evening; seven days

of uncleanness or a sacrifice were not required.

What is important here is not to treat women as dangerous or evil beings. In the same chapter, a man's discharge and emission also made the people and things that came into contact unclean. Both men and women were under the law of cleansing of God in relation to bodily discharges.

5. Even the bed and the seat she sat on are unclean

"Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean" (Leviticus 15:20).

The bed on which a woman during her monthly period lay and the seat on which she sat also became ceremonially unclean.

Uncleanness was not an abstract state of the heart, but an ordinance related to the actual living space and contact. It applied not only to the body but also to the area where one lay and sat.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel, it makes us think of the fact that the influence of sin, too, does not remain only within the heart of the individual. The greed and hatred, falsehood and lewdness that come out of a person's heart leave traces on the family and relationships, the workplace and the community.

But on the basis of the fact that the bed and the seat of a woman during her monthly period are unclean, the monthly period and sin must not be directly identified with each other. The spiritual application is gained from the structure of cleansing in the text; it does not call a normal physiological function itself sin.

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6. The washing of the person who touched the bed or the seat

The person who touched the bed or the seat was unclean until evening after washing his clothes and bathing in water.

"Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:21).

God had the ceremonial uncleanness arising from contact washed away, and had not only the body but also the clothes washed, so that no trace of uncleanness would be left in daily life.

In the Old Testament, ceremonial uncleanness was dealt with by washing the body and the clothes with water. In the New Testament, Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and so accomplished the perfect remission of sins.

The ordinances of cleansing, in which the body and the clothes were washed repeatedly, make us look toward the perfect salvation Christ has accomplished. Though one could wash the body and the clothes with water, one could not remove even the sin in a person's conscience.

Hebrews distinguishes the cleansing ceremonies of the Old Testament and the redemption of Christ as follows.

"For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13–14).

The washing with water in the Old Testament dealt with the flesh and ceremonial uncleanness, but the redemption of Jesus Christ cleanses the sinner's conscience.

7. The meaning of *"be unclean until evening"*

The person who had come into contact returned to the clean state by evening, after washing his clothes and bathing his body. He had not become unclean forever.

This shows that uncleanness is not an irrecoverable status. God not only said what is unclean, but also provided how one becomes clean again.

In the law of cleansing of Leviticus there is not only judgment but also the way of recovery.

The law reveals a person's sin and uncleanness, but God has opened through Jesus Christ the way of salvation that washes away that sin.

A sinner does not become clean by his own strength; he receives cleanness by the method God has appointed.

8. The ordinance concerning lying together during the monthly period

"And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean" (Leviticus 15:24).

In verse 24, the man who lay with a woman during her monthly period and came into contact with that blood was unclean for seven days, not until evening as in ordinary contact, and his bed was also unclean.

This word must also be distinguished from verse 18 earlier.

—After the normal marital relations of verse 18, both the man and the woman bathed their bodies and were unclean until evening.

—Lying together during the monthly period, in verse 24,

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brought the man seven days of uncleanness.

Leviticus 18:19 forbids this even more clearly.

"You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity"

Leviticus 20:18 also treats lying together during the monthly period not as a mere lapse in hygiene, but as a serious act that violates the command of God.

Therefore two things must be said at the same time.

—The monthly period itself is not a woman's sin.

—But under the law of Israel, lying together during the monthly period was forbidden.

The monthly period and lying together in disregard of the prohibition must be distinguished.

9. Is a woman during her monthly period ceremonially unclean today as well?

The saints of the New Testament age do not live under the tabernacle law of cleansing of Leviticus. The ordinances of cleansing of the Old Testament were a shadow pointing to the perfect cleanness Christ, who was to come, would accomplish.

"Which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17).

Therefore, today a woman during her monthly period must not be excluded from worship or prayer, from the Lord's Supper or church service, and be told that she is "dirty before God." A woman who believes the redemption of Jesus Christ is the same child of God during her monthly period as well, and is under the same guidance of the Holy Spirit.

There is no difference in the status of salvation between a man and a woman.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

The respect for and cleanliness of the body, and the consideration for one's spouse, that the ordinances of the Old Testament show are important today as well. Husband and wife must respect each other's health, condition, will, and conscience, and must not force a burden on each other or treat the body as an instrument of desire.

10. The difference between the normal monthly period and a discharge caused by disease

Verses 19–24 deal with the normal monthly period, and from verse 25 on, a discharge of blood that continues for many days outside the normal period.

"If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity"

When the continual discharge stopped, she counted seven days, and on the eighth day took two doves and offered them as a sin offering and a burnt offering respectively.

Not every discharge of blood in a woman was treated the same.

—The normal monthly period: seven days of ceremonial uncleanness

—An abnormally continuing discharge: unclean while the discharge continues; after the discharge stops, seven days are counted and a sacrifice is offered

—Lying together during the monthly period: a separately forbidden act

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If these distinctions are ignored, a normal function of the body can be misunderstood as a disease or a sin.

11. Jesus, who made clean the woman with the flow of blood

In the Gospels there appears the event in which a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years touched the garment of Jesus. This event is recorded together in Matthew 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34, and Luke 8:43–48.

This woman suffered not from the normal monthly period but from a long-lasting flow of blood. According to the ordinance in the latter part of Leviticus chapter 15, she was unclean during the discharge, and the bed and the seat and the people who came into contact could also become unclean.

Such a woman came in among the crowd and touched the garment of Jesus.

The woman believed that if she touched the garment of Jesus she would be saved. The power that went out from Jesus dried up the fountain of the woman's blood.

"Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction" (Mark 5:29).

Jesus did not humiliate the woman publicly. He called her *"Daughter"* and declared salvation and peace.

"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction" (Mark 5:34).

The holiness of Jesus is not polluted by uncleanness. Rather, it makes the unclean person clean, restores the sick person, and sends the person alienated from the community back to peace.

12. The way Jesus bore our uncleanness

Washing a person's body with water cannot remove forever the sin of the heart and the conscience. So Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in order to bear the uncleanness of sinners.

Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is the righteous work by which He bore the sins of all the people of the world. The sins of women and the sins of men, the sins committed with the body and the sins committed in the heart, the sins of the past, the present, and the future were passed on to Jesus.

John the Baptist testified of Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Bearing the sin of the world He had borne with the baptism He received from John, Jesus went to the Cross and was judged, shedding His blood. And Jesus completed salvation by rising again from death.

The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

The washing with water in the Old Testament was repeated, but the atonement completed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross was accomplished once and for all.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

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13. The status of the woman who has been washed by the gospel of the water and the Spirit

A woman who believes the redemption of Jesus does not become a sinner before God because of a normal physiological function that occurs in her body. The remission of sins is not something that arises and disappears according to the cycle or condition of the body.

Because Jesus bore all sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of sin with the blood of the Cross, the person who believes this receives washing, sanctification, and justification in the Holy Spirit.

"You were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Therefore a woman during her monthly period can pray to God, can believe the word, and can preach the gospel and worship.

14. How the uncleanness of sin differs from the uncleanness of the monthly period

The ceremonial uncleanness of the monthly period ended when a set period had passed. But the sin that comes out of the human heart does not disappear of itself with the passing of time.

If one washes the clothes and the body with water, outward uncleanness can be dealt with, but the following sins of the heart cannot be washed away with water.

—Hatred and jealousy

—Greed and pride

—Falsehood and hypocrisy

—Lewdness and evil thoughts

—The unbelief that does not believe in God

—The heart that condemns and despises others

These sins must be washed away by the gospel of the water and the blood of Jesus.

Therefore repeating the washing of Leviticus chapter 15 as it is today is not salvation. What is important is to believe the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, to which that washing points.

15. The application for the family and the church of believers

This text is not a word meant to shame women. Rather, it teaches that the family and the church today must have the following attitudes.

First, the monthly period must not be mocked as something dirty or shameful. A woman's body is a body God made, and a normal physiological function is not a transgression.

Second, women must not be discriminated against in worship and service on the ground of the monthly period. In Christ, men and women are the same children of God.

Third, the family and the community must respect the rest, cleanliness, and privacy of a person during her monthly period, and must not add to her burden but show practical consideration.

Fourth, if abnormal bleeding continues, rather than passing spiritual condemnation, one must help her receive appropriate care. Receiving treatment is not an act of unbelief.

Fifth, husband and wife must not put desire first and ignore the health and will of the other, but must respect each other's bodies.

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Sixth, outward cleanliness and the spiritual remission of sins must not be confused. Washing the body is necessary for hygiene, but the sin of the heart is washed away by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has already accomplished.

Seventh, the person who believes the gospel must not use the ordinances of cleansing to condemn others, but, like Jesus, must preach the gospel of cleanness and peace to those who suffer and are alienated.

Conclusion

Leviticus 15:19–24 is the ordinance of ceremonial uncleanness and contact that follows the normal monthly period. The monthly period itself is not sin, and it does not lower a woman's spiritual worth or personhood. In the tabernacle law of cleansing of the Old Testament, access to the sanctuary was restricted for a set period, and the people and things that came into contact also went through the procedure of washing.

Lying together during the monthly period, in verse 24, unlike the monthly period itself, is an act the law forbade, and the man, too, was pronounced to have taken part in the uncleanness. Therefore the responsibility cannot be laid on the woman alone.

All these laws of cleansing were repeated ordinances that washed a person's outward state, but Jesus Christ has accomplished a more perfect cleanness. Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed eternal salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

Just as the woman with the flow of blood touched the

garment of Jesus by faith and was healed, Jesus is the Savior who bears the uncleanness of sinners and makes them clean.

The core of the text may be summed up in one sentence as follows.

The monthly period was not sin but a normal bodily function that brought ceremonial uncleanness in the Old Testament, and since the fundamental sin of human beings and the uncleanness of the conscience have been completely washed away by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, the men and women who believe this gospel are all equally holy children of God.

Leviticus 15:25–30—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall flow of the text

Whereas verses 19–24 earlier dealt with the temporary uncleanness from the normal monthly period, Leviticus 15:25–30 explains bleeding that occurs outside the normal period of the monthly period or continues beyond the normal period, and the procedure of that woman's recovery.

The flow of the text is as follows.

—While the discharge of blood continues, the woman is ceremonially unclean.

—The places where the woman lay or sat also become unclean.

—The person who touches those things washes his clothes and his body and is unclean until evening.

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—When the bleeding stops, she counts seven days.

—On the eighth day she brings two doves to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

—The priest offers the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.

—Atonement is made before God, and the woman is restored to the community and the place of worship.

Here the bleeding corresponds to a disease or a bodily abnormality, but that does not mean that it is in itself a personal transgression of the woman. Nor must it be interpreted, merely because a *"sin offering"* was offered, that the woman had committed some special sin and so fallen ill. The sin offering of Leviticus was used not only for moral sin but also in the process of becoming clean from ceremonial uncleanness.

2. The difference between the normal monthly period and continual bleeding

"If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity" (Leviticus 15:25).

The text speaks of two cases.

—The case in which bleeding occurs at a time that is not the normal period of the monthly period

—The case in which bleeding that began normally continues for many days beyond that period

For the normal monthly period of verse 19 it was enough to keep the seven days of uncleanness, but this text deals with continual bleeding of which one cannot know when it will end.

"All the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean" (Leviticus 15:25).

Since she was ceremonially unclean while the bleeding continued, if she bled for twelve years she was unclean throughout that whole period.

In addition to physical suffering, access to the tabernacle and everyday contact were restricted, and the bed and the seat also became unclean, so she could also suffer social and relational isolation.

3. Uncleanness while the discharge continues

Verse 25 says that she is unclean *"all the days"* that the discharge continues. It did not end automatically when the appointed seven days had passed, as with the normal monthly period. Only when the bleeding had actually stopped could the procedure of cleansing begin.

When we apply this spiritually, it makes us think of the state in which the problem of sin has not been fundamentally resolved. A person can hide the outward appearance of sin for a while, but if the source of sin remains as it is, sin flows out again.

—The hatred in the heart appears in words and deeds.

—Greed produces falsehood and quarrels.

—Pride makes one despise others.

—Lewd thoughts defile relationships and life.

—Unbelief makes one follow one's own thoughts rather than the word of God.

This word shows the fact that human beings, who are born as descendants of Adam and commit sin, need the salvation of Jesus. It does not conclude, merely because a person has an actual disease, that the person has committed some special evil deed.

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4. The effect on the bed and the seat

"Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity" (Leviticus 15:26).

The uncleanness from the discharge reached beyond the woman's body even to the spaces of daily life such as the bed and the seat.

Even the bed of rest and the seat of daily life and fellowship became unclean, so continual bleeding would have restricted the whole of life.

Seen spiritually, sin, too, does not remain only within the heart of the individual. A person's sin affects the space where he rests, the place where he works, and the sphere where he speaks and forms relationships. Sin seems personal, but it leaves traces on the family and the community.

Therefore the believer cannot say, "It is a matter within my own heart, so it has nothing to do with others." My hatred and unbelief, falsehood and desire, in the end affect those around me through words, deeds, and relationships.

But this ordinance, that the bed and the seat of a person suffering from disease are unclean, must not be applied as it is today to isolate or despise a patient. This is an ordinance given within the tabernacle law of cleansing of the Old Testament age, and it does not mean that in the New Testament age the spiritual worth of a person who has a disease is low.

5. The washing of the person who came into contact

"Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening" (Leviticus 15:27).

The person who came into contact with the bed or the seat had to wash his clothes and bathe in water. The uncleanness was not permanent; it lasted until evening.

This water was used in the cleansing ceremony that washed the body and the clothes. In the New Testament, Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and so made us clean.

This repeated washing teaches that in an unclean state one cannot come to the holy God, and that the way to become clean is necessary.

By washing the clothes and the body with water, the ceremonial uncleanness from contact could be dealt with. But the sin of the heart or the condemnation of the conscience cannot be washed away with water. To wash away the sin of human beings, a more perfect redemption was necessary.

Hebrews 9:13–14 distinguishes between the ceremonies of the Old Testament cleansing the flesh and the blood of Christ cleansing the conscience.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

Even the saved saint, when he does wrong in daily life, must acknowledge that wrong. And he must confirm again the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross. Believing the remission of sins already accomplished, he cleanses his heart and serves the living God.

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6. The procedure of cleansing begins only when the bleeding has stopped

"If she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean" (Leviticus 15:28).

The woman did not become clean merely by thinking, "I am all right now." The discharge had actually to stop, and she had to count seven days.

Those seven days, too, were a period God had appointed for cleanness.

Seen from the standpoint of the gospel, it makes us think of the fact that the remission of sins, too, is not decided merely by a person's self-assurance or feelings. Whether or not one has sin depends not on a human being's mood but on how God has dealt with sin.

Nevertheless, the expression "is cleansed of her discharge" must not be interpreted as meaning that a person obtains salvation by coming to stop committing sin by himself. A person cannot remove the source of sin by his own effort. Jesus Christ ended the condemnation of sin by bearing all sins with the baptism He received from John and being judged on the Cross.

Even when the bleeding had stopped, the whole atonement was not completed. She had to begin the procedure of recovery and, after seven days, offer the sacrifice at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

7. Being clean after counting seven days

After the discharge stopped, the woman had to count the seven days God had appointed.

What is important is the fact that she had to follow the period and the method God had appointed. The woman's state was pronounced clean or unclean not according to her own thinking but according to the word of God.

This shows that faith is not vague self-assurance but trust in the word of God. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not assure himself of the remission of sins on the basis of his own feelings.

—Jesus received baptism from John.

—With that baptism He received from John, He bore all the sins of the world.

—Bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross, shedding His blood.

—Jesus rose again from death.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel is the truth.

On the basis of this word of God, one believes the remission of sins.

8. Coming to the door of the tabernacle of meeting on the eighth day

"And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting" (Leviticus 15:29).

The woman came before the door of the tabernacle of meeting on the eighth day with two doves.

The eighth day was the day on which, after counting the

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seven days, she came with two doves to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

The woman did not declare her own cleanness by herself at home; she had to give the offerings at the door of the tabernacle of meeting and receive atonement through the priest God had established.

This shows that a sinner cannot deal with his own sin by himself. One cannot substitute one's own suffering and tears, effort and good deeds for the price of sin.

In the New Testament our High Priest is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Priest and at the same time the sacrificial offering who offered His own body.

9. Two turtledoves or two young pigeons

God appointed that in this rite of cleansing two turtledoves or two young pigeons be offered.

Of the two, one was offered as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.

What is more important than the size of the offering is whether it was the offering God had appointed. A person was not to choose at will what seemed good to him, but had to believe the word of God and offer according to that word.

The salvation of the New Testament is the same. A person cannot make up a method of salvation convenient for himself. The salvation God has appointed is the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus Christ has accomplished.

10. The meaning of the sin offering

"Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering" (Leviticus 15:30).

The sin offering was the sacrifice that dealt with the woman's uncleanness before God. But, as emphasized earlier, that a sin offering was offered does not mean that the disease had necessarily arisen because of a personal transgression of that woman.

The sin offering was used even for states that were not moral transgressions, such as disease, childbirth, and bodily discharges. This shows the fact that before the holy God the whole of the human body and life must become clean.

Seen from the standpoint of the gospel, the sin offering points to Jesus having borne all our sins and uncleanness in our place.

Jesus is One who has no sin, but He bore the responsibility for sin in our place.

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This does not mean that Jesus Himself committed sin, but means that because He bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment of those sins in our place.

11. The meaning of the burnt offering

The other dove was offered as a burnt offering. The burnt offering makes us look toward the sacrifice by which Jesus offered His own body to God and saved us. The person who has

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been made clean by believing that salvation is accepted by God, and offers his life to God in thanksgiving.

That the sin offering and the burnt offering were offered together shows the fact that salvation does not end only with escaping the punishment of sin.

—The sin offering shows that uncleanness is removed and atonement is accomplished.

—The burnt offering makes us look toward the sacrifice of Christ offered to God, and the person who believes that salvation serves God in thanksgiving.

But the order must not be reversed. It was not that the woman became clean because she had offered herself wholly to God. After receiving atonement through the sacrifice God had appointed, she came to live a life offered to God.

In the New Testament, too, a good life and devotion are not conditions of salvation, but the fruit borne by the person who has been saved.

12. Making atonement *"for the discharge of her uncleanness"*

The priest made atonement for her *"for the discharge of her uncleanness."* This shows that the woman's status was not fixed forever as "an unclean woman."

She was unclean during the discharge, but when she had completed the appointed procedure after it stopped, she could return to the community as a clean person.

God pronounces uncleanness clearly, but His purpose was not to cast off the unclean person forever. He also provided the way to become clean and return before God and the community.

The gospel is the same. God does not say that sin is not sin.

He says clearly that the wages of sin is death. But He did not end with destroying the sinner; He sent Jesus Christ as the sacrificial offering and opened the way of salvation.

13. The suffering the woman with the flow of blood must have undergone

The woman with the flow of blood in the Gospels suffered from bleeding for twelve years. This event is recorded together in Matthew 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34, and Luke 8:43–48.

Mark records that the woman had suffered many things from many physicians and had spent all that she had, but had gained no relief and had rather grown worse.

Under the law of cleansing of Leviticus, this woman was ceremonially unclean throughout the bleeding, and her bed and seat were also unclean, so contact with other people, too, must have been a great burden.

In addition to the woman's physical suffering and financial hardship, we can also think of the difficulties she must have undergone under the ordinances of cleansing.

—The suffering of a body growing weak

—The financial suffering from the cost of treatment

—The relational suffering of not being able to have contact with people freely

—The spiritual suffering of not being able to live normally in the worshiping community

—The shame and fear that she herself could make others unclean

In the midst of such suffering, the woman heard about Jesus and came to Him by faith.

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14. The woman touches the garment of Jesus

"When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment" (Mark 5:27).

The woman believed that if she touched the garment of Jesus she would be saved, and came forward among the crowd.

The power that went out from Jesus healed the woman's disease.

"Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction" (Mark 5:29).

The holiness of Jesus is not defeated by uncleanness. Jesus is the One who can come near to an unclean person, bear that person's uncleanness, and instead make him clean.

It was not because she believed that there was magical power in the garment that the woman touched the garment of Jesus. The object of her faith was not the cloth itself but Jesus. Jesus did not say, "My garment has saved you," but said, *"Your faith has made you well."*

15. Jesus calls the woman *"Daughter"*

"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction" (Mark 5:34).

Jesus did not seek the woman out in order to shame her publicly. He called her *"Daughter,"* and declared salvation, peace, and health.

The fountain of the woman's blood was dried up, and Jesus proclaimed peace to her. The woman told before all the people what had happened to her, and Jesus acknowledged that faith.

This event shows the fact that the Lord gives salvation and

peace to the person who comes to Him with faith that believes in the saving power of Jesus.

In Leviticus, the woman whose discharge had stopped went to the priest and offered the offerings. The woman of the Gospels came relying on Jesus, and Jesus acknowledged that faith and proclaimed peace.

16. The gospel of the water and the Spirit deals with the source of sin

Just as the woman with the flow of blood could not become clean by herself while her bleeding continued, human beings, too, cannot remove sin by their own deeds while sin keeps coming out from within them.

God sent Jesus Christ in order to deal with our sins fundamentally.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He spoke as follows.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

The baptism Jesus received from John is the righteous work by which He bore all the sins of the world once and for all. John the Baptist testified of this Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, and bearing those sins He went to the Cross and was judged, shedding His blood. And Jesus completed our salvation by rising again from death.

The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is true.

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"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

17. The repeated sacrifices of the Old Testament and the once-and-for-all atonement of Jesus

The woman who had recovered from the discharge had to bring two doves. If another uncleanness arose afterward, she had to go through the procedure of cleansing again. The cleansing ceremonies of the Old Testament were repeated.

But Jesus bore the sin of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and accomplished eternal atonement with one sacrifice on the Cross.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

This does not mean that the born-again person never again does any wrong in the flesh. The believer, too, can have wrong thoughts, words, and deeds out of weakness. Each time that happens, he must acknowledge his wrong and turn back, and confirm again in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus has already borne even that sin and been judged.

What must be repeated is not the sacrifice of Christ, but our faith that believes the completed gospel and lives in thanksgiving.

18. Physical healing and the remission of sins must not be confused

The event in which the woman with the flow of blood was healed physically shows the power and compassion of Jesus. But not every disease arises because of a person's sin, nor can it be promised that everyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the healing of every disease immediately on this earth.

Physical healing and the remission of sins are related, but they are not the same.

—Physical healing is recovery from a disease of the body.

—The remission of sins is the removal of the condemnation of sin before God.

—Even a physically healthy person must receive the remission of sins.

—Even a person who has a disease becomes perfectly righteous before God when he believes the gospel.

Therefore one must not judge, on the ground that a disease has not been healed, that a person lacks faith or has not received the remission of sins.

19. A woman's illness must not be made into sin or shame

Uncleanness from bleeding is a verdict of the tabernacle law of cleansing; it is not a word that denies a woman's human worth or spiritual possibility.

Jesus did not despise the woman with the flow of blood. He heard her circumstances and called her *"Daughter."* This shows how the church today must treat women's bodies and illnesses.

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—Abnormal bleeding must not be made a matter of shame.

—A woman's illness must not be condemned as being because of a hidden personal sin.

—If there is continual bleeding, one must help her receive appropriate medical care.

—The privacy and dignity of the patient must be protected.

—Financial and emotional difficulties must be addressed with practical care.

—No one must be excluded from worship and the gospel on the ground of the monthly period or bleeding.

In Christ, men and women are equally children of God.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

20. The life of the person who has received the remission of sins

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit no longer has to hide before God because of his sins. Because Jesus bore all sins, he can come to God by faith.

But the faith that one has no sin does not mean that one need not examine one's conduct. Rather, because one believes the fact that Jesus made one clean with a costly sacrifice, one comes to hate sin and live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Just as the woman with the flow of blood came to Jesus, the source of her disease stopped, and she obtained peace, the believer must live as follows.

—He does not avoid Jesus because of guilt, but comes forward by the gospel.

—He does not hide his own wrong but acknowledges it.

—He relies on the completed salvation of Jesus rather than on his own effort.

—He does not condemn the illness and weakness of others.

—He does not spread sin and falsehood around him, but preaches the gospel.

—He enjoys peace within the gospel of the water and the blood that the Holy Spirit testifies of.

Conclusion

Leviticus 15:25–30 shows the uncleanness from bleeding outside the normal period of the monthly period and from bleeding that continues long, and the procedure of recovery.

During the bleeding the woman and her bed and seat were unclean, and after it stopped, through the seven days and the sin offering and burnt offering of the eighth day explained above, the priest made atonement before the LORD.

This does not mean that a disease is in itself a person's sin. Rather, it means that the holy God, while clearly distinguishing uncleanness, provided the way for the suffering person to become clean again and return before God and the community.

This ordinance was completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed eternal salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

When the woman with the flow of blood touched the garment of Jesus by faith, the fountain of the woman's blood was dried up. In this way the holiness and life of Jesus overcome the uncleanness of the sinner and make him clean.

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The core of the text may be summed up in one sentence as follows.

Just as the woman who could not become clean by herself because of a continual discharge was restored through the sacrifice God had appointed, the person who cannot wash away his own sins obtains perfect cleanness before God by believing the salvation Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Leviticus 15:31–33—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The position and core of the text

Leviticus 15:31–33 concludes the ordinances concerning the discharge, emission, marital relations, the monthly period, and continual bleeding of men and women, and makes clear the reason God gave the law of cleansing.

That reason was not simply to manage hygiene or to shame people.

"Lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them" (Leviticus 15:31).

It was because in the midst of the camp of Israel was the tabernacle in which God dwelt. The grace by which God dwelt with the people at the same time required holiness of the people. If one approached the tabernacle carelessly without distinguishing between the unclean state and the clean state, one would profane the presence of the holy God, and could come to death.

Seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this

solemn warning leads to the question of how a sinner can come before the holy God. The answer is not human effort or repeated washing, but the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

2. *"Separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness"*

"Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness" (Leviticus 15:31).

Here what is to be separated from is not the people themselves but *"their uncleanness."* God did not say to hate and cast off the unclean person forever. He had them discern uncleanness, keep it from defiling the tabernacle, and be restored again through the procedure of cleansing.

In the ordinances of Leviticus chapter 15 there are always two things together.

—It pronounces clearly what is unclean.

—It also makes known how the unclean person becomes clean again.

God does not regard sin and uncleanness lightly, but He also provided the way to save the unclean person.

Therefore "to be separated from uncleanness" means not claiming that the unclean state is normal or leaving it as it is. At the same time, it includes the meaning of not branding the unclean person as a being beyond recovery.

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3. The purpose of the law of cleansing is not to hate people

The repetition of ordinances to avoid contact, wash the clothes and the body, and wait is easily misunderstood as meaning that the unclean person is to be rejected.

But the purpose of the text does not lie in despising the sick or women. The purpose was to prevent the spread of uncleanness while not making the tabernacle of God unclean, and to have that person come back before God and the community again when he had recovered.

The person who had recovered from the discharge counted seven days, washed, and on the eighth day offered a sin offering and a burnt offering. The woman whose abnormal bleeding had stopped also counted seven days and on the eighth day came with the offerings to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

That is, the law of cleansing is not a mere law of exclusion, but a law that includes the way of recovery.

Today, too, sin and wrong must be dealt with clearly, but the person himself must not be hated or insulted. It is the will of God to separate people from sin, yet restore them with the gospel.

4. *"My tabernacle that is among them"*

One of the most important expressions in verse 31 is *"My tabernacle that is among them."*

When God told them in Exodus to build the tabernacle, He spoke of its purpose as follows.

"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

The tabernacle was the sign of the covenant that God dwells with the people of Israel. God was not One who stayed far away; He dwelt in the very midst of the camp of the people.

But that the holy God dwells among the people did not mean that the people could approach Him in any state whatever. The presence of God was grace and at the same time required holiness.

Numbers 5:3 also makes clear as follows the reason the unclean person was put outside the camp.

"That they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell"

The camp of Israel was not a mere dwelling place. It was the holy community in the midst of which God dwelt. Therefore even the condition of the body and daily life were related to the holiness of God.

5. Why defiling the tabernacle is so serious

"When they defile My tabernacle that is among them" (Leviticus 15:31).

The tabernacle was the place where the presence of God appeared. To approach the tabernacle without discerning uncleanness was an act that ignored the holiness of God.

One could not say, while ignoring the boundary God had appointed, "God is love, so it is all right." The love and the holiness of God do not conflict with each other.

The holy God does not accept uncleanness as it is. But the God of love provided the water and the sacrifice that would make the unclean person clean.

It is the same in the gospel.

—God does not say that sin is not sin.

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—He says clearly that the wages of sin is death.

—He shows that a sinner cannot approach God by his own merit.

—At the same time, through Jesus Christ, He provided perfect atonement and opened a new way.

The grace of God is not a grace that makes sin light, but a grace by which He Himself paid the whole price of sin.

6. *"Lest they die in their uncleanness"*

The warning of death in verse 31 does not mean that a bodily function such as the monthly period or a normal emission is in itself a sin deserving death. The problem lies in ignoring the law of cleansing God has appointed, intruding into the tabernacle in an unclean state, and defiling the tabernacle of God.

Leviticus chapter 16, the very next chapter, also shows the solemnity of approaching the sanctuary.

"Not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die" (Leviticus 16:2).

Even Aaron the high priest could not enter the Most Holy Place at the time he wanted and in his own way. He had to enter at the appointed time with the offering and the blood God had appointed.

This means that a person cannot make the way of coming to the holy God. One cannot draw near to God by zeal or religious feeling alone. The way of atonement God has appointed is necessary.

In the Old Testament that way appeared as repeated washing with water and sacrifices, and in the New Testament Jesus Christ completed that way forever.

7. Both men and women are under the law of cleansing

"This is the law for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby, and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean" (Leviticus 15:32–33).

Verses 32–33 sum up the people dealt with in chapter 15.

—The man who has a discharge

—The man who has had an emission

—The woman during her monthly period

—The man and the woman who have a continual discharge

—The man who has lain with a woman during her monthly period

This list shows that both men and women were under the law of cleansing of God. God did not say that only a woman's body was unclean. The discharge that came out of a man's body and a normal emission also caused ceremonial uncleanness.

Therefore this word cannot be used as a ground for discrimination against women. Both men and women are creatures with flesh, and all needed cleanness before the holiness of God.

Moreover, within this list different states are included together.

—A discharge of disease

—A normal physiological function

—Temporary uncleanness arising from contact

—Uncleanness from a forbidden act

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8. Ceremonial uncleanness and moral sin must be distinguished

To understand Leviticus chapter 15 accurately, the following distinctions must be made.

Case	Nature	Procedure of cleansing
Continual discharge	State of disease	Seven days after the discharge stops, washing, sin offering and burnt offering
Normal emission	Normal phenomenon of the body	Washing with water, unclean until evening
Normal monthly period	Normal phenomenon of the body	Ceremonially unclean for seven days
Abnormal continual bleeding	State of disease	Seven days after the discharge stops, sin offering and burnt offering
Lying with a woman during the monthly period	Act forbidden by the law	The man, too, unclean for seven days

Ceremonial uncleanness arising from a normal bodily function is not the same as a personal evil deed. On the other hand, an act that deliberately violates an explicit prohibition of God is connected with moral responsibility.

If this distinction is not made, one can fall into two errors.

First, one can condemn a normal function of the body as sin and cause unnecessary shame.

Second, one can rationalize even a sin God has actually forbidden as a mere function of the body.

Biblical discernment neither drives everything into being sin, nor says that nothing is sin.

9. In the Old Testament, the nearer one came to God, the stricter the cleanness required

The unclean person did not give up daily life entirely, but was under restrictions related to the tabernacle so as not to defile the tabernacle in which God dwelt.

This shows that there is a real distance between human sin and the holy God. A sinner cannot bear the holiness of God in his state as it is.

The washing with water and the sacrifices of the Old Testament dealt with this distance temporarily. But the repeated ceremonies could not make the human conscience perfect forever.

So a greater and more perfect tabernacle and a more perfect High Priest were necessary.

"But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation" (Hebrews 9:11).

Jesus accomplished eternal atonement not with the blood of animals but with His own blood.

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10. Jesus is the true temple who dwelt among us

In the Old Testament the presence of God appeared in the midst of the tabernacle. In the New Testament, Jesus, the Son of God, came among people clothed in flesh.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Jesus also likened His own body to the temple.

"But He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:21).

What is amazing is the fact that Jesus, the holy temple, did not stay far away avoiding unclean people. Jesus touched a leper, healed the disease of the woman with the flow of blood, and was with sinners.

Jesus healed the sick who came to Him. This healing shows the saving power of the Lord, who makes sinners clean.

But the work of making sinners clean was not accomplished without any price. Jesus had to bear all the uncleanness of sinners with the baptism He received from John and be judged on the Cross.

11. The way of coming to God opened by the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus chapter 15 warns that an unclean person can die if he defiles the tabernacle of God. Then how can we, who are sinners by nature, come to God?

God has opened that way through Jesus Christ.

Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is the righteous work by which He bore all

the sin of mankind. John the Baptist testified of this Jesus as follows.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, and bearing those sins He received the punishment of sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. And Jesus completed eternal salvation by rising again from death.

The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the truth.

"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

—The water refers to the baptism Jesus received from John.

—The blood refers to the judgment of sin He bore on the Cross.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the truth.

12. Jesus died for sinners who had to die

Leviticus 15:31 warns that one can die if one defiles the tabernacle in an unclean state. It is the principle that a human being who has sin and uncleanness must receive judgment when he stands before the holiness of God.

But in the gospel, Jesus died in the place of the sinners who had to die.

Jesus had no sin, but He bore all the sins of sinners by receiving baptism from John. After that, He received the curse and the judgment in the sinner's place on the Cross.

As a result, the person who believes the gospel of the water and the blood is no longer under condemnation.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are

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in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

This does not mean that God has pretended not to see sin. Because sin has already been passed on to Jesus, and Jesus received all the judgment of that sin, the condemnation has ended.

13. From a faith that stands far off in fear to a faith that comes forward by faith

The unclean person of the Old Testament could not go near the tabernacle. If he approached wrongly he could die. But Jesus has opened, through His body and His blood, a new way of coming to God.

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19).

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not come to God with his own righteousness. He comes with the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood.

The boldness to come to God does not come from the following.

—The thought that one has sinned less this week

—The merit of having prayed much

—The boast of having served much and given many offerings

—The confidence that the state of one's body is healthy and clean

—The comparison that one is more devout than others

Boldness comes only from the completed salvation, that Jesus bore all sins and was judged.

14. Now the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer

In the Old Testament God dwelt in the midst of the tabernacle. In the New Testament the Holy Spirit dwells in the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Moreover, the saints, connected with one another in Christ, are being built together for *"a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22).*

On the one hand, this is a great grace. God is not only in a building far away; He dwells in the person who believes the gospel.

On the other hand, it means a holy responsibility. The person who has become the temple in which God dwells must not give over his body and heart, and the church community, to sin and falsehood.

The Holy Spirit does not depart because of a bodily condition such as the monthly period or illness. The Holy Spirit dwells in the person who believes the perfect atonement of Jesus, and does not abandon that person because of the natural changes of the body.

15. Just because one is under grace, may one regard holiness lightly?

The fact that Jesus has washed away all sins does not mean that one may commit sin as one pleases. Rather, through the warning of death in Leviticus chapter 15, we come to see how serious sin and uncleanness are.

The fact that Jesus had to receive baptism from John and die

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on the Cross for us shows that sin is by no means light.

Because the person who has received the remission of sins has become the temple of the Holy Spirit, he must give glory to God with his body.

"You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must avoid the following two extremes.

—Falling into condemnation, thinking that one has lost salvation every time one commits sin

—Living in license, thinking that since all sins have been remitted it is all right to live in any way

Because one believes the perfect atonement, one is free from condemnation; but because that grace is so precious, one hates sin and lives following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

16. Must the saints of the New Testament keep the ceremonies of Leviticus chapter 15 as they are?

The saints of the New Testament age do not need to restrict access to the tabernacle in the manner of Leviticus or to offer doves every time there is a discharge, a monthly period, or an emission. These cleansing ceremonies were a shadow pointing to the perfect redemption of Christ who was to come.

"Which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17).

At the same time, the following principles contained in these ordinances are precious.

—The holy God must not be treated lightly.

—The body and the living environment must be kept clean.

—When one has a disease, one must consider the effect it

may have on others.

—Uncleanness and sin must not be hidden or rationalized as normal.

—One must not condemn the suffering person, but open the way that restores him.

—The ground for coming to God must be sought not in one's own deeds but in the atonement of Christ.

17. The responsibility of the community shown by verses 32–33

This ordinance was not entrusted to individuals only. The priests had to teach cleanness and uncleanness, and the community had to keep holiness together, centered on the tabernacle of God.

The church of the New Testament, too, is not a mere gathering of individuals but a community in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Therefore the church must not regard lightly sin and falsehood defiling the community.

But the holiness of the church does not show itself in excluding the person whose body is ill, the woman during her monthly period, the person with a disability, or the socially weak. True holiness deals clearly with sin, yet proclaims the restoration that comes through the gospel to sinners and the weak.

The church must become the following kind of community.

—A community in which the sick can receive help without shame

—A community that treats men and women with the same grace of the gospel

—A community that does not hide sin, yet does not crush with condemnation the person who repents

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—A community that relies not on its own righteousness but on the water and the blood of Jesus

—A community that keeps truth and love together, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit

Conclusion

Leviticus 15:31–33 makes clear the purpose of the ordinances of cleansing. Because the tabernacle of God was in their midst, Israel had to discern uncleanness and be separated from it. If they ignored this and defiled the tabernacle, they could come to death.

But the purpose of this warning did not lie in casting off the unclean person forever. God provided, through washing with water and the sacrifice, the way to become clean again and return before God.

All this system of cleansing was completed in Jesus Christ. Jesus bore the sins and uncleanness of all people, men and women, with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross and died, and accomplished eternal salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit no longer needs to stand far off before God because of the natural phenomena of the body or the sins of the past. By the blood of Jesus he can come boldly to God.

At the same time, since he has become the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells, he must not regard sin and falsehood lightly, but must live offering his body, his heart, and his community to God.

The core of the text may be summed up in one sentence as follows.

Though an unclean person had to die if he defiled the tabernacle of God, since Jesus bore all our uncleanness with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of that sin in our place on the Cross, the person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes the holy temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells and can come boldly to God. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has washed away all our uncleanness with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Leviticus 15:1-15 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness. Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. Whoever touches anything that was

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under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries any of those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water. And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean. On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest. Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge."

Dear beloved saints, when a person discovers his own wrong, he tries to correct it. He is careful with his words, changes his behavior, and strives to become a better person than before. But even while he strives in that way, evil thoughts rise up again in his heart, and he again says the words he had resolved not to say. Even though he tries to correct the revealed wrongs one by one, sin keeps coming out from within us.

Then how can such a person receive the remission of sins before God? Must he wait until he becomes a person who does not commit sin? Can he come to God only after he has removed by his own strength all the evil that comes out of his heart?

Today's passage tells how the person who has become unclean because of a discharge and the person who has touched

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that uncleanness become clean. God not only made uncleanness clear but also told, together with it, the way of washing and the sacrifice of atonement. Through this word we must acknowledge our own sins and believe the remission of sins Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

We must know the sin that flows out from within us

Leviticus 15:2–3 says, *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness."*

God said that not only the state in which something flows out of the body but also the state in which it is stopped up is unclean. It could not be judged that a person had immediately become clean because no flow was seen outwardly. That person's state had to be seen according to the word God had given.

When we look at this ordinance of cleansing in the light of our problem of sin, we come to know the fact that we cannot judge ourselves by outwardly revealed actions alone. Even though one has not uttered an evil word, there may be hatred in the heart. Even though one has not actually taken what belongs to another, there may be greed. One may act politely before people while exalting oneself and putting others down in the heart.

Jesus also said this: *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from*

within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21–23).

We think that we spoke evil words because someone else made us angry. We also make the excuse that we lied because our circumstances were hard. But when we met with such things, the sin that was within us came out. Explaining the situation does not make even the sin of one's heart disappear.

The person who would receive the remission of sins before God must acknowledge this fact first. Thinking of himself as a person who needs only a little correcting, and setting before God only a few revealed wrongs, he cannot rightly know what he himself is like. We are people from whose hearts sin comes out, and we ourselves have no ability to remove all those sins.

Romans 5:12 says, *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned."*

We who were born as descendants of Adam have the problem of sin. And that sin is revealed in actual life through words, thoughts, and actions. The person who acknowledges this fact comes to know that he needs a salvation greater than his own resolution. He comes to seek the Savior who will bear all his sins.

Uncleanness leaves its traces even in the places of daily life

Verse 4 says this: *"Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean."*

The word that follows explains the case of touching the bed on which that person lay, the case of sitting on the place where he sat, and the case of touching his body. Verse 8 speaks of the

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case of being touched by his spit, and verses 9–10 deal with the saddle on which that person rode and the things that were under his body. Verse 11 speaks of the case in which he touched another person without having rinsed his hands in water.

God did not speak of uncleanness vaguely. He looked concretely even at the places of daily life where a person lies down, sits, moves about, and comes into contact with other people.

Our sin, too, begins in the heart and leaves its traces in daily life. Hatred harbored in the heart becomes harsh words, and those words wound the hearts of others. The heart that thought only of its own gain is revealed in lies and unfair actions. Because of the heart that seeks to exalt itself, one even disregards those close to him. We must examine what pain the sin within us has left on ourselves and on others.

Yet we must not set our hearts only on finding fault in other people. The person who must be examined first before this word is oneself. Before speaking of who has hurt me, I must acknowledge what comes out of my heart and what sins I have committed.

Verse 12 also distinguishes the way of dealing with things that have become unclean: *"The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water."*

God had the earthen vessel broken and the wooden vessel rinsed in water. Even after acknowledging the fact that something had become unclean, one could not decide the way of dealing with it as one pleased. One had to follow the way God had commanded.

Our remission of sins, too, must be received within the salvation God has appointed. We cannot judge that sin has disappeared because, in our own eyes, we have regretted it

enough. Nor can we say that we have now paid the price of sin because we have been in anguish for a long time. How sin is washed away and how its judgment is resolved must be known by the word of the salvation God accomplished.

God has given the unclean person the way of washing

In the passage, every time uncleanness is spoken of, the command to wash follows. Verse 5 says, *"And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening."*

To the person who sat on the place where he had sat, and to the person who touched his body as well, God said to wash their clothes and bathe in water. God gave the way that makes clean the person who has become unclean. Both the washing and the appointed time had to be accepted according to the word of God.

And verse 13 speaks of the procedure of cleansing for the person himself who had the discharge: *"And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean."*

Here there is an order. First, after the discharge has been cleansed, he counts seven days, washes his clothes, and bathes his body in running water. Because the discharge had stopped, he could not therefore omit the procedure of cleansing God had commanded. God made known by the word how that person was to become clean.

We, too, must distinguish between our state having improved for a while and our having received the remission of sins before God. Because one has not committed the same wrong for some

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time, the sins committed before do not therefore disappear. Because the heart has become at ease, the judgment of sin has not therefore been resolved. The ground of the remission of sins must be clearer than our feelings or the changes in our lives.

That ground the Lord has prepared. What we need is not to remain in the comfort of having committed fewer sins, but to know and believe how the Lord has washed away all my sins.

The water that washes the body washes away the dirt on the body. But the sin in our hearts and all the sins we have committed before God must be washed away by the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. Before this word of washing we must look to Jesus, who received baptism from John in order to bear our sins.

The person who receives cleanness needed the sacrifice of atonement

Following the procedure of washing, God commanded a sacrifice: *"On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest. Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge" (Leviticus 15:14–15).*

On the eighth day that person had to come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, with two turtledoves or two young pigeons. And he gave them to the priest. The priest offered the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and made atonement for him.

The passage does not end with the washing. The sacrifice for

the person who receives cleanness is offered before God. Everything was not finished by that person explaining his own state and claiming to be clean. He had to receive the atonement God had commanded.

This fact is important in our receiving the remission of sins, too. Sin has the problem of judgment together with the problem of defilement. We who have committed sin cannot escape the responsibility for that sin before God. God prepared the sacrificial offering for this sinner.

Through the sin offering and the burnt offering we come to see the vicarious atonement for the sinner and the sacrifice in his place. Today's passage says to offer the two sacrifices and make atonement for that person. In the grace that makes the sinner clean there is the sacrifice God accepts.

Then who is the true sacrificial offering for us? It is Jesus Christ. The Lord, the Son of God, bore our sins and was judged in our place. The sins we could not remove however much we disciplined our bodies and hearts, the Lord Himself resolved.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

Jesus is the sinless Son of God. Then how did the sinless Lord become the sacrificial offering for our sins? It is because He bore our sins in His body.

In the ordinance of the burnt offering of the Old Testament it is written this way: *"He shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4).*

This word tells of putting the hand on the head of the offering. The sinner laid his hand on the sacrificial offering and passed

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his sins on to it, and the offering that bore those sins died. The offering that received the sins was sacrificed in the sinner's place.

In order to fulfill this will of salvation, Jesus received baptism from John. When Jesus came to the Jordan River and sought to be baptized, John tried to prevent Him. Then the Lord said this: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Jesus did not receive baptism from John in order to wash away sins of His own. In order to save us sinners, He received our sins. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on to the offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John.

Therefore we must not think of the baptism Jesus received from John as a matter separate from our salvation. In that baptism there is the righteousness of God that passes our sins on to the Lord. In order to give life to us who had to be judged because of sin, the Lord Himself bore our sins.

John 1:29 testifies, *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In that sin of the world our sins are included. The Lord bore the problem of the sin we had from birth and the sins we commit with our hearts and actions as we live.

It is not only the sins committed long ago that were passed on to the Lord. Nor did He bear only the sins we remember. The sins we ourselves had not yet realized, the sins we were hiding from others, all the sins we commit throughout our whole lives, the Lord bore. We must not set my sins apart from the sin of the world the Lord bore.

The faith that receives the remission of sins must become

clear here. Going beyond knowing the saying that Jesus bore sins, we must accept in our hearts the fact that when He received baptism from John, He bore even my sins.

He received the judgment of our sins on the Cross

Jesus went to the Cross in the body in which He had borne our sins. With the baptism He received from John He bore the sin of the world, and bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died. The punishment of sin that we had to receive, the Lord received in our place.

Therefore, when we believe in the blood of the Cross, we must know whose sins the Lord who shed that blood bore. They are our sins. The sins I committed with my heart, the sins I committed with my mouth, and the sins I revealed in my actions, the Lord bore. The Lord did not evade the judgment of those sins but gave up His own life.

Just as washing and the sacrifice are together in the procedure of cleansing in today's passage, we must believe together the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. The Lord's bearing our sins and His receiving the judgment of those sins are together in our salvation.

The Lord, who bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, rose again from death after dying on the Cross. Jesus, who bore our sins and was judged, came back to life and became the Savior of us who believe. The salvation we rely on is the salvation the Lord Himself accomplished.

Hebrews 10:14 says, *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."*

Jesus offered His own body and accomplished the perfect atonement. He did not resolve only a part of our sins and leave

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the rest to us. Nor do we have to add our own suffering or good deeds in order to complete salvation.

Reading the word that the sin offering and the burnt offering were offered, we need not think that we must be saved over and over again. The salvation these sacrifices pointed to, Jesus Christ accomplished. We receive by faith the remission of sins He accomplished.

Believe in your hearts the salvation the Holy Spirit testifies

1 John 5:6–8 says, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).*

Jesus came by water and blood. With the baptism He received from John He bore our sins, and by shedding His blood on the Cross He received the judgment of those sins. The Holy Spirit testifies this truth of salvation. The gospel of the water and the Spirit tells the sinner how God has accomplished the remission of sins.

What we need is to believe this word in our hearts. While rejoicing at hearing that someone else has received the remission of sins, we must not leave our own sins as if they were unresolved. We must receive the salvation the Lord accomplished as salvation for me.

Some people cannot readily believe because their sins are so many. Every time a shameful memory comes to mind, they hesitate over whether they may say that even such sins have

disappeared. But we must not think less of the salvation Jesus accomplished because of the fact that our sins are many. It is because our sins are many that the Lord's salvation is necessary. The Lord knew those sins and bore them.

Others think that they have received the remission of sins only when a great emotion arises in the heart. But the ground of assurance does not lie in the size of one's feelings. It lies in the word that the baptism Jesus received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross have resolved my sins. When we believe that word, our hearts come to stand on the salvation of the Lord.

Romans 10:10 also says, *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

The remission of sins must not remain only on the lips that recite the word. We must believe in our hearts what the Lord has done. Because the Lord bore my sins and the Lord received the judgment of my sins, I who believe that salvation confess that I have received the remission of sins.

Do not leave within yourselves the sins the Lord has washed away

Dear beloved saints, to have received the remission of sins does not mean that no wrong thought or action now comes out of our flesh at all. We are still weak. When we commit a wrong, we must acknowledge it as a wrong. If we have done harm to another person, we must set that matter right.

But every time we discover our weakness, we must not deny even the salvation the Lord accomplished. Acknowledging sin as sin and believing that the Lord bore that sin must be together. Jesus did not save us without knowing what kind of people we

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are. Knowing all our sins, He received baptism from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

Therefore the person who has received the remission of sins does not boast of his own conduct and say that he has no sin. He confesses the remission of sins because he believes in Jesus, who took away all his sins. It is not covering over wrongs as if they had never happened, but relying on the vicarious atonement of the Lord, who resolved those sins.

Today's passage begins with speaking of the unclean person and goes on to making atonement for that person before God. While pointing out uncleanness, God also opened the way of becoming clean. Before the word that makes us know our sins, we must acknowledge ourselves, and believe the gospel of the Lord, who has made us clean.

Now do not draw back before the Lord because of your sins. With those sins, look to the salvation the Lord accomplished. Believe that when Jesus received baptism from John, He bore even my sins. Believe that He was judged in my place on the Cross, rose again from death, and became my Savior.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins. It is because the Lord bore all our sins. Accept this salvation in your hearts, and give thanks to God with the assurance of the remission of sins. And tell the salvation the Lord accomplished to those who are under the same burden of sin as well.

We give thanks and glory to Jesus Christ, who has washed away all our uncleanness and set us clean before God. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

God, who has washed away sin to be with us

< Leviticus 15:16-33 >

"If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as

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the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness. Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them. This is the law for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby, and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean."

Dear beloved saints, what grace is needed for the holy God to dwell among weak people? God is holy, but the more a person examines his own body and heart, the more insufficiency he discovers. Even the appearance he could hide before people is revealed as it is before God. Where is the way by which such people as we can live drawing near to God?

In the word we read today are recorded the uncleanness that arises in the bodies of men and women and the ordinances of cleansing for the person who has touched that uncleanness. The word to wash all the body in water, the word to wash the clothes, the word to keep the appointed period, and the word to offer the

sacrifice of atonement through the priest follow one after another. And God makes clear at the end the purpose for which He gave these ordinances: *"Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them" (Leviticus 15:31).*

God did not want His people to die by defiling His tabernacle in an unclean state. He told them the way of becoming clean so that they might be separated from uncleanness. We who read this word, too, must know how God washes sinners and makes them come before Him. We must receive in our hearts the remission of sins He accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God looks even into the secret life of a person

Verse 16 says, *"If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening."*

Here an emission means semen coming out of the body. God told such a person to wash all his body in water. Then in verse 17 He says that any garment or leather on which there is semen must also be washed with water and is unclean until evening. He dealt not only with the body but even with the things stained with what came out of the body.

Verse 18 speaks of the case in which a man and a woman lie together and there is an emission: *"Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening."*

God commanded both the man and the woman to wash. It was not enough for only one of them to wash. The two had each to follow the word of God.

In this passage the emission and the monthly period that

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comes later are dealt with as ordinances of cleansing according to the state of the body. This must not be immediately concluded to be evidence that some evil deed was committed. God is teaching how His people must keep cleanness in relation to His tabernacle.

Before this word we must also examine our own hearts toward God. We cannot think that we are fully prepared to stand before God because we have furnished only the religious life that is seen by people. God knows our secret life and our hearts as well. He knows even the sins we want to hide and the wrongs we have excused to ourselves.

The fact that others did not see does not become the ground for the remission of sins. Nor is the problem of sin before God resolved because those close to me think well of me. The person who would come to God must honestly acknowledge what kind of person he is, and receive the salvation of the Lord, who washes away his sins.

Both men and women need the cleanness God gives

From verse 19 come the ordinances concerning a woman's discharge of blood: *"If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening."*

He said that the woman is in impurity for seven days, and that whoever touches her is unclean until evening. The period for the woman herself and the period for the person who touched her are distinguished.

Verse 20 says that during that period the place where the woman lay and the place where she sat are also unclean. In verses 21–22 He commands the person who touched her bed or

her seat to wash his clothes and bathe in water. Verse 23, too, deals with the case of touching anything on the bed or the seat. And verse 24 says that the person who lies with that woman and has her impurity on him is unclean seven days, and that the bed on which he lies is unclean, too.

In this way God spoke distinguishing each case. One could not shorten the period by one's own judgment or bring the ordinance for a different case and apply it. The standard of cleanness was the word God had given.

Verses 32–33, the last of the passage, sum up that these ordinances concern the person who has a discharge, the person who has become unclean by an emission, the woman who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, the man and the woman who have a discharge, and the person who lies with an unclean woman. There were ordinances of cleansing for men, and there were ordinances for women. All had to follow His word before God.

When we think of the matter of the remission of sins, too, we cannot set ourselves apart as an exception. Some people are good at pointing out the sins of others but forget the fact that they themselves need the same grace of salvation. Some people, because they have lived the life of faith for a long time, do not confirm how their sins were washed away. But for everyone who comes to God, the remission of sins for himself must be clear.

Romans 3:23–24 says, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

All of us had sin, and all of us needed the redemption of Jesus Christ. It is not that we stand before God in an appearance that looks a little better than that of others. We are justified by the grace God has given in Jesus Christ.

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Even for uncleanness that has continued for a long time, He gave the way of becoming clean

Verse 25 deals with a case distinguished from the customary impurity spoken of before: *"If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean."*

It is the case in which a discharge of blood continues for many days other than at the appointed time of customary impurity, or continues beyond that period. In such a time, He said, she is unclean as long as the discharge lasts. Even though He had spoken before of the period of seven days, it could not be said that she was clean merely because the days had passed while the continuing discharge was left as it was.

Verse 26 deals with the bed on which that woman lies and the place on which she sits while the discharge continues. Verse 27 says that the person who touches such things is also unclean, and must therefore wash his clothes and bathe in water, and is unclean until evening. God looked even at the state in which uncleanness continues and at the places of daily life affected by it.

But the word does not stop at that state: *"If she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean" (Leviticus 15:28).*

After the discharge has stopped, He had her count seven days. And He went on to tell of the sacrifice to be offered on the eighth day. Even for the person who had long been unclean, God prepared the way of becoming clean.

The person who is in anguish because of sin also needs this grace. Some people think that there is no hope of salvation for

them because they have repeated the same wrong for too long. Seeing the fact that their resolutions have collapsed every time, they consider that they can no longer come to God.

But we must not judge that even the salvation the Lord accomplished is imperfect on the ground that our own failures have been of long standing. The One who saves us knows our weakness better than we ourselves. The Lord came to this earth in order to resolve the problem of sin that we could not handle.

In the Gospel of Mark appears a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years. She had suffered many things and had spent all she had, but her disease had grown worse. Then, hearing about Jesus, she touched the garment of the Lord. The Lord healed that woman and said this: *"And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction'" (Mark 5:34).*

That woman did not produce from within herself the power to be healed. She believed in the Lord, who would heal her, and came to Him. Through this event we learn that the heart that seeks the remission of sins, too, must be set on the Lord. We must acknowledge ourselves as having no ability to resolve sin, and believe the salvation accomplished by the Lord, who makes sinners clean.

The priest made atonement for that woman

Verses 29–30 speak of the offering the woman who receives cleanness is to bring and of what the priest is to do: *"And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall*

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make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness."

The woman had to prepare two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. The priest offered the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. That sacrifice was a sacrifice offered before God for the woman who had been unclean because of the discharge.

Here continues the procedure of cleansing, explained from verse 25, for the woman whose discharge had continued outside the time of customary impurity or beyond that period. This sacrifice must not be read as attached without distinction to all the bodily phenomena that came before. We must examine it, following what the passage commanded for each case.

Even after the discharge had stopped and she had passed the appointed days, this woman brought the offering God had commanded. All the procedure was not finished by the mere fact that her state had improved. The priest offered the sin offering and the burnt offering for her.

We who would receive the remission of sins, too, must rely on the vicarious atonement the Lord has prepared. Sin does not disappear because the time of regret has been long. Nor do many tears shed take the place of the price of sin. We need the sacrificial offering that will bear sins and be judged.

As that offering God gave Jesus Christ. The sinless Son of God came as the Savior for us. The Lord knew our sins and bore those sins in His body, and gave up His own life in the place of us sinners.

Just as the priest made atonement for the woman in today's passage, in our salvation, too, there is what was done for us. It is what Jesus did for us. The person who receives the remission of sins must lay down the heart that made his own labor the ground

of salvation, and believe the vicarious atonement the Lord has bestowed.

Jesus, who received all our sins with the baptism He received from John

How did Jesus bear our sins? He bore them by receiving baptism from John. Just as in the sacrifices of the Old Testament sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him.

When Jesus was about to be baptized and John tried to prevent Him, the Lord said, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

What the Lord sought to fulfill was all the righteousness of God. Following the righteous will of God to save sinners from sin, Jesus received our sins. It was not because the Lord Himself had sins to wash away that He received baptism from John. The sinless One received it in order to bear our sins.

Only when we know this fact does the washing away of sin become clear. We must not think as if our sins still remained with us and God were merely not looking for a while. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus actually bore our sins. Because the Lord received those sins, we who believe that salvation receive the remission of sins.

John 1:29 testifies, *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

What Jesus took away is the sin of the world. In it are included my sins and your sins. The sins revealed to people and

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the sins kept hidden, the sins committed long ago and the sins committed throughout one's whole life, all belong to that sin of the world.

Therefore do not leave your own sins outside the sin of the world Jesus bore. There is no reason to think that the Lord received the sins of others but did not receive my sins. Every time I think of the weight of my sins, I must look to the Lord, who received baptism from John in order to receive even those sins.

Like the water that washes our bodies, our hearts need the truth of the washing away of sin. When we believe the word that Jesus bore even my sins through the baptism He received from John, the heart gets out of the place where it stood alone bearing its own sins, and comes to rely on the salvation of the Lord.

He received the judgment we were to receive and accomplished the perfect atonement

Jesus, who bore sin, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died. Why did the sinless Lord receive that judgment? It is because He bore our sins with the baptism He received from John. In the body in which He bore those sins, the Lord received the punishment we had to receive.

Here is the reason we must believe together the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross. The baptism tells us that the Lord bore our sins. The blood of the Cross tells us that the Lord received the judgment for those sins. Our salvation was accomplished by the Lord's bearing sin and paying the price of that sin.

The Lord rose again from death and became our Savior. We believe in the living Jesus Christ. The Lord, who bore our sins

and died and rose again from death, has saved us.

Hebrews 10:10 says, *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

In the ordinances of cleansing of the Old Testament there were washing, a period of waiting, and the offering of a sacrifice. But we must not change that procedure into the meaning that we remove sin little by little and are saved only after a long time has passed. Jesus Christ offered His own body once and for all and accomplished salvation.

We believe the salvation the Lord accomplished and receive the remission of sins. It is not that we wash away some sins today and other sins tomorrow, filling up the price of salvation. It is accepting the word that the Lord bore all our sins and accomplished the atonement.

Hebrews 10:18 also says, *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin."*

It is not that we need a new sacrificial offering. Nor does Jesus have to receive baptism from John again or be hung on the Cross again. What we must believe is the perfect salvation of the Lord that has already been accomplished.

Receive the remission of sins the Holy Spirit testifies

1 John 5:6–8 says, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:6–8).*

The Son of God has saved us with water and blood, and the

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Holy Spirit testifies the truth of that salvation. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the news of salvation that Jesus has removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

The faith that receives the remission of sins must have clear content. If, while saying that we believe in Jesus, we do not know how He resolved our sins, our hearts cannot but keep wavering. Depending on how well I have lived today and what feelings I have had, I will feel now as if saved and now as if cast off.

But God did not place the ground of salvation in our feelings. He placed it in what His Son Jesus Christ accomplished. He told us of that work by the word and made us believe it.

Ask yourselves in your hearts. When Jesus received baptism from John, did He bear my sins, too? Was the judgment He received on the Cross the judgment for my sins? Is the Lord who rose again from death my Savior?

Receive this word of salvation in your hearts. Do not stop at being able to explain the fact that Jesus bore the sin of the world, but believe that He has delivered me from that sin. Because the Lord has taken away all sins, have the assurance that I who believe have received the remission of sins.

To have received the remission of sins does not mean that all the weakness of the flesh has disappeared. When we commit a wrong, we must acknowledge it. But we must also believe, together with that, the fact that the Lord bore that wrong. It is not that the heart becomes clean by hiding the wrong, but that by believing the salvation of the Lord, who resolved that sin, the heart gets out of the condemnation of sin.

God is with the people He has made clean

Now let us return to the word of verse 31. God said to keep the people of Israel from dying by defiling His tabernacle in their uncleanness. In these ordinances of cleansing, the holiness of God and His will to give life to His people appear together.

The place where God set His tabernacle was among His people. While God met His people and dwelt among them, He did not let them regard His holiness lightly. For the people to be with God, the grace of becoming clean was necessary.

To us today, too, He has given that grace. God did not leave us to perish because of sin, but sent His Son. He had Jesus receive baptism from John and bear our sins, and had Him receive the judgment of those sins on the Cross. And He has given the remission of sins and life to us who believe in the Lord, who rose again from death.

God has washed away our sins and made us come before Him. We do not need to remain people who only fear God from afar. Believing the remission of sins the Lord has given, we can pray to God, hear His word, and live in His love toward us.

Hebrews 10:22 says, *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."*

Dear saints, acknowledge the fact that you need salvation. And believe in Jesus Christ, who has made us clean. Set your hearts on the word that the Lord bore my sins and received the judgment I was to receive.

There is no need to strive to get near to God while still keeping our sins as they are. God has already opened the way of the remission of sins. Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the washing away of all sins, and come to God relying on that salvation.

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We give thanks to God, who has washed away our sins in order to be with us in our midst. We give praise and glory to Jesus Christ, who has made us, who were unclean, clean, and has delivered us from the judgment of death and made us His people. ✉

Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 15

[Question] 1. Leviticus 15:1–33—what kind of life do the ordinances concerning bodily discharges and uncleanness teach the people of God?

Leviticus chapter 15 deals with a man's discharge and emission of semen, a woman's uncleanness from the monthly period and from abnormal bleeding, and the procedure for becoming clean. The central lesson of these ordinances is that the people who live with the holy God must respect, in their daily life as well, the order of cleanness God has appointed. Even the condition of the body and the most private aspects of life were not unrelated to the life of serving God.

God gave these ordinances so that the people would not defile the tabernacle while unclean and thereby die (verse 31). He also appointed for the person who had become unclean the procedures of washing, waiting, and, in some cases, sacrifice. Therefore this chapter is at the same time a word that distinguishes uncleanness and a word that makes known the way to recover cleanness and come before God.

Here, ceremonial uncleanness arising from natural bodily functions must not be immediately identified with moral sin. When we apply this spiritually, we gain the lesson that we must acknowledge our own weakness and sin and rely on the grace of washing that God gives. Jesus bore our sin by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross. The saints must believe this salvation and live as befits people

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who belong to God.

[Question] 2. Leviticus 15:2, 3—what is the condition the text calls a *'discharge'*?

A *"discharge"* means that something flows out of the body. The text defines as unclean the state in which a secretion flows out of the body or in which that flow is stopped up. Verses 2–15 deal with a man's abnormal discharge, and must be read as distinct from the emission of semen, which is explained separately in verses 16–18.

From the explanation of the text alone, this condition cannot be matched with one specific disease of modern medicine. In particular, it is not appropriate to conclude that the word *"discharge"* as a whole means hemophilia or a specific venereal disease. The concern of this chapter lies not so much in diagnosing the name of a disease as in how the person who has a discharge becomes unclean and by what procedure he recovers cleanness.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 15:2, 3—why was a discharge from the body defined as unclean?

It is because God appointed a bodily discharge as a state that falls under ceremonial uncleanness, and had the person come before Him after going through the procedure for becoming clean. That He said the person was unclean not only when the discharge kept flowing but also when it clotted or was stopped up means that it could not be regarded as a clean state just because no secretion was visible to the eye.

The purpose of these ordinances was to keep the people from treating uncleanness carelessly and defiling the tabernacle of God (verse 31). The person in an unclean state had to acknowledge that state and follow the procedure of washing and recovery God had appointed. It does not mean that one should judge, merely from the fact that a person had fallen ill, that the person was especially wicked or had more sin than others.

Spiritually, it gives the lesson that a person must not hide his uncleanness or claim on his own that he is clean, but must examine himself before God and rely on the grace of cleansing that He has prepared.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 15:5–12—how were the people and things that had touched the uncleanness of the man with a discharge made clean, and what do those ordinances teach?

The person who had touched the bed or the body of the man with a discharge, the person who had sat on the seat he had sat on, and others like them had to wash their clothes, bathe their bodies in water, and remain in an unclean state until evening. The same ordinance of cleansing applied to the person on whom the man with a discharge had spat, and to the person he had touched without having rinsed his hands.

The text also makes distinctions according to the manner of contact. The person who touched anything that had been under him was unclean until evening, and the person who carried such a thing had to wash his clothes and bathe his body (verse 10). Also, the earthen vessel the man with a discharge had touched was to be broken, and a vessel of wood was to be rinsed in water (verse 12). Uncleanness was not to be overlooked, but had to be

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dealt with in the appointed way.

These ordinances teach that the recovery of cleanness before God must be accomplished not by one's own judgment but according to the word of God. When we apply this to the life of faith, when we realize a fault we must acknowledge it and confirm through the word the salvation by which the Lord has washed away sin. The act of bathing the body in water does not in itself remove our moral sins today. The washing of the heart lies in the faith that believes the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 15:5, 6—what does the ordinance that one becomes unclean by touching the man with a discharge or the seat he has sat on make one realize?

It shows that uncleanness does not remain only in the body of the person concerned, but affects even the seat he has used and the people who have come into contact with him. When we apply this spiritually, we come to realize that a person's sin, too, does not end with that one person, but can wound neighbors through words and deeds or lead others onto a wrong path.

Jesus, too, said that the sins that come out of a person's heart, such as evil thoughts, covetousness, and deceit, defile a person (Mark 7:20–23). Therefore the saints must examine not only the deeds that appear outwardly, but also look back on what comes out of their hearts and what effect it has on their neighbors. Instead of shifting one's own faults onto others or justifying them, one must acknowledge one's sin and rely on the grace of the Lord.

This spiritual application does not mean that going near a

sick person or caring for a sick person is in itself sin. Distinguishing between the ceremonial uncleanness of that time and the moral responsibility of today, we must receive it as the lesson to take responsibility for our own words and deeds and to love our neighbors.

[Question] 6. Leviticus 15:16–18—what is the meaning of God's having a man bathe his body after an emission of semen and be unclean until evening?

An "*emission of semen*" refers to semen coming out of the body. The man who had an emission was to wash all his body in water and be unclean until evening, and the garment or leather on which the semen had come was also to be washed in water. When a man and a woman lay together and there was an emission of semen, both of them were to bathe their bodies and be unclean until evening.

This passage teaches that an emission of semen was to be dealt with according to the ordinances of ceremonial cleanness. It did not define an emission in itself, or the sexual relations of husband and wife in themselves, as a moral sin like adultery. In fact, in this case it had the person wash his body and the related things and wait until evening, and verses 16–18 do not require a separate sin offering.

These ordinances teach that the people of God must respect the order God has appointed in the body and in family life as well. Rather than making a natural bodily function a reason for shame or a sense of guilt, one must rightly understand the difference between the ceremonial uncleanness the text defines and moral sin.

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[Question] 7. Leviticus 15:19—what does it mean that the woman having her monthly period was said to be unclean?

The woman who had a discharge of blood from the monthly period was, according to the ordinances of cleanness of the law, in a ceremonially unclean state for a set period. This provision was given so that the community that comes before God would keep the distinctions of cleanness according to the condition of the body. During that period the related ordinances applied also to the bed and the seat the woman had used and to the people who had come into contact with her.

The monthly period is a natural bodily function, and this word does not mean that the woman having her monthly period had personally sinned or that a woman's body in itself is evil. The text itself also explains the natural monthly period and bleeding that continues beyond the usual time as distinct from each other. Moreover, since there are ordinances of uncleanness for a man's emission and discharge as well, this chapter must not be read as a teaching that demeans only women.

What is to be learned from these ordinances is the fact that God regards cleanness as important. Today the monthly period must not be made a ground for treating women as sinners or for excluding them from worship and fellowship.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 15:19–24—how long did the uncleanness from a woman's monthly period last?

The woman having her monthly period was unclean for seven days. The person who touched that woman was unclean until evening, and the person who touched the bed she had lain

on or the seat she had sat on had to wash his clothes, bathe his body, and remain in an unclean state until evening.

However, to the person who lay with that woman and so contracted the uncleanness from her monthly period, an uncleanness of seven days applied, and the bed that person lay on also became unclean (verse 24). Therefore the woman's period of uncleanness, the period of uncleanness of a person who merely touched her, and the period of uncleanness of the man who lay with her must not all be explained as the same. Each must follow the distinction the text appoints.

[Question] 9. Leviticus 15:25–30—by what procedure did the woman whose unusual bleeding had stopped complete the rite of cleansing?

This part deals not with the ordinary monthly period, but with the case in which there is bleeding outside the time of the monthly period, or the bleeding continues beyond the usual time. When that discharge stopped, she followed the procedure of becoming clean after counting seven days. While the bleeding continued, the unclean state also continued, so the discharge first had to stop.

On the eighth day she came to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with two turtledoves or two young pigeons. The priest offered one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and made atonement for that woman before God. The rite of cleansing included all of these: the fact that the bleeding had stopped, the appointed period, and the sacrifice offered to God.

This shows that even the person who had been in an unclean state could recover cleanness according to the way God had appointed and return to the place of worship. Here one must not

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judge, merely from the fact that a sin offering was offered, that the bleeding itself had arisen because of some moral fault of the woman. Here we must look at the context of the sacrifice that resolves the ceremonial uncleanness from a bodily discharge.

[Question] 10. Leviticus 15:4–12, 19–27—what lesson does the teaching that uncleanness is passed even to other people give concerning community life?

What the text emphasizes is the fact that ceremonial uncleanness reaches even other people and things through contact. This must not be taken as a medical explanation that every discharge is a disease transmitted by contact alone. This chapter distinguishes between cleanness and uncleanness and teaches the community to keep those ordinances together.

Spiritually, it gives the lesson that since one person's life is connected with others, sin must not be lightly regarded as a merely personal matter. If one causes others to imitate wrong words and deeds, or creates an atmosphere in which sin is taken for granted, one's neighbors and the community are harmed as well. The saints must acknowledge their own faults and turn back, and help one another to live by a right faith.

Moreover, this chapter does not speak only of the spread of uncleanness, but also makes known the way of washing and cleanness. Rather than remaining in their own weakness and being discouraged, the saints must believe the remission of sins Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and with the Cross. It is important to keep the faith that the Lord has made us clean, and to live preaching the grace of that salvation to our neighbors as well. ✉

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CHAPTER

16

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Leviticus Chapter 16 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 16:1–5—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 16:1–5

Leviticus chapter 16 is the ordinance of the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement. Verses 1–5 are the introduction that makes clear, before the actual performance, the conditions on which the high priest was to enter the Most Holy Place.

The core of this word does not lie only in the warning that "if one draws near carelessly to the holy God, he dies." The deeper center is this.

A sinner cannot come to God by his own method, but if he follows the way of atonement God has appointed, he can meet God without dying.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this ordinance shows beforehand the eternal atonement and the new and living way of coming to God that Jesus was to accomplish in the future with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

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2. The word given after the death of Nadab and Abihu

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died" (Leviticus 16:1).

Here *"the two sons of Aaron"* are Nadab and Abihu. Leviticus 10:1–2 records that they died while burning incense with *"profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them."*

It is not that they lacked the status of priests. Nor is it that they had no religious zeal at all to serve God. The problem was that they arbitrarily changed the way of coming to God.

Before the holiness of God, the following things cannot become the ground of atonement.

—The office of priest

—Human sincerity and zeal

—Religious experience

—Good intentions

—A method of worship made in one's own way

This is the first point that connects with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A sinner cannot come to God by a method of salvation he has thought up himself. Prayer and tears and good deeds, the effort to keep the law, and repeated repentance in themselves cannot become the sacrificial offering that pays the wages of sin in his place.

God Himself appointed the law of salvation so that a sinner might come to Him without dying. In the Old Testament it appeared as the sacrificial offering, the laying on of hands, and the sacrifice of blood, and in the New Testament it was fulfilled as the work of salvation in which Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross.

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Therefore the event of Nadab and Abihu shows, rather than the meaning that "God is One who cannot be approached," that "the way of coming to God cannot be made by man but is appointed by God."

3. *"Not to come at just any time … lest he die"*

"And the LORD said to Moses: Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:2).

—The meaning of *"at just any time"*: *"At just any time"* does not mean 'while ignoring' but 'at any time,' 'as one pleases,' 'frequently.' Even Aaron the high priest could not enter the Most Holy Place whenever he wished.

In the Most Holy Place there was the ark of the covenant containing the Testimony on which the commandments of God were written, and the mercy seat covered it. In Exodus 25:22 God said that He would meet Moses above that mercy seat.

Therefore the mercy seat has a very important gospel meaning.

—The law inside the ark of the covenant reveals the sins of man.

—The sinner who has transgressed the law must receive judgment.

—But God placed the mercy seat on the ark in which the law was.

—On the Day of Atonement the blood of the sacrificial offering is sprinkled on that mercy seat.

—God sees the blood and accepts the death of the sacrificial offering in place of the death of the sinner.

That is, it is not that the righteousness of God disappears; rather, by the sacrificial offering receiving the judgment in the sinner's place, the righteousness and the mercy of God are accomplished together.

—Not a prohibition but a way for life: If one looks only at the word "not to come," it may seem as if God were pushing man away. But in the word *"lest he die"* the will of God is revealed. God did not give this ordinance in order to kill Aaron; He taught the way of life so that Aaron might come to God without dying.

Therefore the law of God is not mere oppression. It is the order of life that God established so that the holy God and sinners might be together.

4. The sin offering of a young bull and the burnt offering of a ram

"Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering" (Leviticus 16:3).

Aaron was the high priest, but he was not a person without sin. As appears in verse 6, ahead of the people he had to prepare the sin offering for himself and his house.

—The sin offering of a young bull: The young bull was the offering for the atonement of Aaron himself. This shows that the high priest of the Old Testament, too, was a sinner. Because a person with sin cannot, while still having sin, bear the sins of others, he first had to resolve the problem of his own sin.

But Jesus is different from Aaron. Hebrews 7:26 testifies of Jesus as the High Priest who is holy, harmless, and undefiled. Jesus had no need to offer a sin offering for His own sins. It is

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because He was the sinless Son of God.

Aaron offered the blood of animals for himself and for the people, but Jesus, while being the High Priest Himself, at the same time became the sacrificial offering. Hebrews 7:27 says that *"for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself."*

—The burnt offering of a ram: The sin offering is the sacrifice that deals with sin, and the burnt offering is the sacrifice that offers the offering wholly to God. Therefore, that the sin offering and the burnt offering were prepared together includes not only sin being removed but also the person who has received atonement being accepted as one who belongs wholly to God.

This order is important for the saints of the New Testament age as well.

It is not that we receive atonement by living holy lives. We first believe the atonement Jesus accomplished and receive the remission of sins, and then, thankful for that grace, we offer our lives to God. Dedication is not a condition for obtaining atonement, but the fruit of the atonement already received.

5. The linen garments and washing with water

"He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on" (Leviticus 16:4).

—Literally, they are the holy vestments of the Day of Atonement. The linen tunic, trousers, sash, and turban are the holy garments the high priest had to wear when performing the duties of the Day of Atonement. The high priest could not enter wearing ordinary clothes or clothes he himself chose. He had to

wear the garments God designated.

These linen garments show the principle that a person cannot stand before God clothed in his own righteousness. Just as the high priest took off his own clothes and put on the holy garments God had appointed, so a sinner cannot come to God making his own good deeds and religious merits his righteousness. He must put on by faith the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

—*"wash his body in water"*: The high priest had to wash his body in water as God had appointed and put on the holy garments. When we see this washing within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can know the salvation by which Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and washed away our sins.

This washing shows the fact that a person with sin and uncleanness cannot come to God as he is. At the same time, Hebrews 9:10 explains that the various washings of the Old Testament were *"fleshly ordinances"* imposed until the time of complete reformation. Washing the body with outward water was necessary, but that alone could not make the conscience and the sins of man clean forever.

In the New Testament, true cleanness is completed by the salvation Jesus accomplished.

—Jesus fulfilled *"all righteousness"* by receiving baptism from John.

—Through that baptism He received from John, He bore all the sins of the world.

—Bearing those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment.

—By rising again from death, Jesus showed that the atonement had been completed.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation accomplished

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with the water and the blood is the truth.

1 John 5:6–8 says that Jesus Christ is *"he that came by water and blood"* and that *"the Spirit, and the water, and the blood"* testify as one.

Therefore the saint who has received the remission of sins must ruminate every day on the word that Jesus bore all his sins with the baptism He received from John. When he commits a wrong in daily life, he must acknowledge that wrong, believe the word of salvation that Jesus already bore even that sin and was judged on the Cross, and make his heart clean.

6. The two goats and the ram for the congregation

"And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering" (Leviticus 16:5).

Now the scope widens from the high priest as an individual to the whole congregation of Israel.

Unlike the young bull for Aaron, the sin offering for the congregation was two male goats. These two goats do not mean two different salvations, but show two aspects of one atonement.

Looking at the ordinance that follows,

—One goat is killed and its blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place.

—The other goat is sent into the wilderness after Aaron lays both his hands on its head and confesses the sins of Israel.

The goat whose blood was sprinkled shows that the righteousness of God, that the wages of sin is death, was accomplished. The goat sent into the wilderness shows before the people that the sins of Israel were actually transferred from them and removed far away.

Within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, these two aspects are fulfilled within the one salvation of Jesus.

—The bearing of sin: When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is not understood merely as an event in which He showed an example of humility. It is the event of righteousness in which He bore all the sins of the world in His own body by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind.

That is why John the Baptist said, pointing to Jesus:

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Jesus had no sin, but by receiving baptism from John He became the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world.

—The judgment of sin: Jesus, who bore sin, shed His blood on the Cross. That death is not a mere martyrdom or an example of love, but the death of sacrifice in which He vicariously received the judgment for the sin of the world.

The blood of the goats and calves of the Old Testament had to be offered repeatedly every year, but Jesus accomplished eternal atonement with His own blood and entered the sanctuary once and for all. Hebrews 9:12 says this clearly.

"But with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption"

—The completion and the testimony of the atonement: Jesus rose again from death. This shows that the wages of sin were paid completely and that the power of sin and death has ended. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death are not salvations separated from one another but one complete salvation. The Holy Spirit testifies in the hearts of people that this very gospel is the truth.

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7. The difference between Aaron and Jesus

Aaron	Jesus
A high priest who himself had sin	The sinless eternal High Priest
First needed an offering for his own sins	Did not need a sacrifice for His own sins
Went in with the blood of animals	Accomplished eternal atonement with His own blood
Went in repeatedly every year	Accomplished atonement once and for all
Entered the Most Holy Place made with hands	Appears for us in the true heavenly sanctuary
He and the sacrificial offering were distinct	Became the sacrificial offering while being the High Priest
Entered alone at a limited time	Opened the way to come to God for those who believe

It is not that the sacrifice of Aaron was worthless because it was imperfect; it was a shadow God appointed so as to show beforehand the perfect atonement Jesus was to accomplish in the future.

8. The Most Holy Place that had been shut and the new and living way that was opened

In Leviticus chapter 16, one could not enter inside the veil at

just any time. But when Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the sanctuary was torn from top to bottom. The tearing of the veil of the sanctuary is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and of these, Matthew and Mark record that it was torn from top to bottom.

That the veil was torn not from bottom to top but from top to bottom shows that God Himself opened the way. It is not that man reached God by his effort; God came down to sinners through the flesh and the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 10:19–20 explains that fulfillment as follows.

"Having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil" (Hebrews 10:19–20).

In Leviticus 16:2 He said "not to come at just any time," but the saints of the New Testament age come boldly to God by the blood of Jesus. It is not because the holiness of God has weakened. It is because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and received completely the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross.

To come boldly does not mean to regard God lightly. It means not to rely on one's own righteousness but to rely wholly on the atonement Jesus completed.

9. The faith of the person who believes this word

—He does not come to God by his own method. He does not make his own zeal, feelings, deeds, or religious merits—like the 'profane fire' of Nadab and Abihu—the ground of salvation. He comes by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has appointed.

—He confirms the remission of sins not in his own state but

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in the work of Jesus. It is not that sin disappears because one day the heart is fervent, and that one becomes a sinner again because the heart is downcast. The ground of the remission of sins is not my feelings but the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death.

—He does not sacrifice Jesus repeatedly in order to wash away sin. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were repeated, but the atonement of Jesus was completed once and for all. When a saint realizes a wrong, he must honestly acknowledge it before God and turn back, but it is not that each time Jesus bears sin again and is hung on the Cross again. It is returning to the truth of the atonement already completed.

—A holy life is not a condition of salvation but its fruit. Just as the linen garments and the washing of the body were the preparation for the holy duties, the saint who has received the remission of sins must not give his body and heart over to sin but must live for the gospel and righteousness. But that life is not the price for obtaining the remission of sins, but the fruit of thanksgiving and faith for the grace already received.

—He fears God, yet comes boldly. He does not regard the holy God lightly, but neither does he flee far away because of sin. While seeing his own insufficiency, he believes the perfect atonement of Jesus and comes to God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 16:1–5 is not a word God gave in order to drive sinners away. It is a word that shows the way of atonement God Himself prepared so that sinners might meet God without dying and God might dwell among sinners.

Aaron had to enter with the blood, at the appointed time,

having prepared the offerings and the garments and washed his body. But Jesus came as the sinless eternal High Priest, bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, shed His own blood on the Cross, and completed the eternal atonement by rising again from death.

Therefore the conclusion of the gospel this text gives is clear.

We come to God not by our own righteousness and effort, but by believing the perfect atonement that Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood and that the Holy Spirit testifies.

The way into the Most Holy Place, which had been forbidden, became a new and living way in Jesus. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer a person trembling outside God because of sin, but a child of God who comes boldly to God by the blood of Jesus.

Leviticus 16:6–10—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The overall flow of Leviticus 16:6–10

This passage distinguishes the three offerings to be used on the Day of Atonement.

—The young bull for Aaron and his house

—The two goats for the congregation of Israel

—Of the two goats, one is killed and its blood is offered, and the other is kept alive and then sent into the wilderness bearing sin

The two goats do not mean two different salvations. Because Leviticus 16:5 calls the two goats together *"a sin offering,"* the

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two goats show two aspects of one atonement.

One shows the righteousness of God, that the wages of sin is death, and the price of blood; the other shows the fact that the sins of the people were passed on to the sacrificial offering and removed far away from them.

Within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all this is fulfilled in Jesus alone. Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed eternal salvation by rising again from death.

2. Aaron first makes atonement for himself and his house

"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house" (Leviticus 16:6).

—Aaron, the high priest with sin: Aaron was the high priest of Israel, but he was not a person without sin. Before the sacrifice for the sins of the people, he had to offer the sin offering for himself and his house.

Verse 6 summarizes this, and the process of killing the young bull and bringing its blood into the Most Holy Place is explained in detail in verses 11–14.

The reason this order is important is that a sinner cannot resolve the problem of another person's sin without having resolved his own sin. Even though he was the high priest, the office itself did not remove sin. Aaron, too, had to rely on the atonement of the sacrificial offering God had appointed.

—Jesus did not need a sacrifice for His own sins. In this point there is a decisive difference between Aaron and Jesus.

Hebrews 7:26 testifies of Jesus as the High Priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Jesus had no need to offer a sin offering for His own sins.

Aaron was a high priest who himself had to receive atonement, but Jesus was the sinless heavenly High Priest. Moreover, Jesus did not bring another sacrificial offering but offered His own body as the sacrificial offering.

"For this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:27).

Therefore what the young bull shows is the weakness of Aaron, and at the same time the necessity that the sinless true High Priest had to come in the future.

—The lesson for the person who preaches the gospel: Today the saints are not high priests who make atonement for the sins of others in their place, as Aaron did. The One who accomplishes eternal atonement is Jesus alone. But the saints who have received the remission of sins have received the priestly mission of testifying of the gospel.

Therefore the person who would preach the gospel to others must first clearly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his own heart.

—Do I believe that my sins were borne by Jesus?

—Do I believe that the Cross of Jesus bore completely the judgment of my sins?

—Do I believe that Jesus justified me by rising again from death?

—Or am I still looking for the evidence of the remission of sins in my own deeds and feelings?

It is difficult for a person who has no assurance of his own remission of sins to preach the perfect atonement boldly to others. He must first apply the gospel to his own heart.

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3. Presenting the two goats before the LORD

"He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting" (Leviticus 16:7).

Both goats were first set *"before the LORD."* This shows that the atonement of the Day of Atonement was not a religious performance by man but a holy work carried out before God.

Neither the people nor Aaron arbitrarily decided the roles of the goats. Which goat was to be killed and which kept alive, the choice and the roles of the offerings, and the order of the sacrifice were all appointed by God.

That the two goats were set together before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting also shows the fact that the two goats belong to one sin offering. One goat was offered before God as the sin offering, and the other, before the eyes of the people, received their sins passed on to it and was sent into the wilderness. God had the people, too, confirm the fact that their sins had been passed on to the sacrificial offering.

It is the same with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If one separates the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross from each other, the whole picture of salvation becomes blurred.

—If one speaks only of the Cross without the baptism Jesus received from John, it becomes unclear what sins He bore when He died.

—If one speaks only of the baptism Jesus received from John without the blood of the Cross, it is not explained how the judgment of the sins He bore was carried out.

—If the rising again of Jesus from death is left out, the victory over sin and death and the completion of salvation are not revealed.

—If the testimony of the Holy Spirit is left out, the testimony

that makes one believe in one's heart that all these facts are the truth of God disappears.

Therefore the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit are not three salvations competing with one another, but testify of the one salvation Jesus Christ completed.

4. The lot for the LORD and the lot for the scapegoat

"Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat" (Leviticus 16:8).

—The meaning of casting lots: Both goats were offerings fit for the sin offering. Casting lots was not a matter of choosing the better goat or the one without blemish, but the process of appointing the role of each before God.

This shows that atonement did not come from human wisdom or choice. It is not that man proposed to God a method of salvation; God first established the method of salvation.

Salvation is not a result that man obtained by persuading God. God, loving sinners, appointed the law of the transfer of sin, of sacrifice, and of the shedding of blood, and later He Himself fulfilled that law in Jesus Christ.

—The goat for *"the scapegoat"*: This goat is the sacrificial offering that bears the sins of the people in their place and is sent into the wilderness.

According to Leviticus 16:21–22, Aaron lays both his hands on the head of the live goat, confesses all the iniquities and all the sins of Israel, and puts those sins on the head of the goat. That goat bears all the iniquities of the people and is sent to an uninhabited land.

Therefore, in this context, the goat for the scapegoat is the goat that bears sin in the people's place and is sent outside the

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camp. The three actions that can be confirmed in the text are as follows.

—The high priest lays his hands on the head of the goat.

—The sins of the people are put on the head of the goat.

—The goat bears those sins and departs far away from the people.

This connects with *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* of the New Testament.

5. The goat on which the lot for the LORD fell

"And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering" (Leviticus 16:9).

Verse 9 is the command to offer the goat for the LORD as a sin offering, and the process of killing it and bringing its blood into the Most Holy Place comes from verse 15 on.

The role of this goat is to show that the price of sin was paid before God.

To remit sin does not mean that God pretends that sin is not sin. The wages of sin must surely be paid. The sacrificial offering that has received the sins passed on to it receives in the sinner's place the death and the judgment the sinner had to receive.

—What the blood says: The blood of the sacrificial offering is the evidence that the offering actually died. That the blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat has the following meaning.

"The sinner had to die, but the sacrificial offering that bore the sinner's sins died in his place."

God did not shut His eyes to sin; He had the sacrificial offering bear the sin and received its life as the price of sin.

This connects with the Cross of Jesus. That Jesus shed His

blood on the Cross was not merely an event in which He underwent physical suffering. It was the event in which He vicariously received the judgment of the sin of the world that He had borne by receiving baptism from John.

On the Cross Jesus said, *"It is finished."* This is not a saying that there remains an atonement man must supplement in the future, but the declaration that the judgment of sin and the work of salvation God appointed have been completely fulfilled.

Hebrews 9:12 makes that difference clear.

"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

6. The live scapegoat

"But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:10).

—Why this goat had to be alive: In verse 10 it was not killed immediately but was presented *"alive before the LORD,"* and was used after the atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar.

In verses 20–22 Aaron lays both his hands on the head of this live goat and confesses all the sins of Israel. And after putting those sins on the head of the goat, he sends it into the wilderness.

Therefore the reason this goat had to be alive was to show it bearing the sins of the people and actually departing from them.

The people could not see the sprinkling of the blood inside the Most Holy Place, but they could confirm the high priest laying his hands on the head of the live goat and that goat leaving

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the camp and going into the wilderness.

This was visible evidence that sin was not merely remitted in a notional sense, but was actually transferred from the people and removed.

—Sent into the wilderness bearing sin: The text says that the goat goes bearing *"all their iniquities to an uninhabited land."*

All the sins of the people were passed on to the goat, and the goat that bore those sins departed far away from the people. Through this figure of the sacrificial offering, we must believe the salvation by which Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and, bearing that sin, was judged in our place on the Cross.

7. The two goats and the one salvation of Jesus

The two goats show the one atonement Jesus accomplished. The atonement offered before God and the transfer of sin that the people confirmed before their eyes show the fact that we must hear by the word the salvation Jesus accomplished and believe it in our hearts.

The two goats of the Day of Atonement	The fulfillment by Jesus Christ
The two goats were prepared as one sin offering	Jesus alone accomplished the whole of salvation
The high priest represented the people	Jesus came as the heavenly High Priest
All the sins were put on the head of the live goat	Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John

The two goats of the Day of Atonement	The fulfillment by Jesus Christ
The goat departed bearing the sins of the people	Jesus became *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"*
The goat for the LORD died and its blood was offered	Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin
The price of sin was paid and sin was removed from the people	Jesus accomplished eternal atonement
The sacrifice was repeated every year	Jesus offered one eternal sacrifice once and for all
The Old Testament sacrifice was a shadow of the substance to come	Jesus completed salvation by rising again from death

8. The baptism Jesus received from John and the transfer of sin

On the Day of Atonement, sin was not passed on to the goat of itself. The high priest, representing the people, laid both his hands on the head of the goat, confessed all the sins, and put those sins on the head of the goat.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the fulfillment of this laying on of hands is the baptism Jesus received from John.

Because Jesus had no sin, He did not receive baptism from John in order to cleanse Himself. That is also why John the Baptist tried to prevent Him, saying, *"I need to be baptized by*

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You." But Jesus said this:

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

By Jesus receiving baptism from John, all the righteousness of God was fulfilled. That is, the sinless Jesus bore the sin of the world in His own body and became the Lamb of God who would vicariously receive the judgment of that sin.

That is why John the Baptist said, pointing to Jesus:

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

It is not that Jesus suddenly bore the sin of the world on the Cross. He first bore sin by receiving baptism from John, and bearing that sin He went to the Cross and shed His blood.

9. The united testimony of the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit

1 John 5:6–8 says that Jesus Christ is *"he that came by water and blood,"* and says that *"the Spirit, and the water, and the blood"* testify as one.

Here the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit are connected as follows.

—The water: Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John

—The blood: He received on the Cross the judgment of the sin He had borne

—The Holy Spirit: He testifies that this work is the righteous salvation of God

And by rising again from death, Jesus overcame sin and death. Romans 4:25 says that Jesus *"was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification."*

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit is neither a gospel that emphasizes only the baptism Jesus received from John, nor a gospel that speaks of the blood of the Cross detached by itself. It is the complete gospel in which the incarnation and the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His rising again from death, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit are connected as one.

10. The relation between His having borne the sins of all people and faith

The scapegoat of the Day of Atonement did not bear the sins of only some of the people of Israel. Aaron put *"all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins"* on the head of the goat.

In the same way, Jesus did not bear only some sins but bore the sin of the world. But this does not mean that all people automatically enjoy the life of salvation regardless of faith.

The following two facts must be seen together.

—Jesus bore all the sins of the world and completed the eternal atonement.

—A sinner receives and enjoys the grace of the remission of sins when he believes this gospel of the water and the blood in his heart.

Even though the scapegoat departed bearing sin, if the people of Israel did not believe the word of God, they could not enjoy the peace of that atonement in their conscience. Likewise, though Jesus bore all the sin of the world, if a person does not know that fact or rejects it, he still holds on to his own sins and lives in condemnation.

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11. The lesson for the life of the saint who has received the remission of sins

—First make your own remission of sins clear: Before preaching the gospel and serving others, one must confirm by faith the fact that one's own sins were passed on to Jesus and the judgment has ended. It is difficult to preach perfect salvation to others while one's own conscience remains pressed down under sin.

—The meaning of 'offering the sin offering by faith' must be understood rightly. It is not that today the saint sacrifices Jesus again every time he commits sin. The atonement of Jesus has already been completed once and for all.

That the saint confirms the atonement by faith every day is not creating a new atonement, but placing his present faults and weaknesses again under the light of the eternal atonement Jesus has already accomplished.

It is ruminating by faith on the fact that "Jesus bore this sin, too, and the judgment of this sin, too, ended on the Cross," while acknowledging the wrong action and turning from it.

—The faults of others must be seen within the gospel rather than condemned. Aaron did not offer the young bull for himself only, but made atonement for his house as well. The person who has received the remission of sins must see not only his own sins within the gospel but also the insufficiencies and faults of his brothers and sisters within the atonement of Jesus.

This does not mean that one should call sin right or leave wrongs alone. Sin must be clearly rebuked and set right, but instead of condemning and casting off that person, one must forgive and help his restoration with the faith that Jesus bore even that sin.

—The news of atonement must be told to those who do not yet know the gospel. The saint is not a person who offers a new

sacrifice in place of others. He is a person who makes known and testifies of the atonement Jesus has already completed.

Preaching the gospel is not demanding that people live harder and wash away their sins, but telling them how Jesus bore those sins and was judged with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Conclusion

Leviticus 16:6–10 shows the order of God by which atonement is accomplished.

Aaron first made atonement for himself and his house, and set the two goats before the LORD and cast lots. One goat he killed and offered its blood before God, and the other he kept alive and then sent into the wilderness bearing all the sins of the people.

These two goats point to the perfect salvation accomplished by one Person—Jesus.

Jesus, being the sinless heavenly High Priest, at the same time became the sacrificial offering for us. By receiving baptism from John He bore all the sins of the world, on the Cross He shed His own blood and received the judgment of those sins, and by rising again from death He justified us. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel consisting of the water and the blood is the truth.

Therefore the faith we must have before this word is this.

My sins do not remain within me as they are but were borne by Jesus. Jesus bore those sins and received the judgment on the Cross, and by rising again from death completed my salvation.

The person who believes this fact, instead of holding on to his own sins and fleeing from God, relies on Jesus, who accomplished the eternal atonement, and comes boldly to God.

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Leviticus 16:11–28—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 16:11–28

This word is the process by which the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement is actually performed. The whole order is as follows.

—Aaron kills the young bull for himself and his house

—He covers the mercy seat with the cloud of incense and sprinkles the blood of the young bull

—He kills the goat for the people and sprinkles its blood on the mercy seat

—He cleanses the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar with the blood

—He lays his hands on the live goat and passes all the sins of Israel on to it

—That goat departs into the wilderness bearing the sins of the people

—Aaron washes his body and offers the burnt offering

—The bodies of the sin offerings are burned outside the camp

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all this process shows that Jesus would bear the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, receive the judgment of that sin with the blood of the Cross, and complete the eternal atonement by rising again from death.

2. The young bull for Aaron himself

"And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself" (Leviticus 16:11).

Aaron was the high priest of Israel, but he was not a person without sin. Before the sacrifice for the sins of the people, he had to kill the sin offering for himself and his house.

This fact reveals the limit of the human high priest.

—However high the office, one cannot avoid the problem of sin.

—Even the person who serves close to God needs atonement.

—A human high priest cannot save the people by his own merit or holiness.

—A mediator with sin must also rely on the death and the blood of the sacrificial offering.

But Jesus is different from Aaron. Because Jesus is the sinless heavenly High Priest, He had no need to offer a sin offering for Himself. Jesus, while being the High Priest, at the same time became the sacrificial offering for us.

Aaron went in with the blood of another offering, but Jesus accomplished the eternal atonement with His own body and blood.

3. The fire of the altar and the cloud of incense

"Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense

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may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die" (Leviticus 16:12–13).

—Not just any fire could be used. Not fire obtained from a convenient place, but *"burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD"* had to be put in the censer.

This connects with the event in Leviticus chapter 10 in which Nadab and Abihu drew near with profane fire that He had not commanded and died. The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement was not a religious event offered in the way man wanted, but the sacrifice of life that had to follow exactly the way God had appointed.

It is the same with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Man cannot make a method of salvation by his own thinking.

—It is not that sin disappears because one has shed many tears.

—It is not that one is atoned for because one has tried to live a good life.

—Nor does the fact that one has repeatedly asked for the remission of sins pay the price of sin.

—Human zeal cannot take the place of the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross.

The method of salvation God appointed is that Jesus bears sin by receiving baptism from John and receives the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—The cloud of incense covers the mercy seat: Aaron had to burn incense in the Most Holy Place and cover the mercy seat. This was an ordinance of protection appointed so that a man with sin might not be directly exposed to the presence of the holy God and die.

The incense itself did not wash away sin. For the atonement of sin, the blood of the sacrificial offering was necessary. The cloud of incense played the role of covering, so that Aaron might

not die when he came before the mercy seat holding the blood.

Seen from the standpoint of the gospel, we cannot produce by ourselves the qualification to come directly to God. We must come by the mediation and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. What God accepts is not human merit but the perfect work of salvation Jesus accomplished.

4. The blood of the young bull sprinkled on the mercy seat

"He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times" (Leviticus 16:14).

The blood of the young bull is the evidence that the young bull died in the place of Aaron and his house.

That the blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat shows the fact that the price of sin was paid before God. It is not that sin was overlooked as if there were none; it is that the sacrificial offering received in the sinner's place the death the sinner had to receive.

—The mercy seat and the law: Under the mercy seat, in the ark of the covenant, was the Testimony on which the commandments of God were written. The law reveals the sins a person has committed and judges those sins. Yet on the Day of Atonement, blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat above the ark in which that law was.

This scene shows how the righteousness and the mercy of God are accomplished together.

—The law demands the judgment of sin.

—The sacrificial offering dies in the sinner's place.

—The blood, the evidence of that death, is sprinkled on the

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mercy seat.

—God sees the blood of the sacrificial offering and accepts the atonement of the sinner.

Sprinkling seven times shows the completeness of the atonement. Just as the atonement God appointed was accomplished wholly, Jesus accomplished the eternal atonement with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. This shows that atonement is not a vague feeling of man but an event with clear evidence before God.

5. The blood of the goat for the people

"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:15).

The blood of the young bull was for Aaron and his house, and the blood of the goat was for the people of Israel.

Aaron killed the goat for the people, brought its blood into the Most Holy Place inside the veil, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat as he had done with the blood of the young bull.

The death of this goat took the place of the death the people of Israel had to receive. Although the people had sinned, it was not that all the people died; the sin offering for the people died in their place.

—The connection with the blood of the Cross: The blood of the Cross of Jesus is precisely the blood with which He bore the judgment of sin. But in order to know why Jesus had to die on the Cross, one must first know how Jesus bore the sin of the world.

Jesus originally had no sin. The reason the sinless Jesus

received the judgment of sin on the Cross is that He bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John.

Therefore the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross are not separated.

—The baptism Jesus received from John shows the bearing of sin.

—The blood of the Cross shows the judgment of the sin He bore.

—His rising again from death shows the completion of the atonement and of salvation.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation of the water and the blood is the truth of God.

This does not mean that the Cross is insufficient and so the baptism Jesus received from John must be added. It is that the baptism Jesus received from John makes clear why the One who died on the Cross could receive the judgment of sinners.

6. Making atonement even for the Most Holy Place and the tabernacle of meeting

"So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness" (Leviticus 16:16).

Why did atonement have to be made for the holy Most Holy Place and the tabernacle of meeting, which had been built according to the command of God?

It does not mean that the Most Holy Place and the tabernacle of meeting themselves had committed a moral sin. Because God dwelt among the people of Israel, who had sin and uncleanness,

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their uncleanness was regarded as having contaminated even the area of the sanctuary.

This shows the fact that sin is not a problem that merely stays within the heart of an individual.

—Sin blocks the way between man and God.

—Sin defiles the community.

—Sin affects worship and service as well.

—It is not that the work automatically becomes clean just because a sinner performs the work of God.

So the blood was necessary not only for people; it also had to be sprinkled on the sanctuary and the altar where sinners served God.

In the New Testament, the blood of Jesus does not stop at merely making an outward place clean, but makes clean the conscience of the person who believes. Hebrews 9:14 says that the blood of Christ cleanses our conscience from dead works so that we may serve the living God.

7. Only the high priest alone enters

"There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel" (Leviticus 16:17).

On the Day of Atonement only the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, and no other priest or Levite could share that work.

This shows that atonement was not accomplished by the cooperation of many people or by the collective effort of the people. One representative came before God for the whole congregation.

In the New Testament, the One who completed this work is Jesus.

—Jesus alone is the eternal High Priest of heaven.

—Jesus alone is the sinless sacrificial offering.

—Jesus alone bore the sin of the world.

—Jesus alone accomplished the eternal atonement with His own blood.

—No one can add his own merit to the salvation of Jesus.

Salvation is the work Jesus accomplished alone. What we do is to accept by faith the work He completed.

8. Putting the blood on the horns of the altar and sprinkling seven times

"Shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel" (Leviticus 16:18–19).

Aaron came out of the Most Holy Place, put the blood of the young bull and of the goat on the horns of the altar, and sprinkled it on the altar seven times.

Looking at the direction in which the atonement proceeds, it comes from inside outward.

—The mercy seat in the Most Holy Place

—The tabernacle of meeting

—The altar

—The camp where the people are

—The goat sent into the wilderness

This is the structure in which the atonement that began in the deepest place, where the presence of God is, passes through

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every area of worship and appears even in the actual life of the people.

Putting the blood on the horns of the altar shows that the sins recorded before God are wiped away by the blood of the sacrificial offering. That the blood was put there shows that the altar that judges the sinner was made clean by the blood of the sacrificial offering, and that the way for the sinner to be accepted by God was opened.

9. Bringing the live goat after the atonement has been finished

"And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat" (Leviticus 16:20).

First, after finishing the atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar with the blood of the offerings, the live goat was brought forward. This order of time is important.

The sprinkling of the blood inside the Most Holy Place is the atonement accomplished before God. But the people could not see that scene directly. So through the live goat God showed before their eyes the fact that the sins of the people were actually passed on to the offering and removed far away.

The two goats are not separate atonements.

—The goat that was killed shows that the price of sin was paid before God.

—The live goat shows that those sins were transferred from the people and removed.

These two scenes together explain one great atonement.

10. Laying both hands and passing on all sins

"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man" (Leviticus 16:21).

This verse is one of the key points of the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement.

—Who laid hands: It was not that all the people of Israel laid hands on the goat one by one. Aaron the high priest laid hands representing the whole people.

One representative passed the sins of all the people on to the sacrificial offering. This becomes an important picture for understanding the relationship between John the Baptist, who represents mankind, and Jesus in the New Testament.

When Jesus received baptism from John, John did not act merely in a personal capacity. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, John is seen as the representative of mankind whom God raised up, and it is believed that by his baptizing Jesus, the sin of the world was borne by Jesus.

—What was passed on: The text does not say that merely a few mistakes were passed on.

—*"all the iniquities"*

—*"all their transgressions, concerning all their sins"*

—*"putting them on the head of the goat"*

God did not say to exclude some of the sins of Israel and pass on only certain sins. He had all the iniquities and all the sins put on the head of the goat.

In the same way, the sin Jesus bore with the baptism He received from John is not some sins but *"the sin of the world."* This is the reason John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus,

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"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

—The laying on of hands signifies the transfer of sin: The laying on of hands is not merely an act of blessing the goat. Verse 21 itself explains its meaning. Aaron laid his hands, confessed all the sins, and put them *"on the head of the goat."*

Sin was not pretended to have vanished; it was taken from the sinner and passed on to the sacrificial offering.

The reason this principle is important is that it answers the question that can arise when one speaks only of the blood of the Cross.

Why did the sinless Jesus receive the punishment of sinners?

It is because Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John. Because sin was borne by Jesus, Jesus went to the Cross bearing that sin and paid the wages of that sin with His own blood.

11. The goat that goes to an uninhabited land bearing sin

"The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:22).

The goat did not go into the wilderness empty. It went bearing *"all their iniquities"*—the iniquities of Israel.

The scene of the goat going farther and farther away before the eyes of the people until it could no longer be seen was visible evidence that their sins had departed from them. It is not that God regarded sin as nonexistent while it remained on the people as it was. Sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering and removed from the people.

—The connection with Jesus: After receiving baptism from

John, Jesus became *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* And bearing that sin, He went to the Cross.

—The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore the sin of the world.

—The Cross is the event in which He received the judgment of the sin He bore.

—The word *"It is finished"* declared the completion of the atonement.

—Jesus rising again from death is the evidence that He overcame sin and death.

The text does not say exactly when or in what manner the scapegoat died in the wilderness. The figure of the goat departing bearing all the sins of the people shows that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John. Bearing that sin, Jesus received the judgment in our place on the Cross.

12. Taking off the garments and washing the body with water

"Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people" (Leviticus 16:23–24).

Having finished his duties, Aaron took off the linen garments and left them in the tabernacle of meeting, washed his body with water in a holy place, and then put on his own garments.

This washing connects with the faith that believes the word

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that Jesus washed away all our sins with the baptism He received from John. The salvation Jesus accomplished is perfect, and the saint who has received the remission of sins must wash his heart every day with the word of that salvation.

The saint must not hide or rationalize the wrongs he has committed in daily life but must acknowledge them before God. And he must confirm again and believe the word that Jesus bore even those sins with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

This is making the heart clean by believing the word that Jesus has already washed away all sins, and boldly having fellowship with God and serving Him.

—Offering the burnt offering after the sin offering: After the rite of atonement, Aaron offered the burnt offering for himself and for the people.

The sin offering emphasizes the removal and the judgment of sin, and the burnt offering emphasizes being offered wholly to God and being accepted. Therefore the order is important.

First one receives atonement, and then one offers oneself to God.

It is not that a saint obtains the remission of sins by dedicating himself and living a good life. It is that the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the atonement Jesus accomplished offers his life to God with thanksgiving.

13. The fat of the sin offering

"The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar" (Leviticus 16:25).

Here the *"fat"* means the fat taken off the sacrificial offering, and the priest burned it to God on the altar. This fat spiritually points to the Holy Spirit. The ground on which we come to God is not our own thinking or effort but the salvation God accomplished.

The saint must confirm and believe the word that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies of this salvation God accomplished, and the saint, believing that word, has his heart made clean and has fellowship with God.

14. The washing of the man who sent away the scapegoat

"And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp" (Leviticus 16:26).

The man who led the scapegoat into the wilderness performed a holy duty that God had commanded.

But because he had become ceremonially unclean by handling the goat on which all the sins had been placed, he returned into the camp only after washing his clothes and bathing his body.

This shows how serious the contamination of sin is. Even the man used in the work of removing sin had to go through the rite of cleansing.

At the same time, it shows the boundary that the sin sent into

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the wilderness does not come back into the camp. The goat that bore the sin goes out, and the man who led it comes into the community only after receiving the washing.

15. Burning the bodies of the sin offerings outside the camp

"The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal" (Leviticus 16:27).

The blood of the sin offering went into the Most Holy Place, and its body was burned outside the camp.

This strongly shows that the sin offering bore sin, the curse, and the judgment. The blood became the evidence of atonement before God, and the body that bore sin was carried outside the community and received the judgment.

Hebrews 13:11–12 connects this scene directly with the suffering of Jesus.

"For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Hebrews 13:11–12).

That Jesus was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem connects with the sacrifice in which the bodies of the sin offerings were burned outside the camp. As the sin offering that bore the sin of the world, Jesus received shame, the curse, and the judgment outside the gate.

Outside the gate was the place of being cast off and of shame. But in that very place our salvation was accomplished.

16. The washing of the man who burned them

"Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp" (Leviticus 16:28).

The man who burned the bodies of the sin offerings outside the camp, too, had to wash his clothes and bathe his body before returning to the camp. As in verse 26, it does not mean that the man had committed a moral transgression. It is a matter of ceremonial cleanness following contact with the offering that bore sin.

This word thoroughly distinguishes between the removal of sin and the cleanness of the community.

—The offering that bore sin goes outside the camp.

—The man who handled that offering receives the washing.

—Only after receiving the washing does he return into the camp.

Sin was not treated lightly, nor was atonement vaguely declared. It was dealt with through the concrete procedure of the transfer of sin, death, blood, burning outside the camp, and washing.

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17. The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement and the fulfillment by Jesus

Leviticus chapter 16	The fulfillment by Jesus Christ
Aaron first made atonement for his own sins	Jesus, having no sin, did not need a sacrifice for His own sins
Only the high priest alone entered the Most Holy Place	Jesus alone is the eternal High Priest of heaven
All the sins of the people were put on the head of the goat	Jesus bore the sin of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John
The offering that bore sin died and shed its blood	Jesus received the judgment of sin on the Cross and shed His blood
The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat	Jesus accomplished eternal atonement with His own blood
The live goat went into the wilderness bearing all the iniquities	Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
The bodies of the sin offerings were burned outside the camp	Jesus suffered outside the gate
The sacrifice was repeated every year	Jesus offered one eternal sacrifice once and for all
The high priest offered the burnt offering after the atonement	The saved saints, thankful for grace, offer their lives to God
Washing the body with water after the rite	Confirming by the word every day and believing that all sins were washed away by Jesus bearing all sins with the baptism He received from John and receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross, and so making the heart clean

18. The completeness of salvation seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

—The water: He bore sin. When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* Through this baptism He received from John, Jesus bore the sin of the world in His own body.

—The blood: He received the judgment of sin. Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin He had borne and shed His blood. That blood does not mean only the martyrdom of a sinless One; it is the blood of atonement that paid the wages of our sins in our place.

—The Holy Spirit: He testifies to the truth of salvation. The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood is the righteousness of God and the truth. 1 John 5:8 says that *"the Spirit, and the water, and the blood"* agree in one.

—Rising again from death: the completion of the atonement: Jesus was delivered up for our offenses, and rose again from death in order to justify us. The resurrection shows that the sacrifice of Jesus did not fail and that the power of sin and death was completely broken.

19. The faith the person who has received the remission of sins must have

—One must not try to create atonement again. The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament was repeated every year, but the sacrifice of Jesus was completed once and for all.

"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer

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an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18).

It is not that every time a saint realizes sin he crucifies Jesus again or creates a new atonement. While honestly acknowledging his wrong and turning from it, he must return to the truth that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

—One must not look for the ground of the remission of sins in feelings. It is not that sin disappears when the heart is at peace, and that one becomes a sinner again when the heart is anxious. The ground of atonement is not our feelings but the work of the water and the blood that Jesus actually accomplished.

—One must not regard sin lightly. The faith that all sins have been remitted does not mean that one may commit sin as one pleases. The text shows how solemn a sacrifice, blood, and judgment were necessary in order to deal with the sin of one person.

The saint must not regard sin lightly, but must turn from sin, remembering the baptism Jesus received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross, which were because of that sin.

—After receiving the remission of sins, one must offer oneself to God. Aaron offered the burnt offering after the sin offering. In the same way, the dedication of the saint is not the price for obtaining salvation but thanksgiving for the salvation already received.

—One must not be ashamed of the reproach Jesus received. Jesus suffered outside the gate. Hebrews 13:13 says, *"Let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach."*

To believe the gospel is not to seek the recognition of the world, but to testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit even if, when necessary, one is rejected and insulted by people as Jesus was.

Conclusion

Leviticus 16:11–28 shows how sin is actually dealt with.

Sin was not remitted by words alone. All the sins of the people were passed on to the sacrificial offering, the offering that bore the sins died and shed its blood, and that blood was sprinkled before God. The live goat departed to an uninhabited land bearing the sins of the people, and the body of the sin offering was burned outside the camp.

All this was completed in Jesus Christ.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross bearing that sin, shed His blood outside the gate and was judged, and completed eternal salvation by rising again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the true salvation of God.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can confess this way.

All my sins were borne by Jesus. Jesus received all the judgment of those sins by being crucified and shedding His blood, and rose again from death. Therefore I come before God not by my deeds but by believing the eternal atonement Jesus completed.

Leviticus 16:29–34—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 16:29–34

This passage, while concluding the ordinance of the Day of

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Atonement, emphasizes three facts.

—The people of Israel must humble themselves and stop all work.

—When the high priest makes atonement for the people, they become clean *"from all your sins."*

—But this sacrifice must keep being repeated once every year.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that the people did no work and the high priest was in charge of the atonement shows the fact that salvation is accomplished not by the deeds of man but by the work of the mediator and the sacrificial offering God established.

At the same time, that it had to be repeated *"once a year"* shows that the sacrifice of the Old Testament was a shadow showing the eternal atonement of Jesus, who was to come. Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and completed eternal salvation once and for all by rising again from death.

2. The tenth day of the seventh month: afflict yourselves and do no work

"This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you" (Leviticus 16:29).

—The appointed day, the tenth day of the seventh month: The Day of Atonement was not a feast for which a convenient day was chosen, but the tenth day of the seventh month of the calendar of Israel, appointed by God.

That the date was fixed shows that the remission of sins is

not established according to a person's subjective feelings or religious zeal, but is accomplished according to the promise and the method God appointed.

The people of Israel could not make a Day of Atonement on the day and in the manner they wanted. Likewise, the salvation of the New Testament cannot be made by the method man wants. Salvation is the work the Son of God came and accomplished at the time God appointed.

—The meaning of "afflicting oneself": This word does not mean to harm one's body or to create suffering for oneself in order to pay the price of sin. It means that on the Day of Atonement the people were to humble themselves, acknowledge the seriousness of sin, and humbly accept the atonement God bestows. Leviticus chapter 23, too, commands on the same day, *"Afflict your souls."*

Traditionally it is understood as an expression that includes fasting and humbling, but the core is not that the amount of physical suffering washes away sin.

It was not that the people afflicting themselves became the price of atonement. The death and the blood of the sacrificial offering that bore sin were the ground of atonement.

It is the same in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

—A heart that grieves over sin is necessary.

—A heart that acknowledges that one is a sinner is also necessary.

—Repentance that acknowledges the wrong and turns from it is also necessary.

—But grief and tears and fasting in themselves are not the price that washes away sin.

The ground of the remission of sins is only the work of salvation in which Jesus bore the sin of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John and received the

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judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross.

—*"do no work at all"*: This is the command of rest, which Israel actually had to keep, to stop all work on the Day of Atonement.

Seen from the standpoint of the gospel, an important principle is contained here. Atonement was not a work the people made by their own effort, but a work the high priest performed before God.

The people did not take part in the atonement by plowing fields, making things, or dealing with the offerings in the high priest's place. The high priest offered the sacrifice in the way God appointed, and the people believed and accepted that sacrifice.

This connects with the salvation of the New Testament.

Salvation is not a work we complete, but receiving by faith the work Jesus completed.

This does not mean that our good deeds or prayers or service are unnecessary. They are not a matter of paying the price of salvation, but the fruit that the person already saved bears with thanksgiving.

—The native and the stranger who dwells among you: Not only the natives of Israel but also the strangers dwelling among them had to stop all work and take part in the ordinance of the Day of Atonement.

This shows the fact that before God, status or ethnic background does not become the standard of atonement. The natives of Israel needed atonement, and the foreigners living among them needed the same grace of atonement.

The gospel of the New Testament, too, is not for a particular people only. Jesus came as *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* The gospel of the water and the Spirit must be preached to all people, including Jews and Gentiles.

3. Becoming clean *"from all your sins"*

"For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Leviticus 16:30).

This verse declares the purpose of the Day of Atonement most clearly.

—"*make atonement for you*": It does not say that the people dealt with their own sins by themselves. The high priest made atonement for the people. The people were not the agents who produced the atonement, but the people who received the grace of the atonement God had prepared.

In the New Testament, too, Jesus accomplished salvation as our eternal High Priest. It is not that we helped the work of Jesus and washed away sin. Jesus Himself became the sacrificial offering, bore sin, and was judged.

—"*from all your sins*": God did not say that only some of the sins of the people of Israel are atoned for.

"From all your sins"

On the Day of Atonement the high priest put all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all the sins they had committed on the head of the goat. It was not that some sins were passed on to the goat and some sins remained on the people.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, what Jesus bore is not some sins but all the sins of the world.

—Sins committed in the past

—Present faults

—Sins that will be committed out of weakness in the future

—Sins committed with the heart

—Sins committed in thought

—Sins committed in action

—Sins committed knowingly and sins committed

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unknowingly

All these sins are included in the sin of the world. Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and bearing that sin He was judged on the Cross.

—*"clean from all your sins before the LORD"*: The remission of sins is not merely a psychological declaration by which a person comforts his own heart. It is becoming clean before God.

The One who determines sin is God, the One who determines the judgment of sin is God, and the One who establishes the method of atonement is also God. Therefore true remission of sins must be accomplished according to the method God appointed.

The people of Israel became clean before God through the sacrificial offering, the high priest, and the blood. The saints of the New Testament become clean before God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

This cleanness is not a subjective state in which "today I have no sin because my heart is at ease, and tomorrow I have sin again because my heart is anxious." It is an objective cleanness based on the work Jesus accomplished.

4. The sabbath of solemn rest

"It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever" (Leviticus 16:31).

The Day of Atonement was *"a sabbath of solemn rest."* The people had to stop all work, humble themselves, and look to the atonement the high priest offered.

—The relation between atonement and rest: If sin remains, one cannot enjoy true rest. If the conscience keeps being

condemned and God is feared, the heart cannot rest. The reason the people of Israel could rest on the Day of Atonement was that the high priest passed all their sins on to the sacrificial offering and paid the price of sin with blood.

Therefore rest does not mean only physical rest in which one does no work. It is connected with the peace that comes from the problem of sin having been dealt with before God.

—The rest of the gospel: Hebrews 4:10 says as follows.

"For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit stops the work of trying to complete the remission of sins by his own deeds. It is because Jesus completed salvation with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

This does not mean that one may live any way one likes. It means that one stops the labor of one's own righteousness for obtaining salvation, believes in God, who has already accomplished salvation, and obeys within that grace.

In the rest of the gospel two things are together.

—The faith that stops the work of trying to obtain the remission of sins by one's own merit

—The life that obeys with thanksgiving to God, who has already given the remission of sins

5. Why "afflicting oneself" and "*rest*" are together

In verse 31 two commands that at first glance seem opposed to each other are together.

—Afflict yourselves.

—Keep it as a sabbath of solemn rest.

But the two do not conflict.

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To afflict oneself is to acknowledge one's own sin and inability and humble one's heart. To rest is not to try to resolve that sin by one's own effort but to believe the atonement God has prepared.

Expressed from the standpoint of the gospel, it is as follows.

I acknowledge that I am a person without ability who cannot help but commit sin, but I believe that my salvation does not depend on my effort but on the atonement Jesus completed.

The person who does not acknowledge his own sin has no need of atonement. On the other hand, the person who, while acknowledging sin, tries to wash away sin by his own strength does not rest.

True faith is to despair of oneself and to rest wholly in the salvation of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished.

6. The high priest who is anointed and consecrated

"And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments" (Leviticus 16:32).

Even after the death of Aaron, the succeeding high priest, anointed and consecrated, had to continue the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement by the same ordinance.

—The limit of the human high priest: When the high priest of the Old Testament died, his son and descendants succeeded to the office, and so they were continually replaced.

Hebrews 7:23 explains that the reason there were many priests was that, because of death, they could not always remain in that office.

But Jesus rose again from death and lives forever. Therefore the high priesthood of Jesus does not pass on to another person.

"He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood" (Hebrews 7:24).

The descendants of Aaron were continually replaced, but Jesus is the eternal High Priest. Therefore the salvation Jesus accomplished, too, has no need to be revised or supplemented by another high priest.

—The literal meaning of *"anointed"*: Here the anointing means that the high priest succeeding Aaron was officially appointed and consecrated to the holy duty.

In the fulfillment of the New Testament, Jesus came as the true Christ, that is, the Anointed One, whom God established and sent. The consecration of the human high priest shows the necessity of the eternal High Priest whom God was to establish in the future.

—The linen garments: The high priest did not put forward his own clothes or splendor, but wore the holy linen garments God had appointed for the duties of the Day of Atonement.

These linen garments show the fact that man's own righteousness and merit cannot become the ground of salvation. The saints must believe in their hearts the salvation God accomplished through Jesus.

7. The scope of the atonement

"Then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly" (Leviticus 16:33).

The scope of the atonement is very comprehensive.

—The Most Holy Place

—The tabernacle of meeting

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—The altar

—The priests

—The congregation of Israel

Because of the sins and the uncleanness of the people, God commanded that the people and the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, in which they served, be made clean with the blood of the sacrificial offering.

This word shows that sin does not end as a problem only within the heart of an individual. Sin affects the relationship with God, the community, and worship and service.

That is why the blood of the Day of Atonement was not applied only to individuals but made clean every area of serving God.

In the New Testament, the blood of Jesus does not make clean only the sanctuary made with hands, but makes clean the conscience of the believer. The blood of Christ cleanses us from dead works so that we may serve the living God.

8. The atonement repeated once a year

"This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses" (Leviticus 16:34).

—The sacrifice for *"all their sins"*: The object of the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement was *"the children of Israel, for all their sins."* God did not say to make atonement for only some sins. The high priest, representing the people, passed all the sins of the year on to the sacrificial offering and made atonement.

But this atonement had to be repeated again the next year.

This very repetition shows the greatness and at the same time the limit of the Old Testament sacrifice.

The Day of Atonement of the Old Testament was actually a system of grace God established. But the blood of animals in itself was not the final offering that could remove the sin of mankind forever.

Hebrews chapter 10 explains it this way.

"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect" (Hebrews 10:1).

—The contrast between *"once a year"* and *"once for all"*:

Repeated once a year	**Accomplished once and for all**
Aaron and his descendants kept succeeding to the office	Jesus remains the eternal High Priest
Even the high priest needed an offering for his own sins	Jesus has no sin
The blood of a young bull and a goat was offered	Jesus offered His own body and blood
Made atonement for the sins of Israel for one year	Bore the sin of mankind of all ages
The sacrifice had to be offered again the next year	No need to offer a sacrifice for sin again
A shadow of the salvation to come	The substance of salvation accomplished with the water, the blood, and the Spirit

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Hebrews 10:12 says that Jesus offered *"one sacrifice for sins forever."* Verse 14 declares that *"by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."*

9. *"An everlasting statute"* and the saints of the New Testament age

The text calls the Day of Atonement *"an everlasting statute"* twice. Then must the saints of the New Testament, too, kill goats and a young bull on the tenth day of the seventh month every year?

No. This command is the ordinance Israel had to keep from generation to generation under the Mosaic covenant. In the New Testament this ordinance was not ignored or discarded; Jesus completed its substance.

To offer the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament again would rather be the same as claiming that the eternal atonement Jesus accomplished once and for all is insufficient.

The saints of the New Testament do not repeat the form of the Day of Atonement, but believe the substance to which that ordinance points.

—The true High Priest is Jesus.

—The true sacrificial offering is also Jesus.

—Jesus bore all the sin of mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John.

—Through the blood of the Cross, He received the judgment for all those sins.

—By rising again from death, Jesus gave new life to those who believe and testified to the completion of the atonement.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation of the water and the blood is the truth.

10. Aaron, who did as God commanded

The end of verse 34 is very important.

"And he did as the LORD commanded Moses"

Aaron did not add his own thoughts or take anything away from the command of God. He did as God commanded through Moses.

This connects with the attitude of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must not reconstruct salvation according to our own thinking.

—We must not exclude the baptism Jesus received from John as an unimportant event.

—We must not reduce the blood of the Cross to a mere example of love.

—We must not leave out the rising again of Jesus from death.

—We must not add human good deeds or repeated prayers of repentance as conditions of atonement.

It is important to believe, just as it is written, the word of the water and the blood that the Holy Spirit testifies.

11. The completion of the Day of Atonement seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

—The baptism Jesus received from John: In the Old Testament the high priest passed all the sins of the people on to the head of the sacrificial offering by laying on hands. In the New Testament, Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John.

Jesus said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,"* and after He received baptism from John, the Holy Spirit came upon Him and God the Father testified that He was His beloved Son.

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—The blood of the Cross: Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world He had borne with the baptism He received from John. The blood of the Cross is the blood by which He received the judgment of the sin He bore.

That Jesus said *"It is finished"* does not mean that there remains an atonement that man must supplement, but is the declaration that the bearing and the judgment of sin have been completed.

—Rising again from death: Jesus was delivered up for our offenses and was raised in order to justify us. By rising again from death, Jesus overcame sin and death and became the perfect Savior.

—The testimony of the Holy Spirit: 1 John 5:6–8 says that Jesus came by water and blood and that the Holy Spirit testifies of this. The Holy Spirit is not One who establishes a person's vague experience as the ground of salvation, but testifies that the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood is the truth.

12. The rest of the gospel and the life of the saints

—One must stop the work of trying to complete salvation. If, though Jesus has completed the eternal atonement, one tries to complete the remission of sins with one's own good deeds, tears, and repeated pleas for the remission of sins, one has not yet entered the rest of the gospel.

When one commits sin, one must acknowledge the wrong and turn back to God, but it is not that each time one makes a new atonement. It is confirming by faith the truth that Jesus bore and was judged for even that sin.

—Rest is not license. The faith that "all sins have been

remitted" is not a permission to commit sin as one pleases. Rather, it makes one hate sin, knowing what sacrifice the Son of God made in order to remove sin.

One does not obey in order to obtain atonement, but obeys with thanksgiving because one has received atonement.

—One must acknowledge one's own inability. The word "afflict yourselves" gives the lesson not to regard one's own sin and weakness lightly. A person cannot keep the law perfectly and become righteous by himself.

But one must not end in despairing of oneself. One must believe that though there is no hope in oneself, the salvation of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished is perfect.

Conclusion

Leviticus 16:29–34 shows how a sinner obtains true rest before God.

On the Day of Atonement the people of Israel had to stop all work and humble themselves. The work of atonement was done not by the people but by the high priest God had established. As a result the people became clean before the LORD *"from all your sins."*

But the sacrifice was repeated every year, and when the high priest died another person had to succeed to the office. This shows that an eternal High Priest and an eternal sacrificial offering are necessary.

That eternal High Priest is Jesus. Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of sin with His own blood on the Cross, and completed the eternal atonement by rising again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit no longer tries to complete atonement by his own effort. He confesses by faith this way.

Jesus bore all my sins and received all the judgment of those sins. Jesus justified me by rising again from death. Therefore I enjoy true rest not in my deeds but within the eternal atonement Jesus completed. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The way of atonement God has prepared for sinners

< Leviticus 16:1-10 >

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died; and the LORD said to Moses: Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.”

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For a sinner to come before the holy God

Dear beloved saints, how can a person who has sin come before the holy God? Is it enough to regret one's wrongs and resolve to live a good life from now on? If one's zeal toward God is great, does the sin within oneself also disappear? Today's word teaches what is needed for a sinner to come before God.

Leviticus chapter 16 begins by mentioning the event in which the two sons of Aaron died as they came before the LORD. They were priests, but they died while burning incense with profane fire that God had not commanded. The fact that they held the office of serving God could not take the place of the word of God. The person who came to God had to follow the way God had appointed.

After this event God spoke to Aaron through Moses: *"The LORD said to Moses: Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:2).*

Here the veil refers to the curtain. Aaron was the high priest, but he could not enter before the mercy seat inside the veil whenever he wished. It is because God appears there. For a person with sin to come before the holy God without any preparation was a matter of life and death.

Yet God did not only say not to come in. In the word that follows, He told Aaron how he was to prepare and come in. He appointed one by one what offerings he was to prepare, what garments he was to wear, and for whom he was to make atonement first. God Himself prepared the way by which a sinner could escape death before God and be with God.

In this word we must see the will of God for salvation together with the gravity of sin. God is not One who accepts a

person while leaving sin as it is. And yet He did not leave the sinner as he was, but gave the way of atonement that would resolve that sin. Here also lies the reason we today must know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is because we must know how God has removed our sins and receive that salvation by faith.

Aaron himself also needed the offering of atonement

In verse 3 God told Aaron to prepare a young bull as the sin offering and a ram as the burnt offering. And in verse 6 He made clear for whom that sin offering was: *"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house."*

Aaron was the high priest who dealt with the problem of the sins of the people. But he himself was also a person who needed atonement. It was not that his own sins disappeared of themselves just because he had been given the duty of offering sacrifices for others. Aaron and his house, too, needed the sacrificial offering God had appointed.

This fact is an important word for us as well. Even a person who knows the Bible well needs the remission of sins. Even a person who has attended church for a long time needs the remission of sins. Even a person who urges others to believe in God must know how his own sins are removed. It is because the record of one's life of faith or the office one holds cannot remove the sin in one's heart.

What we can set before God is not the boast of how faithfully we have led a religious life. We must first acknowledge the fact that we are people who commit sin. And we must accept the salvation God has given for us.

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Just as Aaron needed a sacrificial offering, we too need an offering that will bear our sins. That offering is Jesus Christ Himself. The Lord came to this earth for us and accomplished the atonement with His own body.

Only, here we must know clearly the difference between Aaron and Jesus. Aaron had to make atonement first for his own sins, but Jesus had no sin of His own to wash away. Hebrews chapter 7 speaks of Jesus as the High Priest who is holy, harmless, and undefiled. The sinless Lord offered Himself for us who have sin.

Therefore we must not expect salvation from a person who has sin just as we do. We must know how the sinless Jesus bore and resolved our sins. We must come before God with the faith that believes that work.

He said to wash with water and put on the garments God had appointed

God did not only have the offerings prepared. He also appointed the garments that Aaron, who offered the sacrifice, was to wear: *"He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on" (Leviticus 16:4).*

Aaron had to wash his body with water and put on the linen tunic and trousers. He had to be girded with the linen sash and wear the linen turban. God called these holy garments. Aaron was not to choose and wear the clothes that seemed good in his own thinking and go in; he had to go in wearing the garments God had appointed.

Through this word we learn that the remission of sins is not something accomplished by human effort and devotion. The preparation fit for standing before God was also appointed by God. A person must not try to make holiness by his own zeal and be recognized by God. He must accept what God has said and believe it as it is.

We too need washing. The sin of the heart is not washed away merely by putting on a neat outward appearance. Even the evil thoughts and the greed of the heart harbored where no one sees are revealed before God. Though one may show a respectable appearance before people, one cannot resolve the problem of sin before God with that appearance.

Then with what are our sins washed away? They are washed away by believing the truth that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John. We receive the remission of sins by believing the gospel that the Lord bore those sins and was judged on the Cross.

We must not take the word that Aaron washed his body to mean that if we today wet our bodies with water, the sins of the soul disappear. The One who actually bore our sins is Jesus. What we must rely on is the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross. When we believe this salvation God has given, we receive the washing away of sin and can stand before God.

He had two goats prepared for the people

Now God speaks of the offerings for the congregation of Israel: *"And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering" (Leviticus 16:5).*

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The sin offering for Aaron himself was a young bull, and the sin offering for the people was two male goats. He also had one ram prepared as the burnt offering for the people. God appointed concretely the kinds and the uses of the offerings.

Dear fellow believers, it is not that, because the people were many, each of them prepared his own way of removing sin. God appointed the offering of atonement for the congregation. The resolving of the sins of the people had to be accomplished through that offering.

This word tells us where we must look when we think of salvation. However much we look into our own hearts, we cannot find within them the ability to remove sin. We can regret what we did wrong, but regret does not pay the price of that sin in our place. We must look at the sacrificial offering God has appointed.

Today, too, the Savior God has given us is the one Jesus Christ. It is not that some receive the remission of sins by good deeds, some by religious zeal, and others by tears. All of us need the salvation Jesus accomplished. The appearance of sin differs from person to person, but the remission of sins is received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given.

God did not appoint the way of salvation without knowing our circumstances. Knowing the fact that we are people who cannot remove sin by ourselves, He gave the Savior who would bear our sins. Therefore, if we have discovered our own insufficiency, we must not give up salvation because of that insufficiency, but must look to Jesus Christ, who was given precisely for such people as us.

The two goats were set apart for the work God had appointed

In verse 7 He said to present the two goats before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And in verse 8 He had lots cast for the two goats: *"Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat."*

Both goats were set before the LORD. One of them was offered as the sin offering for the LORD, and the other was kept alive and then sent into the wilderness. Which goat was to do which work was also decided according to the procedure God had commanded.

Verses 9 and 10 explain that difference: *"And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering." "But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:10).*

The goat for the LORD was the offering of atonement offered before God. The scapegoat was the offering that showed the sins of the people being transferred from them and departing. God had the atonement accomplished before Him, and also let the people know how their sins were dealt with.

The meaning of these two goats becomes clearer in the word that follows. In verse 21 He said that Aaron was to lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess all the iniquities and all the sins of the children of Israel, and put those sins on the head of the goat. And in verse 22 He said that the goat goes out into the wilderness bearing all the iniquities of the people.

The sin was on the people, but that sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering. The iniquity the people should have been

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bearing, the goat bore and went out. God let the people know the ground of the remission of sins. It was not that they regarded sin as gone because their hearts had become at ease for a while; He made them believe the remission of sins because the atonement God had appointed was accomplished.

We must not think of the two goats as two different saviors. The meaning of atonement shown through the two goats was accomplished in the one Jesus Christ. The Lord bore our sins and received the judgment of those sins. And we hear that word of salvation and by faith obtain the assurance that our sins have been remitted.

Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John

Then how was the passing on of sin to the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament accomplished in Jesus?

Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John. When John tried to prevent Jesus, the Lord said this: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Jesus had no sin of His own to repent of and wash away. Nevertheless, that He received baptism from John was in order to bear the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus bore the sin of the world in His own body by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind. He fulfilled the righteous will of God to save sinners.

We must not think of the baptism Jesus received from John as a matter separate from salvation. Nor, while believing that

Jesus bore our sins, must we regard how He bore those sins as unimportant. God spoke in the Old Testament, too, of sin being passed on to the offering, and in the New Testament He recorded for us Jesus receiving baptism from John.

John saw Jesus and testified: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

In the sin of the world that Jesus took away, our sins, too, are included. The sins we could not tell others, the sins committed long ago but still weighing on the heart, the sins we feel ashamed of every time we examine ourselves—these, too, the Lord bore. The Lord, who knows our lives, bore with the baptism He received from John all the sins we commit throughout our whole lives.

We must believe this fact. Making one's heart at ease by regarding one's own sins as small is not faith. Faith is accepting the word that Jesus bore all those sins, while acknowledging that the sins actually existed and that the one who must be judged because of those sins is oneself.

The Lord, who bore sin, was judged on the Cross

After bearing the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, Jesus went to the Cross. He gave up His body in order to bear the wages of sin in our place. That the sinless Lord shed His blood and died was His receiving in our place the judgment of sin that we had to receive.

Therefore the baptism Jesus received from John and the shedding of His blood on the Cross must be believed together within the truth of salvation. The Lord bore our sins with the baptism, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

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And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

Hebrews speaks of this salvation this way: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).*

The ground on which we obtain sanctification lies in Jesus Christ having offered His own body. It is not that we correct our hearts little by little and finally become people without sin. Because the Lord bore all our sins and accomplished the atonement with His own body, the person who believes that gospel receives the remission of sins.

In the salvation God has given, there remains no sin that we must resolve separately. It is not that Jesus bore a part and had us remove the rest by our effort. The Lord, who knows all our sins, bore all those sins. To accept wholly the salvation the Lord accomplished is the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1 John chapter 5 says that Jesus Christ came by water and blood and that the Holy Spirit testifies. It also says, *"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth – ASV" (1 John 5:6).*

Our salvation does not depend on a momentary feeling. The Holy Spirit testifies the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. We believe this truth that God testifies and receive the remission of sins.

Believe the atonement the Lord has accomplished as your own salvation

Dear beloved fellow believers, think again of the word about the two goats. God had the sacrifice of atonement offered before Him, and let the people know that their sins were passed on to the offering and departed. He did not leave them to guess vaguely at the remission of sins.

We too, as we hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must confirm within it the problem of our own sins. We must believe that our own sins are included in the word that Jesus bore the sin of the world. We must believe that the judgment the Lord received on the Cross was the judgment we ourselves had to receive.

Someone may think, "I have done so many wrong things that I cannot easily say I have received the remission of sins." But what we must know more clearly than how many our sins are is the fact of how completely the Lord bore those sins. The Lord did not save us without knowing our sins. He knew them all and bore them.

Another person waits for his heart to become fervent enough. He thinks that only if many tears flow does it seem he has been saved, and that only if there is a special feeling does it seem God has accepted him. But the ground of the remission of sins is not our feelings. The salvation Jesus actually accomplished is that ground. The assurance of the heart, too, must be obtained from believing this word.

Acknowledge your sins before God. And believe in Jesus Christ, who bore those sins. There is no need to hide your sins, nor any need to wait, trying to become clean first by your own strength before coming to the Lord. The salvation we sinners need, the Lord has already accomplished.

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In today's word, Aaron could not go in before God as he thought fit. He had to prepare the offerings God appointed, wash with water, put on the holy garments, and follow the ordinance of atonement He commanded. We too must accept the way of salvation God has opened. That way is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Believe the love of the Lord, who came to this earth in order to bear our sins. Accept as your own Savior the Lord, who received our judgment in our place and rose again from death. The person who believes this gospel in his heart receives the remission of all sins and comes before God.

We give thanks and glory to God, who has prepared the way of atonement for sinners and accomplished that salvation through Jesus Christ. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who bore all iniquities and accomplished eternal atonement

< Leviticus 16:11-22 >

"And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself. Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die. He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may

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make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. And he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness."

Dear beloved saints, in today's word there appears the sacrificial offering that bears the sins of the people in their place. There is the blood of the offering offered before God, and there is the live goat that goes out into the wilderness bearing all the iniquities of the people. Through this ordinance of atonement God showed concretely how sin is remitted.

The person who has committed sin has the responsibility for that sin. Sin does not disappear because one lives on forgetting the wrong. Nor does one's anguish, when one thinks of sin and is in anguish, pay the price of sin in one's place. The problem of sin before God must be resolved through the atonement God has appointed.

Today we will follow the sacrifice the high priest offers and examine how God had the sins of the people dealt with. And we

must know how the atonement shown in this word was accomplished by the baptism Jesus received from John and the sacrifice of the Cross. When we believe that salvation as our own, a clear remission of sins is accomplished in our hearts as well.

Even the high priest for the people first had to receive atonement

In verse 11 Aaron kills the young bull of the sin offering for himself. This young bull was the offering for Aaron himself and his house. Even Aaron, who was entrusted with the atonement of the people, had sin that first had to be resolved.

Aaron could not simply let his own sin go on the ground that he was the high priest. God required the offering of atonement of him as well. However precious the duty of a priest, that duty in itself could not make a person clean from sin.

In Exodus chapter 29, too, when Aaron and his sons were established as priests, He had them lay their hands on the head of a young bull. After that He had the bull killed and its blood put on the horns of the altar. Even the person who serves God first had to resolve his own sins through a sacrificial offering.

We too must receive this fact in our hearts. Before teaching faith to others, one must oneself receive the remission of sins. Because reading the Bible and attending worship have become familiar, the problem of sin is not therefore resolved of itself. What we must rely on is not the work we have been given or our record in the life of faith, but the atonement God accomplished for us.

Aaron needed an offering because of his own sin, but Jesus, our eternal High Priest, did not need an offering for His own sin. Jesus is One who has no sin. Such a Lord bore our sins and

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offered Himself for us. Therefore our salvation does not depend on the ability of a human being who has sin. It depends on the atonement the sinless Lord accomplished.

He covered the mercy seat with the cloud of incense and sprinkled the blood of the offering

After killing the young bull, Aaron had to take a censer and fill it with burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD. He also had to go inside the veil with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine. God also said what he was to do inside: *"He shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die" (Leviticus 16:13).*

Aaron had to go inside the veil, burn the incense, and cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony with that cloud of incense. God said that only so would he escape death. Coming before the holy God was not something a person could do according to his own thinking.

Looking at this word, we can see that Aaron needed the grace of God even up to the moment he stood before God. Because he had prepared the offerings, washed his body, and put on the appointed garments, it was not that from then on he could act as he pleased. He had to follow to the end the way God had spoken.

Next, Aaron had to take the blood of the young bull and sprinkle it on the east side of the mercy seat, and sprinkle it seven times before the mercy seat. What he brought in before God was not his own merit but the blood of the sacrificial offering.

That blood is the evidence that the offering died. Atonement was not a matter of passing over the problem of sin while pretending not to know it. A life was sacrificed because of sin.

God had it shown through the blood of the sacrificial offering that the judgment on sin had been carried out.

We must know this fact when we think of the Cross of Jesus. That the Lord shed His blood was not merely in order to show us a sorrowful sight. The Lord received in our place the judgment we had to receive because of our sins. Because Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins on the Cross.

The faith that comes before God is the faith that relies on this salvation. What matters is not how earnest an expression we have made, but who bore sin and who was judged for us. Our Savior is Jesus Christ.

Because of the sins and the uncleanness of the people, He had atonement made even for the sanctuary

Having offered the sacrifice for himself and his house, Aaron killed the goat of the sin offering for the people: *"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:15).*

For Aaron a young bull was sacrificed, and for the people a goat was sacrificed. Aaron had to go inside the veil with the blood of the goat for the people and sprinkle it on and before the mercy seat. The people, too, had to receive atonement through the blood of the sacrificial offering.

Verse 16 makes clear the reason this atonement was necessary: *"So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because*

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of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

Because of the sins and the uncleanness of the people, God had atonement made for the Most Holy Place and the tabernacle of meeting. The tabernacle of meeting was in the midst of the uncleanness of the people. Because it was the dwelling place where God was with the people, it was not that the sins of the people were no problem at all. God dealt with that uncleanness and made it clean.

In verses 18 and 19 He said to put the blood of the young bull and the blood of the goat on the horns of the altar, and to sprinkle that blood on the altar seven times. In that way the altar had to be consecrated from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. The priest who came to God, the people who offered the sacrifice, and the dwelling place where God was served all needed atonement and cleanness.

This word shows how grave sin is. A person easily regards his own wrong as a mere personal matter. But God dealt with the sins and the uncleanness of the people through the sacrifice of atonement. One could not be with the holy God while leaving sin as it was.

At the same time, this ordinance also shows how minutely God prepared the way of atonement for sinners. God did not merely point out the fact that the people had sin and end there. He had atonement made because of those sins, and He consecrated what was unclean. God Himself appointed the atonement necessary for Him to be with the people.

What we today need, too, is not zeal that tries to serve God while covering over sin. It is receiving the washing away of sin that God accomplished through Jesus Christ. In order to set us before God, the Lord bore all our sins and was judged.

The people had to rely on the sacrifice the high priest offered for them

In verse 17 there is a special command: *"There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel."*

While the high priest was inside for the atonement, no one was to be in the tabernacle of meeting. It was not that each of the people went in and added his own share of the atonement. The high priest God had established performed the work of atonement representing them.

The people could not see directly all that was done inside. That did not make the atonement a matter unrelated to the people. Aaron went in not for himself and his house only, but for all the assembly of Israel. In the place that could not be seen, the atonement for the people was being accomplished.

Through this word we learn what it is to believe the atonement that was carried out for oneself. Salvation is not received because I myself have carried out that work. It is receiving by faith the work God accomplished for me.

When Jesus received baptism from John, we were not there. When the Lord was hung on the Cross and judged, neither did we help the work of salvation at His side. But in the sin of the world the Lord bore, our sins, too, were included. The judgment the Lord received was the judgment for us.

Therefore we must not try to add our own merit to the sacrifice of the Lord in order to receive salvation. We must know the fact that the atonement accomplished for us is complete. We must hear that word and believe it as our own salvation.

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Aaron put all the sins on the head of the live goat

After finishing the atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, the live goat was offered. Now God says what was to be done with that goat: *"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man" (Leviticus 16:21).*

In this word is contained what is indispensable for understanding the remission of sins. First, those who committed sin were the people of Israel. It was not the goat that had done the iniquities of the people of Israel. Yet Aaron laid both his hands on the head of the goat while confessing all the iniquities and all the sins the people had committed. God said to put those sins on the head of the goat.

In this sacrifice, the laying on of hands was the act of passing on sin. It is transferring the sins that were on the people to the sacrificial offering. The confessing of sin and the passing on of sin were accomplished together.

Here we must rightly understand the confession of sin. It is not that Aaron spoke of the sins of the people and then did nothing. He put those sins on the head of the goat. It is not that sin vanished merely because he said they had done wrong; the offering God had appointed came to bear that sin.

We too must acknowledge our own sins. We must not hide before God the sins committed with the heart, the sins committed with the mouth, and the wrongs revealed in action. But if we stop at acknowledging sin, we cannot help but keep looking at sin and being in anguish. We must know who bore that sin. We must believe in Jesus Christ, the sacrificial offering God has given for us.

Moreover, God spoke of all the iniquities and all the sins the children of Israel had committed. He did not have only the sins people can easily speak of passed on to the offering. What needed the remission of sins was all the iniquities of the people. God had those sins put on the offering.

Before this word we must not set our own sins apart from the range of sins the Lord bore. If Jesus bore the sin of the world, my sins are in it, too. We must believe the fact that the Lord bore the very sin of which I am ashamed.

The goat went out into the wilderness bearing the iniquities of the people

What became of the goat that had received the sins passed on to it? *"The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:22).*

The goat went out bearing all the iniquities of the people. A suitable man appointed beforehand was entrusted with that goat, led it to a place where no one lived, and released it in the wilderness. God showed the people, together with the fact that their sins had been passed on to the offering, the offering bearing those sins and departing.

What did the people have to believe? Did they have to believe the feeling that they seemed to have become better people than before? No. They had to believe the fact that, as God had commanded, their sins had been passed on to the goat and that the goat had gone out bearing their iniquities.

The blood sprinkled on the mercy seat and the goat that went out into the wilderness show us the truth of the remission of sins. Before God the atonement for sin was accomplished. To the

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people the fact that their sins had been passed on to the offering and had departed was shown. God gave concrete words and sacrifices so that the people could know the remission of sins.

Our hearts, too, must stand on this truth of salvation. We must distinguish between the fact that the memory of having committed sin remains and the fact that that sin has been remitted. Because one remembers the wrongs of the past, the atonement Jesus accomplished is not therefore canceled. What matters is the fact of whether the Lord bore that sin.

The faith of the remission of sins is not a faith that insists one has done nothing wrong. It is the faith that I actually committed sin, but the Lord bore and resolved that sin. It is accepting, on the ground of the word of salvation God has recorded for us, that one's own sins have been remitted.

Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John

Just as in the Old Testament the high priest laid hands on the goat representing the people, Jesus received baptism from John, the representative of mankind. That the sinless Lord received baptism was in order to bear our sins.

Matthew 3:15 says, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

The Lord sought to fulfill all righteousness by receiving baptism from John. According to the will of God to save sinners, He bore the sin of the world in His own body. That will of atonement by which, in Leviticus, He had sin put on the sacrificial offering was fulfilled with the baptism Jesus received from John.

After that John testified, pointing to Jesus: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Just as the goat that went out into the wilderness went bearing the iniquities of the people, Jesus went bearing the sin of the world. The sin the Lord bore was not only the sins of some special people. It was the sin of all mankind. Before we were born, the Lord knew even the sins we commit throughout our whole lives and bore all those sins.

Therefore we must believe the baptism Jesus received from John in connection with the problem of our own sins. We must not regard the Lord as having borne only the sins of others. It is the baptism by which He bore my sins. Even the sin that weighed on my heart was passed on to the Lord, and He received it.

And the Lord went to the Cross bearing those sins. He received in our place the judgment we had to receive, shed His blood, and died. Both the bearing of sin and the receiving of the judgment of sin the Lord accomplished. Here lies the reason we must believe together the baptism Jesus received from John and the shedding of His blood on the Cross.

The Lord rose again from death. The Lord, who bore our sins and was judged, came back to life and became our eternal Savior. This is the gospel of salvation God has given us.

The Lord accomplished eternal atonement with His own blood

The high priest of the Old Testament entered the sanctuary with the blood of animals. But Jesus offered Himself as the sacrificial offering. Hebrews says this difference clearly: *"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He*

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entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

The atonement Jesus accomplished is eternal atonement. The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, offered every year in the Old Testament, showed the salvation Jesus Christ would accomplish. The Lord came, bore the sin of the world, and completed that salvation by offering His own body.

It is not that every time we commit sin Jesus must receive baptism from John again. Nor must He be hung on the Cross and die again. The Lord knew all our sins, bore them once and for all, and received the judgment of those sins. Therefore that salvation is the salvation for our whole lives.

We must not make this salvation small while looking at our own weakness. We are weak people with many wrongs. But the salvation the Lord accomplished is complete. It is not that the salvation of the Lord becomes complete only when we become perfect people. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the Lord, who accomplished the perfect salvation.

Some people think that the Lord bore only a part of their sins. They consider that they must remove the remaining sins by praying or striving themselves. But that is not the faith that wholly accepts the eternal atonement. We must believe, just as it is, the word that the Lord bore all our sins.

God did not leave the work of the remission of sins to us. Jesus Christ accomplished that work. We must know the salvation God accomplished and believe it in our hearts.

When we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our conscience also obtains cleanness

Hebrews also says what the atonement the Lord accomplished does to our conscience: *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).*

The salvation the Lord accomplished is not a distant story spoken of only before God. It also makes clean the conscience of us who believe that salvation. When we believe the fact that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and received that judgment on the Cross, we get out from under the burden of sin.

It is not by deceiving ourselves that our conscience obtains cleanness. It is because the Lord actually resolved sin. Rather than striving to erase the memory of sin, what is necessary is to know clearly the Savior who bore that sin. We must not try to substitute reproaching ourselves for atonement, but believe the word that the Lord was judged in our place.

1 John says, *"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:8).*

The Holy Spirit testifies to the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a story a sinner made up to soothe his own heart. It is the truth of salvation that God promised, Jesus Christ accomplished, and the Holy Spirit testifies.

Dear beloved fellow believers, in today's word Aaron put all the sins of the people on the head of the goat. That goat went out into the wilderness bearing the iniquities of the people. God let

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the people know the way sin is resolved.

Now we believe in Jesus Christ, who fulfilled that promise. The Lord bore our sins with the baptism He received from John. Because of those sins He was judged on the Cross and rose again from death. For the person who believes that salvation there is eternal remission of sins.

If, while acknowledging your own sins, you have not been able to accept the salvation the Lord accomplished, believe this word in your heart today. Believe that your own sins are in the sin of the world the Lord bore. Believe that the judgment the Lord received was the very judgment for you.

We give thanks to the Lord, who bore all our iniquities and accomplished eternal atonement. We give glory to the Lord, who has saved us from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made us stand before God with a clean conscience. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who has made us clean from all sins and given us rest

< Leviticus 16:23-34 >

"Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn

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rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses."

God appointed the day on which sinners become clean

Dear beloved saints, in today's text there is a clear promise God gave to the people who have sin: *"On that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Leviticus 16:30).*

God told the people of Israel that they would become clean from all their sins. It was not that the people found out for themselves a way to remove their own sins. God appointed the day of atonement for them, and gave the sacrifice to be offered and the ordinance to be kept on that day.

What we must pay attention to in this word is the fact of becoming clean before God. Receiving a good evaluation before people and receiving the remission of sins before God are different. People can look at our outward appearance and say we are all right. But God knows even the thoughts of the heart and the hidden sins. Therefore the remission of sins cannot depend on the praise of people or on one's own judgment. What matters

is how God has dealt with our sins.

Today's word shows how the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement is concluded. Aaron changed his garments and offered the burnt offering, and the fat of the offering used in the sacrifice and the rest of its body were burned in the appointed place. The men entrusted with that work also had to follow the ordinance of washing. And the people had to afflict themselves and do no work.

In the midst of all these ordinances, God gave the promise that He makes the people clean. We must know Jesus Christ, who fulfilled that promise. When we know and believe how Jesus made us clean with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, we get out from under the burden of sin and obtain true rest.

Aaron did as God appointed, down to the last procedure

In verse 23 Aaron comes into the tabernacle of meeting, takes off the linen garments he put on when he went into the Most Holy Place, and leaves them there. And he washes his body with water in a holy place and puts on his own garments.

Then God said: *"He shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people" (Leviticus 16:24).*

Aaron had earlier gone into the Most Holy Place with the blood of the sin offering, and had also finished passing the sins of the people on to the live goat and sending it into the wilderness. But not all the procedures of the Day of Atonement had ended. Now he had to offer his own burnt offering and the

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burnt offering of the people.

The text says of this burnt offering, too, that he makes atonement for himself and for the people. Therefore this burnt offering must not be seen merely as a token of thanksgiving offered after the sacrifice was over. This, too, was a work belonging to the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement that God had appointed. Aaron had to carry out to the end the work God had entrusted to him.

Moreover, in verse 25 He said to burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. Which part of the offering was to be dealt with where and how, God also appointed. Aaron could not pick out and do only what seemed important in his own thinking.

Through this word we learn the fact that the remission of sins depends on the salvation God has appointed. A person cannot add a method according to his own thinking or leave out a necessary part. We must know how God has saved us, and accept that salvation wholly.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the work in which He bore our sins. That He shed His blood on the Cross is the work in which He received in our place the judgment for those sins. We must believe in these works together as salvation. We must accept in our hearts the work in which the Lord bore our sins and paid the price of those sins.

The men entrusted with the work of the sacrifice also needed washing

In verse 26 comes the ordinance concerning the man who sent the goat into the wilderness: *"He who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp"*

That man was entrusted with the work of leading away the goat that goes bearing the sins of the people. But it was not that he could immediately come into the camp just because he had finished that work. He had to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water before coming in.

In verses 27 and 28, too, the same ordinance of washing appears. The blood of the bull for the sin offering and of the goat for the sin offering went into the sanctuary, but their skins, their flesh, and their offal had to be carried outside and burned. The man who burned them also had to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water before coming into the camp.

Here we must distinguish the blood of the offering, the fat burned on the altar, and the remaining parts burned outside. God did not let the sacrifice that atones for sin be concluded carelessly. He had even the men entrusted with that work keep the ordinance of cleanness.

The fact that these men faithfully carried out the work entrusted to them and the fact that washing was necessary stand together. One could not skip the ordinance of cleanness on the ground that one had done the work God entrusted.

We too must not think that the problem of our own sins has been resolved merely by the fact that we have done some work for God. Even the person who has labored for the church must receive the remission of sins. Even the person who has helped others needs the salvation that washes away his own sins. Labor and service are precious, but they are not the power that washes away sin.

The One who washes away our sins is Jesus Christ. By receiving baptism from John, the Lord bore all our sins. And on the Cross He was judged in our place. We receive the washing away of the sin of our hearts by believing that truth.

It is not that, just because there was an ordinance of washing

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the clothes and the body in the Old Testament, even the sins of the soul disappear if we today wash our bodies with water. What we need is the faith that believes the washing away of sin the Lord accomplished. We must receive in our hearts the fact that Jesus bore my sins with the baptism He received from John.

Before the word to afflict yourselves, we must acknowledge our own sins

God also spoke of the attitude the people were to take on the Day of Atonement: *"This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you" (Leviticus 16:29).*

The people had to afflict themselves on the day God appointed. They were not to regard their sins lightly, or to stand as if they were people who needed no atonement. They had to accept the fact that they had committed sin before God and that because of that sin an offering of atonement was necessary.

But this word must not be taken to mean that the more one afflicts one's heart, the more sins are remitted. What bore the sins of the people was the sacrificial offering. What died and shed its blood because of sin was the offering. The grief of the people did not take the place of the life of the offering.

When a person realizes his wrong, he regrets it. The more he thinks of it, the more ashamed he is, and he also resolves never to do such a thing again. Such a heart can come from acknowledging sin. But by regret and resolution alone the sins already committed do not disappear. The person who has acknowledged sin must come to the Savior who resolved that sin.

We must know the fact that we are sinners who cannot exalt

ourselves before God. We must lay down the heart that thought it could become righteous by itself. We must not cover sin with the claim that we are right, but accept the remission of sins the Lord gives.

The heart that acknowledges sin and the heart that believes salvation must be together. We must not remain endlessly in anguish, looking only at our own sins. God has made it so that a sinner realizes his sins and receives salvation by believing in Jesus Christ, who bore those sins.

Is there a sin that weighs on your heart? Acknowledge that sin before God. And believe the word that Jesus bore that very sin, too, with the baptism He received from John. Even before we realized our sins, the Lord knew all our sins and accomplished the work of salvation.

The command to do no work and the rest obtained through atonement

God commanded that no work be done on the Day of Atonement. This was the command to stop the labor of daily life on that day and keep the ordinance God had appointed. The same command was given not only to the natives but also to the strangers dwelling among them.

In verse 31 He called this day a sabbath of solemn rest: *"It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever."*

The people had to stop their work and be before the sacrifice of atonement offered for them. They were not to let the day of atonement go by lightly as one of the many affairs of daily life. On that day they had to receive in their hearts the work in which God makes their sins clean.

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The teaching of faith we receive from this word is also clear. The remission of sins is not received as the price of one's own labor. It is not that because we have done much for God, He remits sin as the reward. It is grace received through the sacrificial offering God has given.

Romans says, *"To him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5).*

If we need righteousness, we must believe in the Lord, who justifies us. We must not try to pay the price of the remission of sins by gathering our own deeds. In order to give us the remission of sins, Jesus received baptism from John and sacrificed Himself on the Cross. The work necessary for salvation the Lord accomplished.

The person who has sin cannot rest in his heart. However busily he lives, the moment he thinks of his sins he becomes afraid again. Though he strives to live a good life by himself, when an evil thought is revealed within him he is discouraged. As long as he relies on himself, he cannot end that problem.

But the person who believes the salvation Jesus accomplished rests within the remission of sins. It is because he knows the fact that the Lord bore his sins and even received the judgment. He lays down the burden that he must pile up his own merit in order to be saved, and accepts the grace the Lord has given.

God promised cleansing from all sins

Engrave the promise of verse 30 again in your hearts: *"On that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD"*

God said that atonement would be made for the people. He said that by that atonement He makes the people clean. And He said that that cleanness is the cleanness obtained from all sins.

There are times when, even while hearing the word of salvation, we think as if our own sins were the exception. We consider that though the sins of others may be forgiven, the sins we ourselves committed are too great and shameful to be remitted. But if God has spoken of all sins, we must lay down our own judgment before that word.

It is not because sin is light that it is remitted. It is remitted because God has given the sacrificial offering that bears that sin. God, who knows how serious our sins are, prepared the salvation that resolves those sins.

This promise was fulfilled as eternal salvation in Jesus Christ. The Lord did not bear only the sins we remember. Knowing even the sins we have not properly realized, He bore the sin of the world. The Lord, who knows our lives, received all the sins we commit throughout our whole lives as they were passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John.

Therefore we must not think that salvation is completed only when we remember all our sins and tell them without omission. Our memory is imperfect. But the range of sins the Lord bore is not limited to our memory. We must believe the fact that the Lord knew all our sins and saved us.

Accept the promise that you are clean before God. Do not be satisfied with what looks all right to people, but receive in your hearts the remission of sins through the atonement God accomplished. The person who believes in that salvation cannot boast of his own merit, but can testify with thanksgiving about the Lord, who has made him clean.

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The duty of the priest passed on from generation to generation makes us look to the salvation of Jesus

Verse 32 speaks of the one who was to perform the office of priest after Aaron: *"The priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments"*

This ordinance did not end with the lifetime of the one man Aaron. A descendant anointed and consecrated had to continue that office. He too had to put on the holy garments, make atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, and make atonement for the priests and for the people of the assembly.

God had the ordinance of atonement continue while the people lived on from generation to generation. Even when the priest changed, a person could not arbitrarily make up a different method of salvation. Atonement had to be made with the offerings and the sacrifice God had appointed.

When we think of this duty of the priest, we come to know the importance of John baptizing Jesus. Luke chapter 1 makes clear that John's father Zacharias was a priest and that his mother Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. Through John, born of the house of Aaron, God had the passing on of the sin of the world to Jesus accomplished.

Just as in the Old Testament the high priest laid hands on the offering representing the people, John baptized Jesus representing mankind. As He received that baptism, Jesus also said: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John was the work that fulfilled the righteous will of God to save sinners. The sinless

Lord bore the sin of mankind in His own body. And bearing that sin, He went to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. The Lord bore not only our sins but also the judgment we had to receive.

Moreover, Jesus rose again from death. The Lord, who saved us from sin, lives. We receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John, sacrificed Himself on the Cross, and rose again from death.

The sacrifice offered every year was completed as eternal atonement

Leviticus chapter 16 ends this way: *"This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses" (Leviticus 16:34).*

The people of Israel had to offer the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement once every year. This ordinance God appointed was an ordinance to be kept from generation to generation.

Then must we today, too, bring an animal every year and offer the same sacrifice? To know the fulfillment of this word, we must look at the atonement Jesus Christ accomplished. Hebrews explains the meaning of the Old Testament sacrifice this way: *"The law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect" (Hebrews 10:1).*

The sacrifice offered every year showed Jesus Christ, who was to come. Through the ordinance of passing sin on to the offering and the offering being sacrificed in one's place, God promised that the Savior would come, bear sin, and be judged.

The Lord fulfilled that promise. He bore the sin of the world

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with the baptism He received from John and offered His own body on the Cross. Whereas the sacrifice of the Old Testament was repeated, Jesus accomplished eternal atonement once and for all. It also says, *"By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).*

It is not that the meaning of atonement God appointed has disappeared. It was completed in Jesus Christ. Therefore we must believe the completed salvation. There is no need to return to the place where sin had to be resolved every year with a new sacrificial offering.

In the salvation the Lord accomplished there remains no price of sin that we must pay separately. It is not that Jesus bore only the sins of the past and left the sins to come to us. The Lord, who bore all our sins, received the judgment of all those sins.

Hebrews, saying that the Holy Spirit testifies this salvation, records and declares as follows: *"Then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:17–18).*

This is the eternal remission of sins received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit testifies the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. We become clean before God by believing that word.

Acknowledge your sins and rest within the completed salvation

Dear beloved fellow believers, on the Day of Atonement God had the people afflict themselves and rest. And He promised to make them clean from all sins.

We must acknowledge our own sins. We must know how

weak we are and be humble before God. But after acknowledging sin, we must believe in the Lord, who has saved us. If we keep looking only at our own sins and cannot accept the atonement the Lord accomplished, our hearts cannot rest.

The One who gives us rest is Jesus Christ. The Lord bore our sins with the baptism He received from John. He was judged in our place on the Cross and rose again from death. That salvation is complete and eternal.

Do not count up your own good deeds in order to obtain the remission of sins. Do not make how long you have been in anguish or how many tears you have shed the ground of salvation. Confirm in the word and believe how the Lord bore our sins and how He was judged.

God gave this gospel in order to save people who have sin. To the person discouraged because of his own sins, He gave the way of becoming clean from all sins. The person who believes in his heart the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished receives the remission of sins.

We give thanks to God, who, though He knows our sins, does not cast us off, but Himself prepared the way of atonement. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has made us clean with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and has let us rest within the completed salvation. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 16

[Question] 1. Leviticus 16:2—what kind of place is *'the Holy Place inside the veil'*, into which God said not to come at just any time?

"The Holy Place inside the veil" refers to the Most Holy Place, which lies beyond the veil on the inner side of the sanctuary. The *"veil"* means the curtain, that is, the hanging that divides the space. In the Most Holy Place were the ark and the mercy seat upon it, and God said that He would appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

Therefore this was not a place that even the high priest could go in and out of as he pleased. He had to come according to the time and the ordinance God had appointed. This shows that God is holy, and that the way of atonement God has prepared is necessary for a person to meet God.

[Question] 2. Leviticus 16:2—what can be learned from the ordinance that had the high priest come into the Most Holy Place only on the Day of Atonement every year?

It can be learned that the way to come to God is not opened by a person's position or zeal alone. Even the high priest, who represented Israel, had to come with the blood of the sacrificial offering on the Day of Atonement God had appointed. This

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means that one cannot stand before the holy God while leaving one's sin as it is, and that the washing away of sin, too, must follow the method God has appointed.

This ordinance makes us look toward the eternal atonement Jesus Christ has accomplished. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. The person who believes this salvation comes to God along the way the Lord has opened. Unlike the sacrifice of atonement that was repeated every year, Jesus accomplished the eternal atonement by offering His own body (Hebrews 9:12; 10:19–22).

[Question] 3. Leviticus 16:2—which part of the ark is the mercy seat, and what was done there?

The mercy seat is the cover made of pure gold that covers the top of the ark. At its two ends were two cherubim that covered the mercy seat with their wings. God said that He would meet Moses between those two cherubim and give him the words He would command the people of Israel (Exodus 25:17–22).

On the Day of Atonement the high priest went in with the blood of the sacrificial offering and sprinkled it on the mercy seat and before it. Therefore the mercy seat is the place where the presence of God and the grace that remits sins appear together. God did not take the sins of the people lightly, and yet He opened the way of atonement through the sacrificial offering and dwelt with them.

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[Question] 4. Leviticus 16:4—why did Aaron have to wash his body and put on the holy garments before going into the Most Holy Place?

It was because, in order to carry out the office of atonement before God, he first had to make the preparations for cleanness that God had commanded. Aaron had to wash his body in water, then put on the linen tunic and the linen trousers, gird himself with the linen sash, and put on the linen turban. The office of high priest in itself did not take the place of this preparation.

This word gives the lesson that the person who serves God must first examine himself and rely on the grace by which God makes him clean. The act of washing the body alone does not remove even the sin of the heart. We must believe that Jesus has washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John and with the sacrifice of the Cross, and examine our hearts by that word and serve God.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 16:4—what do the linen garments appointed to be worn on the Day of Atonement teach about the faith that serves God?

God Himself appointed the garments the high priest was to wear on the Day of Atonement, and called them holy garments. Rather than displaying his own glory or position, Aaron had to put on the garments God had appointed and carry out the office entrusted to him. The linen garments make us think of the cleanness and being set apart that are required before God.

Spiritually, it gives the lesson that a person cannot obtain the remission of sins by putting forward his own efforts and merits. It is important to know the salvation God has accomplished and

to believe that word with pure faith. The faith that serves God, too, lies not in showing how excellent I am, but in obeying the word, relying on the remission of sins the Lord has bestowed.

[Question] 6. Leviticus 16:6, 11—why did Aaron offer a sin offering for himself and his house before the sacrifice for the people?

It was because Aaron himself and his house also needed the remission of sins. *"His house"* refers to the members of the household who belonged to him. Aaron was the high priest who represented the people, but his own sins did not disappear of themselves because of that office. So he first offered the sin offering of a young bull for himself and his house, and then carried out the office of atonement for the people.

This order shows that the person who serves God, too, must stand on the grace of the remission of sins he himself has received. One must not turn away from the problem of one's own sin while preaching the salvation of God to others. One must first know and believe how the Lord has borne and washed away one's own sins, and serve others relying on that grace.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 16:8—what does it mean to set apart one of the two goats 'for the scapegoat'?

It means that one goat was to be offered to the LORD as a sin offering, and the other was to be set apart to be kept alive and then sent away into the wilderness bearing the sins of the people. Aaron laid both his hands on the head of the live goat, confessed all the iniquities and sins of the children of Israel, and put those

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sins on the head of the goat. Then he entrusted it to an appointed man and had it sent away into the wilderness where no one lives (verses 20–22).

Sending out the goat in this way shows that the sins of the people had departed from them. Through the goat that went away bearing their sins, the people could confirm the remission of sins God had prepared. This scene makes us think of the work by which Jesus bore our sins and accomplished salvation, and leads us to believe in the Lord, who has removed our sins.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 16:11—when it says that sin is atoned for through a sacrifice, in what way does it mean that sin is dealt with?

Atonement refers to washing away sin by passing the sin on to the sacrificial offering and having that offering bear the price of sin in the sinner's place. In the Old Testament, sins were passed on by laying hands on the head of the offering, and the remission of sins was received through the sacrifice in which the offering shed its blood and died. In Leviticus chapter 16, too, Aaron killed the young bull, the sin offering for himself and his house, and came before God with its blood.

Therefore atonement is not a matter of regarding sin as trivial or simply forgetting it. Sin must be judged, but God provided a sacrificial offering to take the sinner's place. The passing on of sin and the receiving of the judgment for that sin in the sinner's place are accomplished together.

This atonement is connected to the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished. Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross. The remission of sins we receive lies in

believing this salvation the Lord has accomplished. Since the Lord has accomplished the eternal atonement, there is no need to offer a sacrifice again to remove sin (Hebrews 10:10, 14, 18).

[Question] 9. Leviticus 16:14–19—what is the meaning of God's having the sanctuary, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar made clean with blood on the Day of Atonement?

It means that because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and the sins they had committed, the sanctuary where God dwells, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar also had to be made clean. This does not say that the furnishings themselves had committed moral sin, but means that the holy dwelling place that stood among a sinful people was cleansed in the way God had commanded.

The high priest sprinkled the blood of the young bull and of the goat on the mercy seat and before it, and after putting the blood on the horns of the altar he sprinkled it on the altar seven times and consecrated it. He made atonement according to the place and the method God had designated.

This ordinance reveals the will of the holy God to wash away the sins of the people and to dwell among them. The problem of sin is not solved merely by furnishing a place and a form for serving God. There must be the remission of sins through the sacrifice God has prepared, and today we too come to God by believing the atonement Jesus Christ has accomplished.

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[Question] 10. Leviticus 16:29—on what date did the people of Israel keep the Day of Atonement every year?

The Day of Atonement was the tenth day of the seventh month by the calendar of Israel, that is, ‘the 10th of the 7th month.’ It does not mean July 10 of the solar calendar we use today.

On that day the people had to afflict themselves and do no work at all, and the same ordinance applied to the strangers who dwelt among them. It was the day on which all the people reflected on their sins before God and received the grace of atonement and cleansing that God bestows. God commanded that this ordinance be kept every year (verses 29–34). ✉

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CHAPTER

17

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Leviticus Chapter 17 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 17:1–7—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The center of Leviticus 17:1–7

Leviticus chapter 17, following the ordinance of the Day of Atonement, prescribes the method of handling the sacrificial offering and the blood. The core of verses 1–7 is as follows.

Do not kill the sacrificial offering as you please and offer it to other gods, but without fail bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting which God has appointed and offer it to the LORD through the priest.

This is not simply a matter of the place of slaughter. It is a matter of to whom one offers the sacrifice, by what method one handles the blood, and through what mediator one comes to God.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it connects with the word that one must be reconciled with God not through a religious method made by man, but through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross, which God appointed.

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2. The command of the LORD that was to be told to all people

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying" (Leviticus 17:1–2).

This command was not given only to Moses personally or to the priests.

—Aaron

—The sons of Aaron

—All the children of Israel

Both the priests who performed the sacrifice and the people who brought the offering had to know it. The sacrifice offered to God was not the work of the priests alone, but the order of the covenant that the whole community of Israel had to keep.

The expression *"the thing which the LORD has commanded"* emphasizes the fact that this ordinance was not a religious custom of man or a system made by the priests. The method by which a sinner comes to God is appointed by God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same. Salvation did not come from human philosophy or religious experience. It is the salvation of God that God planned and accomplished through Jesus, and that the Holy Spirit testifies.

3. If one does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, he is regarded as one who has shed blood

"Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills it outside the camp, and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an

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offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people" (Leviticus 17:3–4).

—Is it a word that forbids the slaughter of all animals forever: The ox, the lamb, and the goat of this passage are the livestock used for sacrifice. At that time Israel lived in the wilderness, forming the camp around the tabernacle. In this situation, killing livestock used for sacrifice without bringing it to the tabernacle of meeting could be connected with private sacrifice or idolatry.

So God commanded that whether one killed it in the camp or killed it outside the camp, he should first bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

But this must not be understood to mean that the act itself of killing livestock in order to eat meat was forbidden in every age and every place. After Israel settled in the land of Canaan, Deuteronomy 12:15 permits killing livestock and eating meat in every town. Only, the sacrifice had to be offered in the place God chose, and the blood was not to be eaten but was to be poured out on the ground.

Therefore the direct purpose of Leviticus 17:3–4 is as follows.

—To concentrate the sacrifices at the tabernacle of meeting

—To forbid private altars

—To have the blood handled as holy

—To prevent sacrifices being offered to idols

—To preserve the priests and the law of sacrifice that God appointed

—Why did He say *"He has shed blood"*: Life belongs to God. For a man to kill livestock used for sacrifice at will and not offer its blood on the altar God appointed was an act of treating life as if it were his own possession.

Leviticus 17:11 explains the reason.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."

Blood was not something for man to consume as he pleased, but what God had given on the altar in order to make atonement for the life of the sinner. Therefore, not offering the blood of the sacrifice to God but shedding it for another purpose was not a mere violation of a regulation, but an act that infringed on the sovereignty over life.

—Being cut off from among the people. That one *"shall be cut off from among his people"* shows that this act was not a light wrong. The person who rejected the sacrifice God appointed and shed blood in another way received the judgment of being cut off from the covenant community.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel, it shows how serious it is to abandon the way of salvation God has appointed and follow another way of atonement made by man.

4. The way appointed by God that the door of the tabernacle of meeting shows

The people of Israel could not kill the sacrificial offering in just any place and offer the sacrifice. They had to bring it without fail to *"the door of the tabernacle of meeting."*

The tabernacle of meeting was the place where God dwelt among Israel and met them. The door of the tabernacle of meeting was the designated entrance through which a sinner came to God with the sacrificial offering.

The word to come to the door of the tabernacle of meeting shows that one must follow the way of salvation God has

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appointed. A sinner must come relying on the sacrificial offering God has prepared.

Jesus said.

"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9).

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

In the Old Testament the sacrificial offering had to be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and in the New Testament no one can come to God except through Jesus Christ.

Here, going through Jesus does not simply mean "I acknowledge the existence of Jesus." It is believing what Jesus actually accomplished in order to save sinners.

—Jesus came to this earth as the Son of God

—He bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John

— Bearing the sin He had taken upon Himself, He shed His blood on the Cross

—He overcame sin and death and rose again from death

— The Holy Spirit testifies to this salvation of the water and the blood

5. Bringing the sacrifices that were offered in the open field to the door of the tabernacle of meeting

"To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the LORD" (Leviticus 17:5).

—*"their sacrifices which they offer in the open field"*: That

the people of Israel killed the sacrificial offering in the open field does not stop at the meaning that they simply dressed meat for eating. When we connect it with verse 7, they had before used sacrificial offerings in sacrifices that served an object other than God.

God did not tell them merely to change the place of their sacrifice. He told them to change the whole of the object, the relationship, and the purpose of the sacrifice.

—From the private sacrifice offered in the open field

—To before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting

—From one's own way to God's way

—From fellowship with idols to reconciliation with God

This shows the structure of repentance. True repentance does not end with simply saying that one did wrong. It is turning from the wrong object and way of sacrifice and coming with the sacrifice and the faith God has appointed.

—"*to the priest*": The people had to bring the offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and give it to the priest, and the priest sprinkled the blood on the altar and offered the offering according to the law of sacrifice God had appointed.

A sinner cannot restore his relationship with God in his own way. He needs the mediation God has established.

The eternal High Priest of the New Testament is Jesus. The human priest was himself a sinner too, but Jesus is without sin. Also, Jesus, while being the Priest, became the sacrificial offering. Jesus accomplished eternal atonement not with the blood of other animals but with His own blood.

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6. Why did He say to offer it as a peace offering

Verse 5 says that, as for the sacrifices that were offered in the open field, they were to *"offer them as peace offerings to the LORD."*

The peace offering is the sacrifice that expresses peace and fellowship with God, thanksgiving and joy. Though there are differences from the sin offering in the ordinance of the sacrifice, in the peace offering too there were the death and the blood of the offering, and it shows the fact that reconciliation with God is accomplished through sacrifice.

Sin makes the relationship between God and man one of enmity. In a state where sin has not been dealt with, one cannot enjoy true fellowship with God. The blood of the sacrificial offering shows that the relationship blocked by sin has been restored through the price of life.

In the New Testament, Jesus became our reconciliation.

Romans 5:10 says that when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of the Son of God. Colossians 1:20 also testifies of Jesus as *"having made peace through the blood of His cross."*

Therefore reconciliation is not a result that man obtained by appeasing God. It is the restoration of the relationship that God Himself accomplished by giving His own Son as the sacrificial offering.

7. The blood on the altar, the fat in the fire

"And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the LORD" (Leviticus 17:6).

—Sprinkling the blood on the altar: The priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrificial offering on the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. The blood is the evidence that the offering actually gave up its life.

Because the wages of sin is death, a sinner must pay that price with his life. But in order to give life to the sinner, God accepted the life of the sacrificial offering in place of the life of the sinner.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the blood of Jesus shows the judgment of sin that was carried out on the Cross. But it is not that Jesus shed His blood for no reason. Because Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, He paid the wages of that sin on the Cross.

Therefore the baptism and the Cross are connected within one salvation.

—The baptism Jesus received from John is the work by which all the sin of mankind was transferred to Jesus once and for all.

—Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of the sins that had been transferred to Him.

—His rising again from death is the victory over sin and death.

—The Holy Spirit testifies that all this salvation is the truth.

—Burning the fat: *"The fat"* here is not olive oil or the oil of anointing, but the fat of the sacrificial offering.

It is the ordinance of burning on the altar the portion of fat set apart to be offered to God from the peace offering. Leviticus chapter 3 also commands that the fat covering the entrails of the peace offering and the fat around the kidneys be burned on the altar. This fat spiritually refers to the Holy Spirit. God gave His own Son as the sacrificial offering and saved us, and the Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation Jesus accomplished with the

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water and the blood is the truth.

"A sweet aroma" means that God gladly accepts the sacrifice offered according to the method He Himself appointed. God accepts the sacrificial offering in place of the sinner, gives life to the sinner, and is reconciled with the person who comes by faith.

8. The he-goats they had served before by playing the harlot

"And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the he-goats, after which they play the harlot. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations –ASV" (Leviticus 17:7).

—The problem of actual idolatry: This word refers to the fact that the people of Israel had in the past offered sacrifices to idols in the shape of he-goats or to idolatrous beings of the wilderness. The words *"after which they play the harlot"* do not mean only sexual sin. They mean the spiritual adultery in which the people who had made a covenant with God followed after other gods.

Deuteronomy 32:17 explains the idolatry of Israel like this.

"They sacrificed to demons, not to God"

1 Corinthians chapter 10 also says that the sacrifices of the Gentiles are offered to demons, and that one cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons at the same time.

—The word not to follow the lusts of the flesh: The word not to sacrifice again to the he-goats they had served before teaches that a person who has been saved must not live following the desires of his own flesh.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not make his own comfort, wealth, and honor the

purpose of his life, but must set his heart on loving the gospel and saving souls.

We are lacking, and so at times we may follow the thoughts of the flesh. But the person who has set his heart to serve the gospel acknowledges his wrong and turns back, and gathers his heart again to the work of preaching the gospel.

—*"no more sacrifice their sacrifices"*: The words *"no more"* show that Israel had had the habit of idolatry in the past. Even after they came out of Egypt, the idols they had served before and their religious habits remained in their hearts.

God did not permit them the mixed faith of serving God and idols together.

Today too, one cannot believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and at the same time hold on to another method of salvation.

—One cannot mix the salvation of Jesus and human merit half and half.

—One cannot claim to believe the gospel while serving money and success as one's ultimate master.

—One cannot claim to rely on God while following fortune-telling and superstition as well.

—One cannot claim to believe the eternal atonement of Jesus while making one's own self-mortification the price of the remission of sins.

God did not merely gather the places of sacrifice into one place; He also wanted to gather the hearts of Israel to God alone.

9. *"A statute for ever unto them throughout their generations"*

Israel had to keep this ordinance throughout their generations

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under the Mosaic covenant. But it does not mean that the saints of the New Testament must literally bring all livestock to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and offer animal sacrifices.

It is because Jesus completed the substance of the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

—The tabernacle of meeting was the place where God met man.

—The priest performed the sacrifice between God and the sinner.

—The sacrificial offering died in place of the sinner.

—The blood showed that the price of life had been paid.

—The peace offering showed the restored relationship with God.

All these were completed in Jesus. Therefore the saints of the New Testament do not repeat animal sacrifices, but believe the once-and-for-all eternal sacrifice that Jesus accomplished.

10. The connection with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

—The way of coming to God is appointed by God. Just as the people of Israel could not offer sacrifices in the open field as they pleased, a sinner cannot come to God by his own religion and merit.

—Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John. The sacrificial offering of the Old Testament was put to death after bearing the sin of the sinner. In the New Testament, Jesus fulfilled *"all righteousness"* by receiving baptism from John, and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

—He paid the price of sin with the blood of the Cross. The

blood Jesus shed is the blood by which He received the judgment of the sin He had borne. God paid the price of our sins with the life of Jesus.

—He completed reconciliation by rising again from death. Jesus overcame sin and death by rising again from death. Through Jesus, who died and rose again, we have come to be reconciled with God and to be able to rejoice in God.

— The Holy Spirit testifies to the water and the blood. The Holy Spirit testifies that the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are the salvation of God. 1 John chapter 5 says that *"the Spirit, and the water, and the blood"* agree in one.

11. The peace offering of the person who has received the remission of sins

Today the saints do not offer Jesus again as a sacrificial offering. Jesus has already offered one eternal sacrifice for sins.

That the saints offer the peace offering by faith every day does not mean that they make a new atonement. It is, when they realize a wrong in their lives, to acknowledge it honestly, to believe again the fact that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross, and to enjoy fellowship with God.

It is not that the status of salvation is canceled every day and then comes into being again; it is continually applying the completed gospel to one's own conscience.

This faith appears as follows.

—When one has done wrong, one acknowledges it without making excuses.

—One does not run away from God because of sin.

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—One does not try to wash away sin by one's own deeds.

—One comes to God relying on the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood.

—Having received the grace of reconciliation, one strives to be reconciled with other people as well.

—One does not serve idols and the desires of the world as one's ultimate master.

—One offers one's life to the gospel and the will of God.

Conclusion

Leviticus 17:1–7 is not a simple regulation not to kill the sacrificial offering. It is a word that says life and blood and sacrifice belong to God, and that the way of coming to God is appointed by God alone.

The people of Israel were not to offer sacrifices in the open field in their own way or to sacrifice to the idols they had served before. They had to bring the sacrificial offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and give it to the priest, sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD, and offer it to God as a peace offering.

The New Testament fulfillment of this word is Jesus Christ. Jesus is our eternal High Priest and sacrificial offering. He bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed reconciliation with God by rising again from death.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not come to God in his own way. He comes by faith like this.

Jesus bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and by

rising again from death reconciled me with God. I believe the word of the Holy Spirit who testifies this salvation of the water and the blood.

Leviticus 17:8–9—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"Also you shall say to them: Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from among his people" (Leviticus 17:8–9).

The center of this word is clear.

It is that the way of coming to God and the method by which a sinner is saved are not decided by man as he thinks, but are appointed by God.

2. *"Also you shall say to them"*

"Also" shows that verses 8–9 are not a new regulation separated from the preceding word.

In the preceding verses 3–7, God said that when offering an ox or a sheep or a goat as a sacrificial offering, they must not sacrifice in the open field or in any place at will, but must bring it without fail to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. One of its purposes was to keep them from sacrificing again to the he-

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goat idols they had served before.

Therefore verses 8–9 are the word that confirms that command again and widens the scope of its application.

The people of Israel could not offer sacrifices to God in the place and by the method they wanted. However much one offered an offering, and however much religious zeal one had, a sacrifice that departed from the tabernacle of meeting, the priests, and the law of sacrifice that God appointed was not a sacrifice that God accepted.

The core lay not in the sincerity of the person who offered the offering, but in whether he offered it according to the law God appointed.

3. *"Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you"*

According to this command, not only Israelites by blood but also the strangers who dwelt within the community, if they wanted to offer a burnt offering or a sacrifice, had to bring it in the same way to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

This shows two facts.

First, the holiness of God does not change according to a person's blood or status. It is not that He demanded a holy sacrifice from the Israelites while permitting idolatry or sacrifice at will to the strangers.

Second, the way of coming to God is one for all people. It is not that there was a law of sacrifice for the Israelites and a separate law of sacrifice for the strangers. Whoever wanted to come to God had to follow the same way God had established.

This principle connects with the gospel being preached to all nations in the New Testament. There is not one gospel for the

Jews and another gospel for the Gentiles. All people are sinners alike, and are saved through the same Jesus Christ.

Just as both the Israelite and the stranger had to follow the law of sacrifice God appointed, today too one must not rely on blood or status, but must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

4. *"Who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice"*

Here it deals with, beyond ordinary slaughter for food, the act of sacrifice in which an animal is offered to God or to some divine being.

This is confirmed in Deuteronomy chapter 12 as well.

"Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you" (Deuteronomy 12:13–14).

After the settlement in Canaan they could kill livestock for food in every town, but the blood was not to be eaten but was to be poured out on the ground. Therefore the focus of Leviticus 17:8–9 lies not in permanently restricting all slaughter to one place, but in concentrating sacrifice in the place and order God designated.

Whether a burnt offering or another sacrifice, if it was an act of offering to God, it had to follow without fail the method God appointed.

This shows the fact that religious zeal in itself does not accomplish salvation. Just as Cain came with his own produce, it is not that a person is automatically accepted by God just because he comes to God with his own sincerity, merit, fasting, tears, and good deeds.

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God Himself appointed the sacrifice on the basis of which a sinner must come, the mediator through whom he must come, and the method by which he must come.

5. *"Bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting"*

The door of the tabernacle of meeting was the place God had appointed, saying that He would meet Israel, and before the tabernacle of meeting there were the altar of burnt offering and the priests God had established.

Bringing the offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting was not merely an administrative measure to concentrate sacrifice in a particular building. It includes the following confessions of faith.

—The confession that God appoints the way of coming to God

—The confession that a sinner cannot come to the holy God without a sacrificial offering

—The confession that the problem of sin must be dealt with according to the priests and the law of sacrifice God established

—The confession that one abandons idols made by man and private religious methods

A sacrifice offered in a place chosen at will, having left the door of the tabernacle of meeting that God appointed, may look outwardly like a sacrifice that has an offering, has blood, and has fire. But it is a sacrifice that has no priest designated by God, has no altar appointed by God, and has departed from the order God commanded.

In the end, the door of the tabernacle of meeting speaks not only of "which place is more spiritual?" but marks the boundary between the way God has opened and the way man has made for himself.

6. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the way of coming to God

Jesus said.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

In the Old Testament the offering had to be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting that God designated. In the New Testament, the only way by which a sinner comes to God is Jesus Christ.

God appointed the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the altar, and the law of sacrifice, and gave the way by which a sinner could come. This way of salvation was completed in Jesus Christ. Therefore one must believe, exactly as God appointed it, the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

This connection can be understood as follows.

The sacrificial offering of the Old Testament died in place of the sinner. The offering had to shed its blood after receiving the sin of the sinner passed on to it through the laying on of hands, according to the law of sacrifice God appointed.

In the New Testament, Jesus is *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* The baptism Jesus received from John was not a mere religious rite but was to fulfill all the righteousness of God.

"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the order of salvation is as follows.

Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John → He went to the Cross bearing that sin and was

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judged by shedding His blood → He rose again from death → The Holy Spirit testifies the truth of this salvation

John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

It is not that Jesus was killed by the Roman soldiers by chance without having borne any sin. Because Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, He paid the price of that sin with the blood and death of the Cross. And God showed, by raising Jesus from death, that the righteousness of that salvation had been completely accomplished.

"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Therefore the water, the blood, and the resurrection are not three gospels separated from one another. They are the one complete salvation that the one Jesus Christ accomplished.

7. The Holy Spirit testifies this salvation that God appointed

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).

The Holy Spirit is God who testifies that the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood is the truth. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make emotion or experience the ground of salvation, but believes the salvation Jesus completed with the baptism He

received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Therefore the claim that "I have received the Holy Spirit" also cannot be separated from the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished. The Holy Spirit does not say that the baptism Jesus received from John is unnecessary, does not make light of the blood of the Cross, and does not turn the resurrection into a mere symbol. The Holy Spirit testifies to the gospel Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood.

8. *"Cut off from among his people"*

He said that the person who did not bring the offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting would be cut off from among his people.

This expression is very grave. The passage does not regard the rejection of the sacrifice God appointed as a trivial difference in the manner of worship. It was an act of rejecting the covenant order of God and departing from the way of life God had bestowed.

In this passage it is not recorded even by what procedure man was to carry out that punishment. But the warning that He would cut off from among the people the person who rejected the sacrifice God appointed is clear. Leaving the way of life God has given must not be taken lightly.

From the perspective of the New Testament as well, this becomes a grave warning. If a person, while trying to come to God by his own zeal and religious effort, refuses Jesus Christ whom God sent, he is refusing the way of life God has prepared.

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9. How should the door of the tabernacle of meeting be applied today

It does not mean that today we must go to the old tabernacle of meeting or the Temple of Jerusalem and offer animals again. It is because Jesus Christ became the perfect sacrificial offering once and for all. There is no need to repeat a sacrifice that sacrifices Christ again.

Today we hear the word within the Church of God that preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and come to God by believing the salvation Jesus accomplished. It is not that the church building itself washes away sin. What is important is to hear the word of salvation God appointed and believe it with the heart.

Today this word makes us examine our faith as follows.

First, do I believe the salvation God accomplished, or am I holding on to a method of salvation I made myself?

Second, while speaking only of the Cross of Jesus, am I not leaving out why Jesus received baptism from John and how He bore the sin of the world?

Third, do I know the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross only as knowledge, or do I believe with the heart that all my sins were actually passed on to Jesus and that the judgment of those sins ended on the Cross?

Fourth, am I offering my own good deeds, repentance, and sincerity as the price of salvation, or am I believing with thanksgiving the salvation Jesus completed?

Fifth, even after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, am I not serving my own desires or worldly success like an idol and making God a means of achieving my own purposes?

Conclusion

Leviticus 17:8–9 is not a word that says, "It is enough just to offer a sacrifice." Rather, it is a word that says one must offer it by the way God appointed.

Both the Israelite and the stranger had to come to the door of the tabernacle of meeting that God appointed. Offering a burnt offering or a sacrifice as one thought fit was not permitted. It is because the way of coming to God was appointed by God.

This principle appeared perfectly in Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and Jesus rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the true salvation of God.

Therefore faith is not presenting to God a method we have made. Faith is knowing and accepting as it is the way of salvation that God appointed and accomplished in Jesus Christ. This is the most important lesson that Leviticus 17:8–9 gives to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Leviticus 17:10–16—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The whole flow of Leviticus 17:10–16

This passage is divided broadly into three parts.

—Verses 10–12: The command not to eat blood and its reason

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—Verses 13–14: The command to pour out the blood of hunted animals on the ground and cover it

—Verses 15–16: The ordinance of cleansing when one has eaten an animal that died naturally or was torn to death

At the center of this word is the truth that the sovereignty over life belongs to God, and that God gave the blood on the altar in order to make atonement for the life of the sinner.

2. *"Who eats any blood"*

"And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people" (Leviticus 17:10).

The command not to eat blood applied to both the Israelites and the strangers who dwelt within their community.

The expression *"any blood"* keeps man from arbitrarily distinguishing kinds of blood. It did not mean that only the blood of the offering was important and the blood of ordinary animals was all right. The principle that the life of all flesh belongs to God was applied.

That God Himself said *"I will set My face against"* the person who eats blood and would cut him off from among his people shows that this command was not a mere sanitary regulation. Taking the blood, the symbol of life, carelessly was an act that defied God, the Sovereign of life.

But the word *"You shall not eat the blood"* must not be interpreted as an absolute command of vegetarianism that says "do not kill animals." God spoke to Noah as follows.

"Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not

eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Genesis 9:3–4).

Eating meat was permitted, but He said not to eat the blood, which represents life. Therefore this command is not a word that totally forbids eating meat, but a word that says, even when eating meat, to acknowledge the fact that the sovereignty over life belongs to God.

3. *"The life of the flesh is in the blood"*

"The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11).

The life of the flesh is in the blood. God regarded the blood as important because the sacrificial offering had to give up its life in place of us who had to die because of sin.

The word *"it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul"* means that the sacrificial offering that has borne sin according to the law of sacrifice God appointed gives up its life, and by its blood being sprinkled on the altar, it makes atonement for the life of the sinner.

Because the wages of sin is death, the sinner must die. But God permitted the sacrificial offering to die in place of the sinner. The blood is the very evidence of that vicarious death.

4. *"I have given it to you"*

One of the most important expressions in verse 11 is this.

"I have given it to you upon the altar"

Here the subject is God. God gave the sacrificial offering and its blood and appointed the law of sacrifice in order to make atonement for the life of the sinner.

This shows the fact that salvation did not begin from man but

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began from God.

It is not that the sinner persuaded God and produced the system of atonement. God gave the sacrificial offering so that the sinner might live without dying, and had its blood sprinkled on the altar. Atonement was not a religious invention of man but the gracious preparation of God.

Therefore the person who offered the sacrifice could not put forward his own merit, saying, "I have offered a precious offering to God, so remit my sin." God gave the offering, God appointed the law of sacrifice, and the efficacy of atonement too came from the promise of God.

This is the important point that connects with the salvation of the New Testament. God gave His own Son as the sacrificial offering in order to save our lives. It is not that the sinner provided a Savior for God, but that God gave a Savior to the sinner.

5. *"To make atonement for your souls"*

"To make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

Here, one life is placed opposite another.

The life of the sinner had to be judged because of sin. But the sacrificial offering bore the sin of the sinner and gave up its own life. The blood of the sacrificial offering showed the life given up in place of the life of the sinner.

In the sacrifice of atonement of the Old Testament there was the following order.

—The sinner brings a sacrificial offering without blemish.

—He lays his hand on the head of the offering and passes his sin on to it.

—The offering that has borne the sin is put to death.

—The priest sprinkles or applies its blood in the place God appointed.

—God accepts that sacrifice and grants the sinner remission.

Therefore the laying on of hands and the blood cannot be separated from each other. The blood of an animal that has not received sin passed on to it cannot become the blood of atonement in place of that sinner. Conversely, if the offering that has received sin passed on to it does not shed its blood and die, the wages of sin is not paid.

This order is completed through Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

6. The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross

Jesus said, as He received baptism from John.

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is the event of bearing the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament the sin of the sinner was passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John.

The next day John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Jesus was able to take away the sin of the world because He had borne that sin by receiving baptism from John. Jesus thus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world.

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Leviticus 17:11 says that *"it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."* In the New Testament, Jesus bore the judgment of sin by shedding His blood on the Cross.

"Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19).

Therefore the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are not two methods of salvation that compete or are separated.

—The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore the sin of the world.

—The blood He shed on the Cross is the evidence that Jesus paid the price of the sin He had borne.

—That Jesus rose again from death shows that the righteousness of that vicarious atonement and salvation has been completed.

— The Holy Spirit testifies to the fact that all this salvation is true and perfect.

If one emphasizes only the blood without explaining what sin Jesus bore as He went to the Cross, one leaves out the cause of the Cross. Conversely, if one speaks only of the baptism Jesus received from John and makes light of the blood and death of the Cross, one leaves out the judgment of sin and the price of the vicarious atonement.

So the Apostle John testifies as follows.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:6–8).

7. The reason for pouring out the blood on the ground and covering it with dust

"Who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust" (Leviticus 17:13).

A hunted animal is not necessarily a sacrificial offering offered at the tabernacle. Even with an animal caught for food, one was not to eat its blood as it was, but had to drain it sufficiently and then cover it with dust.

This act contains the meaning that one must not treat life carelessly. A man may catch an animal and eat its meat, but he cannot treat even its life as if it were his own possession. Pouring out the blood on the ground and covering it was an act of acknowledging the fact that life belongs to God.

Spiritually, the ground refers to the heart of man. God gave the life of Jesus Christ to us who were dead in sin. We believe with the heart the gospel that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and gave up His own life on the Cross.

The person who has received this life must not do the work of devouring the life of another soul, but must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to that soul. He must do the work of preaching the salvation of the water and the blood that Jesus has given, and giving life to souls that are dying in sin.

8. *"It is the life of all flesh"*

Verse 14 repeats the reason given in verse 11.

"It is the life of all flesh"

God repeatedly connected the reason for forbidding blood

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with life. Therefore the command concerning blood is a teaching to regard life as precious.

This word is applied even more gravely to the life of man. In Genesis chapter 9, following the command not to eat blood, He forbade the shedding of the blood of man. It is because man was made in the image of God.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not take life lightly.

—One must not harm other people with violence.

—One must not destroy the hearts of other people with hatred and insult.

—One must not break down the faith of weak souls.

—One must not use the gospel to make people subordinate to oneself or to dominate them.

—Rather, one must preach the gospel of life to souls that are dying in sin.

The word not to eat blood is, spiritually, a warning not to devour the life of another person. We must not do the work of harming other souls by following the lusts of the flesh, but must do the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit by following the leading of the Holy Spirit, and saving those souls from sin.

9. An animal that died naturally or was torn to death

"And every person who eats what died naturally or what was torn by beasts, whether he is a native of your own country or a stranger" (Leviticus 17:15).

The person who ate what died naturally or what was torn to death by beasts became unclean, and had to wash his clothes and bathe his body as God appointed.

When we see this word from the perspective of the gospel, we can know what kind of sacrificial offering Jesus became. Jesus is not One who, regardless of our sins, died naturally or was killed because He had no strength.

Because Jesus had borne the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, according to the will of God the Father He shed His blood on the Cross in our place and received the judgment of sin. And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

Also, in the life of the saints this word teaches that one must acknowledge the sins committed in the flesh and wash them by faith.

Even a person who has been saved is weak in the flesh and commits sin. At that time he must not hide his wrong, but must believe the word that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John. God has given us the way to wash our hearts by faith.

10. *"Wash his clothes and bathe in water"*

The person who had become unclean had to do two things.

—He had to wash his clothes.

—He had to bathe his body in water.

Even after washing, he was unclean until evening, and only after evening had passed did he become clean.

This is the ordinance of cleansing in which the body and the clothes are washed. This washing shows how the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit washes by faith the sins he has committed in his life.

The saints must acknowledge their wrongs and reflect on the word that Jesus already bore even that sin when He received

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baptism from John. Jesus bore the sin of the world and received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us.

This does not mean that Jesus must receive baptism from John again or be sacrificed on the Cross again. It is to make one's conscience clean by believing now with the heart the salvation Jesus has already accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Therefore one must not leave one's own wrongs covered up as they are on the ground that one has received the remission of sins. One must acknowledge one's wrong before the word, wash one's heart by believing again the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and serve God with a clean conscience.

11. If he does not wash, he shall *"bear his guilt"*

"But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt" (Leviticus 17:16).

The fact itself of having become unclean by eating something unclean, and the refusal of the cleansing procedure God commanded, are distinguished.

Even if a person had become unclean, if he washed his clothes and bathed his body as God appointed, he could become clean after evening. But if he ignores the fact that he has become unclean and refuses to wash, that becomes the sin of disobeying the command of God.

This principle gives an important lesson for faith today as well.

Even a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is weak in the flesh and commits sin. At that time the believer must not go to

the following two extremes.

First, one must not hide the sin one has committed or rationalize it, saying that it is not sin.

Second, one must not think that every time one commits sin Jesus must receive baptism from John again and die on the Cross again.

The atonement of Jesus was completed once and for all. What the believer must do when he realizes his sin is not to offer a new sacrifice, but to acknowledge his wrong honestly and to believe again that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and received even that judgment with the blood of the Cross.

This is not sacrificing Christ repeatedly, but the faith that washes the conscience with the gospel already completed.

12. Then must the saints of the New Testament also literally not eat blood?

This matter must be handled carefully.

Leviticus chapter 17 clearly commands the Israelites and the strangers who dwell among them not to eat blood. And in Acts chapter 15 the apostles gave the following advice to the Gentile believers as well.

"That we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:20).

"That you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well" (Acts 15:29).

Because the advice to abstain from blood is recorded in Acts as well, this word must not be treated as if it did not exist.

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How to apply this advice to the diet of today must be judged carefully, examining the passage and the word of salvation together.

But what is clear is as follows.

—The act of not eating blood is not a condition of the remission of sins.

—It is not that one obtains salvation by keeping food regulations.

—Salvation is received by believing the gospel of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished.

—At the same time, the believer must take seriously the repeated word of the Bible not to treat lightly the blood, which symbolizes life.

—One must not let this word end merely as a dispute about food, but must regard as precious the life the Lord has given and do the work of giving life to souls.

Conclusion

Leviticus 17:10–16 says that man cannot own life or dispose of it as he pleases. Life belongs to God. The sinner must lose his life because of his sin, but God prepared the life of a sacrifice to take the place of the sinner.

In the Old Testament the blood of the sacrificial offering that had borne sin was sprinkled on the altar. In the New Testament, Jesus, the Lamb of God, bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and, bearing that sin, died shedding His blood on the Cross. And Jesus rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies this salvation that Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood.

Therefore this word requires three kinds of faith of us.

First, the faith that my life is not my own but belongs to God.

Second, the faith that my sin cannot be washed away by my effort or repeated religious acts, and that Jesus has already dealt with it completely with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Third, the faith that after receiving the remission of sins, one must live not a life that harms and devours the lives of others, but a life that gives life by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to dying souls.

The deepest gospel of Leviticus 17:11 is this.

Before God demanded the life of the sinner, He first gave the life of a sacrifice to give life to the sinner. That perfect life is none other than Jesus Christ. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that reconciles us with God

< Leviticus 17:1-9 >

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying: Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills it outside the camp, and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the LORD. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the LORD. (And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the he-goats, after which they play the harlot. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations –ASV). Also you shall say to them: Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, and does not bring it to the door of the

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tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from among his people."

Dear beloved saints, for the person who wants to come before God there is a problem that must be resolved first of all. It is the sin that stands between God and us. Even if one wants in his heart to draw near to God, if sin remains as it is, he cannot be bold before the holy God. Therefore we must not only look at the zeal of our own hearts toward God, but must know how God has removed our sins.

In today's passage God commanded the people of Israel to bring the offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and offer it to the LORD. In this word is contained the meaning that a sinner does not go looking for God as he himself thinks, but must come following the way God has appointed. God Himself prepared the way for the people to be reconciled with Him and made that way known.

Through this word we will look at Jesus Christ, who has reconciled us with God. When we know and believe how our sins were resolved with the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, we receive the remission of sins and can come before God.

The way of salvation God made known to all the people

When we look at verses 1–2, the LORD spoke to Moses and had that word told to Aaron, his sons, and all the children of Israel. It was a command concerning sacrifice, but it was not a word that only the priests were to know. The people who brought

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the offering also had to know what God had commanded.

It is the same with the faith concerning the remission of sins. The fact that someone else knows it cannot take the place of one's own faith. Each person must know for himself what kind of person he is before God and how God has saved him. Knowing the salvation God has accomplished and accepting it with the heart is faith.

People try to serve God in the way that is familiar to them. If there is a habit one has kept for a long time, it is easy to regard it as right. But the fact that one has done it for a long time does not remove sin. Nor does a method man has decided on become the method of God's salvation just because one has a sincere heart.

God did not leave the work of saving us from sin to our guesswork. In the Old Testament He gave the sacrificial offering and the law of sacrifice, and in the New Testament He sent Jesus Christ, who would fulfill that promise. We must know salvation through the word God has made known.

The meaning contained in the command to bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting

In verses 3–4 God said that whether an Israelite killed an ox or lamb or goat in the camp or killed it outside the camp, he must first bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and offer it as an offering to the LORD. He said that whoever *"does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people."*

One could not omit the command on the ground that he was

inside the camp, nor could he choose another method on the ground that he was outside the camp. God did not let man handle as he pleased the life of the animal God had appointed, and commanded that the offering be brought before God.

Here there is a clear boundary. The mere fact that one killed an animal and shed its blood did not make it a sacrifice fit for God. It had to be offered in the place God appointed, as the sacrifice God appointed. The word of God, who receives the offering, comes before the thought of the person who offers it.

Our salvation, too, must be believed just as God accomplished it. The problem of sin is not resolved by making up in one's heart the savior one wants and believing that thought. One must know what Jesus actually did to save us. Since God has prepared the way of salvation, we must accept that way by faith.

God wanted to be reconciled with the people

The purpose for which God gathered the sacrifices of the people to the door of the tabernacle of meeting appears in verse 5: "*To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the LORD.*"

God wanted the people to be reconciled with Him. So He had them bring before God the sacrifices they had offered in the open field and offer them as peace offerings. He did not leave as they were the people who had grown distant from God, but opened the way for them to come to Him through the sacrificial offering.

We must not think of the word reconciliation simply as the heart becoming at ease. If there is sin between God and us,

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reconciliation is accomplished only when that sin is resolved. Merely striving to keep one's heart at ease while sin remains cannot make one bold before God.

God knows our sins. He knows not only the deeds that appear outwardly but also the evil thoughts and desires we harbor in our hearts. And yet, wanting to save us, He prepared the sacrificial offering. In order to give life to us who have sin, He gave the way in which sin is passed on to the offering and that offering is sacrificed in our place.

Therefore in the peace offering is contained the love of God who wants to meet the sinner. It is not that the sinner first makes himself perfect and obtains the qualification to be loved by God. God loved the sinner and gave the way to be reconciled.

The reconciliation accomplished through the laying on of hands and the shedding of blood

In verse 6 He commanded that the priest sprinkle the blood of the sacrificial offering on the altar and burn its fat and offer it to God: *"And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the LORD."*

The offering was not set before God alive and then sent back as it was. It had to shed its blood, and the fat to be offered to God had to be burned on the altar. Reconciliation with God involved sacrifice.

There is a word in Leviticus chapter 3 that tells the procedure of this peace offering more clearly. He also said: *"And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar" (Leviticus 3:2).*

Here we see the relationship between the laying on of hands and the shedding of blood. The person who offered the offering laid his hand on the head of the offering. It is passing sin on to the offering. And the offering that bore that sin died and shed its blood. Through this sacrifice God had the sinner come to Him.

If we are to understand the peace offering, we must know why the offering dies. That offering is sacrificed bearing the sin of man in his place. Therefore the ground of reconciliation does not lie in how excellent a person the one who offers the sacrifice is. It lies in the offering that bore sin and was sacrificed as God appointed.

This laying on of hands and shedding of blood show how Jesus saved us. What we need is not vague comfort, but the faith that knows to whom our sins were passed on and how the price of those sins was paid.

Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John

Jesus came to this earth to become our peace offering. Jesus, the Son of God, had no sin. Such a Lord came to the Jordan River and sought to receive baptism from John. When John tried to prevent it, Jesus said this: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

The baptism Jesus received from John was not to wash away His own sins. It was to bear the sin of mankind. Just as the offering of the Old Testament received sin passed on to it through the laying on of hands, Jesus bore our sins on His own body by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind.

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Our sins are included in that sin. The Lord bore not only the sins we acknowledge but also the sins we want to hide, not only the sins committed in deed but also the sins committed in the heart. It is not that He resolved only the few wrongs we remember. He bore all the sins belonging to our whole lifetime.

John testified of Jesus like this: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Jesus went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world. He bore sin by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

Therefore we must believe the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross together. The baptism tells us of the work in which the Lord bore our sins, and the blood of the Cross tells us of the work in which He received the judgment for those sins in our place. With this salvation God has reconciled us with Himself.

Abandon what you served away from God and believe the word

In verse 7 God commanded the people not to sacrifice again to the he-goats they had served before: *"And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the he-goats, after which they play the harlot. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations."*

The people, though they belonged to God, had left God and served idols. God commanded them to abandon that wrong serving and return to Him. More than the act itself of offering a sacrifice, it had to be clear whom they served and whose word

they followed.

We too must examine our hearts before the word of God. Are we not relying more on our own thoughts than on the salvation God has accomplished? Are we not making the religious zeal or the good deeds we have piled up the ground of the remission of sins? God wants us to believe in Jesus Christ, whom He sent for us, rather than rely on the righteousness we have prepared for ourselves.

In verses 8–9 He gave the same command not only to the Israelites but also to the strangers who dwelt among them. Whoever wanted to offer a sacrifice before God had to follow the way God had appointed. A different way of sacrifice was not given because one's origin was different.

It is the same with the faith that receives the remission of sins. Whether a person has attended church for a long time or is now hearing the gospel, the One who saves us is the same Jesus Christ. Whoever it may be, one must believe that the Lord bore one's sins by receiving baptism from John and received their judgment on the Cross.

Let us come before God, who loved us first

The Apostle John testified like this of the love God has bestowed on us: *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).*

God did not love us because He was unaware that we have sin. Though He knew our sins, He sent His Son in order to give us life. And Jesus fulfilled that love by receiving baptism from John and shedding His blood on the Cross.

Therefore do not only think, looking at your own sins, that

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you cannot come to God. Look at the Lord, who bore our sins. Do not hide your shortcomings but acknowledge them, yet believe with the heart the salvation of the Lord who has removed those sins. We do not come before God because we are people without blemish. We come because the Lord without blemish bore our sins and was sacrificed in our place.

The person who has received the remission of sins by this faith can call God Father. He can know the love of God and give thanks, and can have fellowship with the Lord who saved him. Even when he later discovers his own weakness, he must hold on by faith to the salvation of the Lord who has reconciled us.

God, who commanded that the offering be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, today makes known to us the salvation He accomplished through Jesus Christ. Jesus resolved all our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart and receive the remission of sins. We give thanks and glory to God, who loved us first and reconciled us with Himself. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who bore sin with His baptism and paid the price of sin with His life

< Leviticus 17:10-16 >

"And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.' Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.' And every person who eats what died naturally or what was torn by beasts, whether he is a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

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Dear beloved saints, receiving the remission of sins is not forgetting for a while the fact that one has committed sin. It means that the judgment for sin that one must receive before God is resolved, and that the heart defiled by sin is washed. Therefore what we need is not vague comfort about sin, but the word of God that tells us how sin has been resolved.

In today's passage God gives the command not to eat blood and explains the reason. It is that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and that God has given that blood to the people to make atonement for life. Then He also speaks of how the person who has eaten what died naturally or what was torn by beasts must become clean.

In this word the sacrifice that takes the place of life and the ordinance that washes away defilement appear together. Through this word we are going to look at the baptism by which Jesus bore our sins and the blood of the Cross He shed in place of our lives. The Lord gave up His own life and gave life to us who were to die for sin.

He did not let man handle life as he pleased

In verse 10 God said that He would set His face against whoever eats any blood, whether an Israelite or a stranger who dwells among them, and would cut him off from among his people. In verse 12 He gave the same command, and in verse 14 He made clear once again that the life of all flesh is in its blood.

The person who received this ordinance had to put his own attitude toward life under the word of God. Since God had appointed and spoken of the relationship between life and blood, the people could not treat it lightly as they pleased.

In verse 13 He also tells what must be done with the blood

of a hunted animal or bird: *"Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust."*

Even if one had hunted an animal or bird that could be eaten, one was not permitted to eat even its blood. The blood had to be poured out and covered with dust. Even in the everyday work of obtaining food, He had them remember the order of life God had appointed.

What we must know first as we read this word is also the fact that the Owner of life is God. Our lives, too, are before God. We must not think that we can remove the consequences by ourselves even after committing sin. We must resolve the problem of sin before God, who gave life.

"I have given it to you"

In verse 11 God directly explained the relationship between blood and atonement: *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."*

The part of this word we must first engrave on our hearts is the word *"I have given it to you."* The One who prepared the way of atonement is God. It is not that man found a method of resolving the problem of sin and proposed it to God. God had atonement made with the blood of the sacrificial offering in order to give life to the sinner.

God said that He had that blood sprinkled on the altar to make atonement for the lives of the people. In the place where the sinner had to die, the life of the sacrificial offering is offered. In the blood of the offering is its life, and that life was sacrificed

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in place of the sinner.

Therefore the word that the blood makes atonement for sin does not mean that the substance called blood itself must be regarded as something mysterious. We must know the meaning that the life of the sacrificial offering God appointed was offered in place of the sinner. Pouring out the blood of a hunted animal on the ground and offering the blood of the offering God appointed on the altar are not the same. Not every death becomes atonement just because blood was shed.

God did not lightly let our sins go. Judgment follows sin. But because He loved us, He gave the offering to be sacrificed in our place. In this the righteousness and the love of God appear together.

The life of Jesus that He gave up in place of our lives

The vicarious atonement that the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament showed was accomplished by Jesus Christ. Vicarious atonement is the Lord paying the price in place of us who were to be judged for sin.

Romans 6:23 says: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

If the wages of sin is death, the problem of sin cannot end with soothing the heart. The price of the sin one has already committed does not disappear of itself just because a person grieves over and regrets his sin. We need a Savior who will deliver us from that judgment.

Jesus came to this earth clothed in human flesh in order to give us life. He did not merely say that He loved us from a place that had nothing to do with us. He bore our sins on His own body

and received on the Cross the judgment that had to be received for those sins. The Lord's shedding His blood and dying was His giving up His own life.

Though we receive the remission of sins as a gift, it is not that this salvation was accomplished without any price. Because Jesus paid with His own life the price we could not pay, we receive it by faith. For us it is grace, but the Lord sacrificed Himself and accomplished that grace.

When we know this fact, we cannot look at the Cross of Jesus as a tragedy that has nothing to do with us. The Lord sacrificed Himself because of our sins, and gave up His own life in order to give us life. Therefore the assurance of salvation, too, must be sought not in one's own merit, but in the price of the Lord's life paid for us.

To know the blood of the Cross, one must know the baptism He received from John

Jesus is the sinless Son of God. Why did such a Lord have to be judged like a sinner? It is because He bore our sins. Then when and how did He bear our sins? It was when Jesus received baptism from John.

The sacrifice of the Old Testament was not accomplished only by killing the offering. Sin was passed on to the offering through the laying on of hands, and the offering that bore that sin died and shed its blood. The passing on of sin and the judgment for that sin went together.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. That the Lord received baptism from John was to fulfill the righteous will of God to remove the sin of mankind. So Jesus became the Lamb of God who takes away the

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sin of the world.

Our sins are in the sin of the world that Jesus bore at this time. The original sin and all the sins we commit as we live were passed on to the Lord. Though the Lord knew our sins, He did not turn away from them but bore them Himself.

And with the body that bore those sins He was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood. Jesus did not die because of His own wrongs. Because He had borne our sins, He was judged in our place. Only when we know together the baptism the Lord received from John and the death of the Cross can we know why that blood is the blood that makes atonement for our sins.

Jesus did not stop at bearing our sins, nor did He leave the price of those sins remaining. He bore sin with His baptism, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death and became our Savior. We believe this salvation and receive the remission of sins.

Not just any death can become the sacrifice that takes the place of our sins

Verse 15 speaks concerning the person who has eaten what died naturally or what was torn by beasts: *"And every person who eats what died naturally or what was torn by beasts, whether he is a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean."*

According to the ordinance of the passage, the person who ate such a thing became unclean. He had to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and he remained in an unclean state until evening and after that became clean. One could not regard it as the same as the holy sacrifice that God accepts merely because

an animal had died.

Keeping this distinction in mind, we must also know rightly the death of Jesus. Jesus is not One who simply came into the world and naturally ended His life. Nor must He be understood only as One who was unjustly killed without any relation to our sins. The Lord bore our sins and sacrificed Himself in order to accomplish the salvation God appointed.

There may be a heart that grieves as it thinks of the suffering of the Cross. But with that grief alone one cannot know how one's own sins were resolved. One must know the fact that the Lord bore my sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of those very sins.

The reason the death of Jesus becomes the sacrifice that saves me is that the Lord bore my sins in my place. When we believe this fact, the Cross becomes for us the evidence of the salvation in which the judgment of sin has been resolved.

Do not take lightly the command to wash with water

God told the person who had become unclean to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water. And in verse 16 He spoke of the case in which one does not follow that command: *"But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."*

One could not just wait for evening to come while ignoring the command to wash. Since God had given the way to become clean, the person who had become unclean had to wash according to that word.

In Exodus 30:17–21, too, God commanded that the priests wash their hands and feet with the water of the laver. Even those

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who served the sacrifices could not omit the washing. It is because the person who came to God needed cleanness.

Through this ordinance of washing with water we come to think of the salvation of the Lord, who washes away sin. The way to wash away the sin in our hearts lies in believing the baptism Jesus received from John. It is not that we ourselves remove the sin of the heart by the act of washing our bodies in water; we receive the washing of sin by believing the work in which the Lord bore our sins.

Whenever your sins come to mind, do not try to deny or hide those sins. Acknowledge your wrongs before God, and believe the word that the Lord bore even those sins. The word that one has received the remission of sins does not mean that we did not commit sin before. It means that the Lord bore the sins we actually committed and received their judgment.

Faith is not a heart that takes sin lightly. It is a heart that acknowledges its own sins and yet relies on the salvation of the Lord who has resolved those sins. When we believe the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, our hearts can enjoy together the washing of sin and salvation from judgment.

The Holy Spirit testifies to the salvation accomplished with the water and the blood

1 John 5:6–8 says: "*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one. –ASV*"

Jesus saved us with the water and the blood. He bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment of sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies the truth of this salvation.

Therefore the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a faith that looks only at what kind of feeling has arisen in one's heart. It is knowing and believing the salvation God has made known through the word. The ground of salvation is not how strong my feelings are, but how the Lord resolved my sins.

Accept in your heart the salvation the Lord has bestowed for us. Believe that my sins were passed on to the Lord and that the Lord paid the price of those sins with His own life. By this faith we receive the remission of sins before God and are justified.

It is not that the salvation of the Lord is insufficient for our sins. Jesus, who came to save us, bore all sins and bore their judgment with His own life. For us, who have no strength to resolve sin, the Lord Himself accomplished that work.

Dear beloved saints, God said that He gave the blood of the sacrificial offering to make atonement for life. Jesus, who fulfilled that promise, received baptism from John and bore our sins, and gave up His own life on the Cross. And He rose again from death and gave us new life.

Believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit and be washed of all sins. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who paid the price of sin in our place and gave us life. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 17

[Question] 1. What ordinances does Leviticus chapter 17 deal with, and what do those ordinances emphasize?

Leviticus chapter 17 deals with the place and the method of offering sacrifices to God, the command not to eat blood, and the ordinance of cleansing for when one has eaten an animal that has died.

• The sacrifice offered at the door of the tabernacle of meeting (verses 1–9): God had them bring an ox, a lamb, or a goat to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and offer it to the LORD. He forbade them to sacrifice at will in the open field or to sacrifice again to the he-goats they had served before.

• The command not to eat blood (verses 10–14): Blood is related to life, and since God gave it to make atonement for sin, He forbade them to eat it. Even the blood of an animal or bird fit to eat that had been caught in hunting had to be poured out and covered with dust.

• The ordinance for becoming clean from uncleanness (verses 15–16): The person who ate what died naturally or what was torn by wild beasts had to wash his clothes and bathe his body, and was unclean until evening.

The common feature of these ordinances lies in the fact that people cannot handle sacrifice and life as they please. Serving God must follow the word God has appointed, and one must respect God, the Lord of life, and the grace of atonement He has

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prepared. This command was not given to the priests only, but concerned the faith and the life of all the people.

[Question] 2. Leviticus 17:2—in the command that had Moses deliver the word, what attitude must the person entrusted with the word have?

The person who delivers the word must know that he is one who has been entrusted with the word of God and passes it on, and must deliver its meaning faithfully. God told Moses to make the command known to Aaron and his sons and to all the children of Israel. The basis of what Moses was to deliver was not his own thoughts or experience, but the word God had spoken.

Therefore the person who delivers the word must first hear the word and know its meaning rightly, and he himself must also believe and follow that word. He must not put forward ideas the hearers would like as if they were God's command, or change the word to suit his own will. To deliver the word of God is not a matter of raising one's own authority, but of serving so that people may know and believe the will of God.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 17:4, 5—why did God have them bring the sacrificial animal to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and offer it to the LORD as an offering?

It was so that they would come to Him according to the law of sacrifice He had appointed, and so that He would reconcile them to Himself. The people had to stop killing animals and

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sacrificing in their own way in the open field, and had to bring them to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, give them to the priest, and offer them to the LORD as peace offerings. The priest sprinkled the blood on the altar and burned the fat, offering it to God (verses 5, 6).

Bringing the offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting is an act that acknowledges that the object of the sacrifice is the LORD God, and that God also appoints the way to come to Him. One was not reconciled with God by the act of killing an animal or by human devotion alone, but had to come through the sacrifice God had prepared.

This word teaches that we, too, must come to God by believing the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. We believe this salvation and live in a relationship of reconciliation with God.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 17:4—what wrong of the people did God intend to prevent by having the sacrifice offered at the door of the tabernacle of meeting?

It was to prevent the people from leaving God and sacrificing to idols. Among the people of Israel there were those who had not given up the habit of idolatry they had picked up in Egypt. God had them change the sacrificing they had done in the open field into the sacrifice offered to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and commanded them not to sacrifice again to the he-goats they had served before (verses 5–7).

Therefore this system did not stop at simply gathering the

place of sacrifice into one spot. It was an ordinance that made clear toward whom the worship of the people was to be directed, so that they would cut off idolatry and serve God alone. That He dealt severely with the failure to bring the offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting was also because ignoring God's command and performing the sacrifice according to one's own will was not a light wrong.

We, too, must examine ourselves as to whether, while saying that we serve God, we are actually using faith to fulfill our own desires. Believing and following the word God has appointed must be the center of worship.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 17:7—why did God speak of idolatry by likening it to adultery that betrays one's spouse?

It is because the relationship between God and His people is a relationship that requires love and faithfulness. God delivered Israel out of Egypt and made them His own people. If, then, the people leave God and give their hearts to another god and serve it, that becomes an act of betraying the God who saved them.

That verse 7 describes the idols as those after which they *"play the harlot"* reveals this kind of spiritual betrayal. Idolatry is not merely a matter of having chosen a religious rite wrongly. It is giving to another object the love and trust that ought to be given to God, and seeking something to take the place of God.

This word makes us examine what our hearts rely on and follow most. If material things or our own desires take the place of God, then even though we outwardly believe in God, our hearts come to serve something else. We must know the grace of salvation God has bestowed and live with hearts faithful to Him.

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[Question] 6. Leviticus 17:7—what object do *'the he-goats, after which they play the harlot,'* which the people had served before, refer to?

The he-goat of this verse refers to the object of idolatry that the people had served and sacrificed to in place of God. It must be distinguished from the male goat offered to the LORD as a sin offering. Here the text speaks not of offering a male goat to God, but of the wrong of serving the he-goat itself and sacrificing to it.

God commanded them to stop this kind of worship and to sacrifice to the LORD only. Spiritually, it makes us examine a life that follows the desires of one's own flesh and serves them. The person who believes in God must not set his heart only on obtaining what he wants, but must live according to the will in which God delights. The animal called the he-goat does not in itself always symbolize evil; the point of this verse lies in leaving God and serving another object.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 17:10–13—how is the reason God forbade eating blood as food connected with life and atonement?

It is because blood is related to life, and God gave that blood to be used in making atonement for the life of the sinner. God spoke as follows.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

The Lord of life is God. The people could eat meat, but they could not eat as they pleased even the blood, which is one with

life. Moreover, the blood of the sacrificial offering sprinkled on the altar showed that a life had been offered in the sinner's place. Therefore the command not to eat blood also conveys the intent to respect life and to treasure the method of atonement God has appointed.

This word makes us think of the salvation of vicarious atonement Jesus Christ has bestowed. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and paid the price of those sins by giving up His own life on the Cross. The salvation we receive is the salvation the Lord accomplished with His own life. We must know and believe the grace of that sacrifice.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 17:13—why did God have the blood of a hunted animal or bird poured out on the ground and covered with dust?

This was to prevent them from eating even a clean animal or bird caught in hunting with its blood, and to lead them to acknowledge that life belongs to God. Not only the people of Israel but also the strangers who dwelt among them had to pour out that blood and cover it with dust. Verse 14 places the reason for this in the fact that blood is one with life.

This command does not mean that the blood of the sacrificial offering offered on the altar and the blood of a hunted animal are dealt with in the same way. The blood of a hunted animal was to be poured out on the ground and covered instead of being sprinkled on the altar. Though the method of handling differs, the principle of not eating blood is the same. It is the lesson that God's permission to eat did not give people the authority to treat even life as they pleased.

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[Question] 9. Why did some of the people continue in idolatry even after seeing the amazing miracles of the exodus?

It is because the experience of seeing miracles does not of itself produce a heart that believes in and obeys God. The people of Israel had come out of Egypt, but they had not given up all the habits and thoughts of idolatry they had picked up in Egypt. Even after experiencing the power of God, in their hearts they could hold on to their former way of life and their own desires.

The incident of the golden calf shows this well. When Moses was delayed in coming down from the mountain, the people demanded that a god be made to lead them. Even though God had already delivered them out of Egypt, they made an image visible before their eyes and called it the god that had led them (Exodus 32:1–8). Even after experiencing the grace of salvation, rather than trusting God and waiting, they put what they wanted first.

Therefore this incident must not be regarded as the incomprehensible behavior of the people of that time only. We, too, after experiencing God's help, can rely on something else according to our circumstances and our own desires. What is important is not to remain in boasting of a special experience of the past, but to receive the word of God into our hearts and to discern what is right and wrong and follow it. We must remember the grace God has bestowed, and examine ourselves as to whether there is any idol we put before Him. ✉

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CHAPTER

18

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Leviticus Chapter 18 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 18:1–5—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The word of the passage

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: I am the LORD your God. According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 18:1–5).

Leviticus 18:1–5 is the introduction to the ordinances of sexual and family holiness that follow. The central content is as follows.

It is that the people of God must not make either the customs of Egypt, where they lived in the past, or the customs of Canaan,

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which they were to enter, the standard of their lives, but must live according to the word of God who saved them.

At the same time, the word of verse 5, *"If a man does, he shall live by them,"* becomes in the New Testament an important ground for distinguishing the righteousness that is of the law from the righteousness that is of faith.

2. *"I am the LORD your God"*

Before commanding the ordinances, God first makes clear who He is.

"I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 18:2).

This word is repeated in verses 2 and 4, and verse 5 too ends with *"I am the LORD."* Therefore the whole of verses 1–5 is surrounded by the identity and sovereignty of God.

God did not simply issue commands, saying, "Do this, do not do that." He first declared that He is the God of Israel.

Israel is not a nation that escaped from Egypt by its own strength. God delivered them from death through the blood of the Passover lamb, and had them cross the Red Sea and saved them from slavery in Egypt. Therefore, for Israel to keep the ordinances of God was not a matter of paying the price of the grace by which He had delivered them from Egypt, but a matter of living according to His word as the people God had saved.

The order is important.

God first saved Israel, and then gave the saved people the way in which they were to live holy lives.

This applies to the saints of the New Testament as well. The reason the saints must live holy lives is not to become the children of God by piling up good deeds. Because they have been saved from sin through Jesus Christ and have become the

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children of God, they must now live according to the will of God who saved them.

3. *"According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do"*

Egypt was the land where Israel had lived for a long time. The people of Israel had come out of Egypt in body, but the customs, the ways of thinking, the religious practices, and the habits of life of Egypt could remain in their hearts.

God commanded that they must not go on living according to the customs of Egypt just because they had come out of Egypt.

Only, the word *"According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do"* must not be interpreted to mean that all the culture and ways of life of Egypt are condemned as evil without exception. It does not mean that He forbade everything that was done in Egypt, such as clothing, language, and farming techniques.

When we look at the context of Leviticus 18:6–23 that follows, what God particularly forbade were the customs connected with idolatry, sexual corruption, incestuous relations, adultery, the act of offering children to Molech, sexual acts between persons of the same sex, sexual acts with animals, and other such acts that go against the order of creation of God and His holiness.

Therefore this word does not mean to despise a particular people, but means that whatever people's culture it may be, one must not follow the part that goes against the will of God.

4. *"According to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances"*

What was dangerous to Israel was not only the Egypt of the past. The customs of Canaan, which they were to enter, were dangerous as well.

Egypt was the environment they had passed through, and Canaan was the environment they would meet in the future. God warned against both the familiar sins of the past and the sins they would newly encounter in the future.

This shows that it is not that a person who has been saved will receive no temptation at all in the future just because he has come out of the sins of the past. Even a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can continue to be influenced by former habits and the present culture, because he lives in the world with the flesh.

So the believer must be on guard against both of the following.

—Going back to the sins one had grown used to in the past, longing for them

—Accepting the customs of the new age uncritically

God told Israel to follow neither the customs of Egypt, where they had lived before, nor the customs of Canaan, which they were to enter. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must discern before the word the sins he was used to in the past and the worldly values that attract his heart now, and follow God.

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5. Not the customs of the world but the judgments of God are the standard

"You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them" (Leviticus 18:4).

People live following some standard. Three ways lay before Israel.

—The customs of Egypt, where they had lived in the past

—The customs of Canaan, which they were to enter

—The judgments and ordinances God had given

God says that it is not that something is right just because the majority of people do it. Nor is an old tradition necessarily right, nor is a new culture necessarily progressive and good.

For the people of God, the final standard for judging good and evil is not the fashion of the age or the social majority, but the word of God.

The *"judgments"* and *"ordinances"* together refer to the judgment and command of God, the order of life the people must follow. The saints must make the word of God, rather than their own thoughts, the standard, discern what sin is, and turn from the wrong way.

It was not to oppress the people that God gave the ordinances. He made clear what sin is, protected life, and set up boundaries so that the people of God would not be swallowed up in the corruption of the world.

6. *"If a man does, he shall live by them"*

This word must be looked at on two levels.

—First, the covenantal life of Israel. If Israel kept the ordinances of God, they could enjoy life and order in that land

as the holy people of God. Conversely, if they lived following the abominable customs of Egypt and Canaan, they would be vomited out of the land and receive the judgment of the covenant. The latter part of Leviticus chapter 18 warns of that very result.

Therefore the word *"live"* here contains the meaning of preserving life within the covenant of God and living as a holy community.

But this does not mean that man can obtain eternal life by his own merit. The law demands perfect obedience, but man under sin cannot fulfill that demand.

—Second, the principle of righteousness that the law presents. The Apostle Paul directly quotes Leviticus 18:5 in Romans.

"For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them'" (Romans 10:5).

The principle of the law is "do and live." The problem is not that God gave a bad law, but that man under sin cannot fully do that law.

The law is not fulfilled by keeping only a part of it. Galatians says as follows.

"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them" (Galatians 3:10).

One must *"continue"* in *"all things."* By keeping it only in a certain period, or by keeping only the commandments one wants among the many, one cannot reach the perfect righteousness that is of the law.

So if one makes the law a ladder of salvation, one ends up discovering his own sin and incapacity.

"By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).

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The law is not a mirror that lets a person boast of how good he is, but a mirror that makes him realize that he is a sinner before the holiness of God.

7. Then are Leviticus 18:5 and the gospel opposed to each other

They are not opposed to each other. The law shows the righteous demand of God, and the gospel shows how Jesus Christ accomplished that righteousness which the sinner failed to accomplish.

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4).

Here *"the end of the law"* does not mean that the holiness of God or the standard of good and evil has disappeared. It means that Christ completed the righteousness the law demands of the sinner and the judgment of sin.

We have not kept the law completely. Therefore, according to the principle of the law, we must receive judgment and death rather than obtain life. But Jesus accomplished the righteousness of God in our place.

8. The righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished

Jesus said this when He received baptism from John:

"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore all the sin of mankind. Just as in the Old Testament the

sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed his sin on to it, Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John.

John the Baptist testified, pointing to Jesus.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and went to the Cross bearing that sin and shed His blood. He received in our place the judgment the law demands, that *"the wages of sin is death."*

Galatians explains this as follows.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

The Cross of Jesus is not an event that disregarded the law. Rather, it is the event in which He fully bore the judgment of the law. And Jesus rose again from death. Jesus rising again from death is the victory over sin and death, and shows that He is the true Savior who justifies us.

"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Therefore the way for a sinner to obtain eternal life is not to claim that he himself has fully done the law, but to believe with the heart the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

"With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

9. How "do and live" should be understood in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The way the law speaks of is as follows.

Do it perfectly. Then you shall live.

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But man under sin cannot fulfill that demand. So God sent Jesus Christ.

The way the gospel speaks of is as follows.

Believe that Jesus bore your sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from death. Then you shall live by the righteousness of Christ.

This is not that God lowered the standard of righteousness. It is that Jesus Himself completed the righteousness God demanded.

The Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood, is our perfect Savior. Therefore the person who believes does not say, looking at his own deeds, "I have done well enough, so I will live." Looking at the salvation Jesus accomplished, he confesses, "The Lord bore all my sins and judgment, so I live by faith."

10. Then does the person who has been saved have no need to keep the ordinances of God

That is not so. Here both legalism and antinomianism must be avoided.

Legalism is trying to obtain the remission of sins and eternal life by the merit of having kept the ordinances of God. But no one can be justified before God by perfect obedience.

Conversely, antinomianism is thinking that since Jesus has removed all sins, it now does not matter even if one lives following the customs of Egypt and Canaan. This too goes against the purpose of Leviticus chapter 18 and the meaning of the gospel.

The gospel is not a license to commit sin as much as one

pleases. It is the power that saves us from the condemnation and dominion of sin and makes us live following God.

The order of salvation and holy living is as follows.

—Man realizes that he is a sinner before the law of God.

—He believes the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

—He receives the remission of sins by faith and becomes a child of God.

—Led by the Holy Spirit, he refuses the customs of the world and lives according to the will of God.

Holy living is not an act of paying the price of salvation, but the fruit of faith borne by the person who has been saved.

1 Peter also says to the saints who have been saved.

"As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:14–15).

11. The application this gives to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit today

—One must not take the habits of the past for granted. Even after receiving the remission of sins, old habits like those learned in Egypt may remain. One must not rationalize anger, lewdness, lying, greed, and self-centered thinking, saying, "I am originally this kind of person."

—The majority of the world is not itself the truth. Even if the customs of Canaan were widely practiced throughout society, they could be an abomination before God. Today too, it is not that everything is right before God just because society permits or praises it.

—One must not condemn the culture and the people in the

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same way. God did not tell them to hate the peoples themselves, the Egyptians or the Canaanites. He told them not to follow the customs that destroy the order of creation of God and defile life and the family. The believer must not hate people, but must discern sin.

—One must not establish one's own righteousness. One must not boast of being more righteous than others just because one has kept the ordinances of God to some degree. Before the law all people fall short. Our righteousness is the righteousness Jesus accomplished, received by faith.

—When one has committed sin, one must return to the gospel. It is not that Jesus must receive baptism from John again and die on the Cross again just because one has committed sin after being saved. The salvation of Jesus was completed once and for all.

The believer must acknowledge his wrong and believe again that Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged with the blood of the Cross. And seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit, he must actually turn from the wrong way.

—One must not turn obedience into a formula for material success. The word "keep the ordinances and live" must not be changed into the mechanical formula "if you obey, you will surely become rich and never fall ill." The righteous of the Bible too went through suffering, illness, and persecution.

In a life that follows the word of God there are the blessings of fellowship with God, boldness of conscience, and protection from the destructive power of sin. But to conclude that every suffering or illness is because of an individual's disobedience goes beyond the scope of the passage.

Conclusion

In Leviticus 18:1–5 God told Israel to live according to the ordinances of God, not the customs of Egypt and Canaan. The reason is that God had delivered them from Egypt and made them His own people.

The word *"if a man does, he shall live by them"* shows that the law of God is a good order for life, and at the same time makes the man who tries to be justified by perfect obedience discover his own incapacity and sin.

Jesus accomplished the righteousness of God that we failed to complete by our doing. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the curse of the law and the judgment of sin with the blood of the Cross, and Jesus rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel of the water and the blood is the truth of true salvation.

Therefore the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who keeps the law and establishes his own righteousness. He is a person who obtains life by believing the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and, thankful for that salvation, refuses the customs of Egypt and Canaan and lives according to the will of God.

We do not buy salvation by doing the law; we obtain life by believing the salvation Christ accomplished, and with that life we live according to the word of God.

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Leviticus 18:6–18—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The central meaning of Leviticus 18:6–18

This passage is not a word that regards sex as unclean or sees the body itself as evil. It is a word that says to keep holy, within the covenant of marriage, the sex God created, and to protect the boundaries between the members of a family.

Verse 6 is like the title of the whole regulation.

"None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD."

"Approach" does not refer simply to meeting or touching a relative. Used together with the expression "uncover nakedness," it means approaching for a sexual purpose and having sexual relations. Therefore this word is not a word that forbids having seen a body by accident, or the act of caring for a family member in illness or old age.

God commanded that even among family one must not act according to one's own desire, but must keep the boundaries of the relationships God appointed. Before this word we must realize our sins, believe in Jesus Christ who bore even those sins, and go forward to a life that protects and loves the family.

2. *"I am the LORD"* is the ground of all the regulations

The ground on which God forbade these relationships is not merely social custom or genetic risk. At the end of verse 6 there is the declaration *"I am the LORD."*

The sexual ethics of Israel had to be decided not by the customs of the surrounding peoples or by individual desire, but by the character of the holy God who had saved them from Egypt. Because God was their God, they had to follow the will of God in the body, in marriage, and in family relationships as well.

This principle continues in the New Testament as well. After saving a person, God does not leave him to use his body just as he pleases. It is because the body of a person who has been saved is a body that belongs to the Lord and is the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

3. Keep the boundaries of the closest family

—Verse 7—the mother: It says that uncovering the nakedness of one's mother is at the same time uncovering *"The nakedness of your father."* This does not mean that the mother is treated as the property of the father. Because the parents became one flesh through marriage, having sexual relations with one's mother is an act that tramples not only on the mother as an individual but on the whole marriage covenant of the parents.

Within the family, between parents and children there must be love and protection. If that relationship is turned into an object of sexual desire, the order and trust of the home are fundamentally destroyed.

—Verse 8—the stepmother: The stepmother, even if not related by blood, is a person who has married the father and become one flesh with him. Therefore sexual relations with the stepmother violate the marriage covenant of the father.

The moral gravity of this regulation is likewise confirmed in the New Testament. When there was a case in the church of Corinth that *"a man has his father's wife,"* Paul sternly rebuked

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it as a sexual immorality hard to find even among the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 5:1). This shows that the word of Leviticus chapter 18 is not a mere sanitary regulation that applied only to ancient Israel.

—Verses 9 and 11—the sister and the half sister: Whether they have the same father or the same mother, whether they grew up in the same house or grew up apart from each other, a sister is a sister. A difference in the environment of upbringing or in emotional closeness does not remove the boundary of family relationship God appointed.

Verse 11 reaffirms clearly that the daughter born to the father and the stepmother is also one's sister. The blood relationship does not disappear on the ground that "we did not grow up together" or "we do not feel like family to each other."

—Verse 10—the granddaughter on the son's side and the daughter's side: Concerning the son's daughter and the daughter's daughter, God says, *"Theirs is your own nakedness."* A descendant is not a stranger unrelated to oneself, but a person who has come from one's own life and lineage.

In this relationship there must be protection and responsibility. For the grandparents' generation to use its authority or age to make the next generation a sexual object is an act that overturns the place of protector God has given.

4. The boundaries of the extended family and the family joined by marriage

—Verses 12–13—the father's sister and the mother's sister: The father's sister is near of kin to the father, and the mother's sister is near of kin to the mother. God set the same boundary for close blood relatives outside the nuclear family as well.

The closeness of being family cannot be a ground for permitting sexual approach. Rather, because family must be able to feel safe and trust one another, a clearer boundary is needed.

—Verse 14—the father's brother's wife, that is, the wife of one's father's brother: The wife of the father's brother is not a person connected by blood, but a person who has entered the family community through marriage. Approaching her sexually damages the marriage relationship of the uncle and the trust of the whole family.

Therefore the passage protects not only blood relationships of near kin but also family relationships formed by marriage.

—Verse 15—the daughter-in-law: The daughter-in-law is the son's wife. Sexual relations with the daughter-in-law are not mere personal sexual immorality, but an act that violates the marriage covenant of the son and abuses the authority given to parents.

This command makes one think especially of the difference in power. Within the family, a person who is older or holds authority must not use his position to approach a weaker person.

—Verse 16—the brother's wife: Having sexual relations with the brother's wife is an act that intrudes on the marriage relationship of the brother. The passage says *"it is your brother's nakedness"* because the two became one flesh through marriage.

Only, in Deuteronomy 25:5–10 there appears the regulation of levirate marriage, for continuing the family line when one of the brothers dwelling together died without a son. This does not contradict Leviticus chapter 18. Leviticus chapter 18 forbids taking the brother's wife as an ordinary object of sexual relations or marriage, and Deuteronomy is a limited regulation given for the survival of the family line and the protection of the widow in the particular situation in which a brother has died without a son.

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Therefore, on the ground of the special regulation of levirate marriage, one cannot intrude on the marriage of a living brother or justify an ordinary relationship.

5. Do not bring rivalry and destruction into one family

—Verse 17—the act of taking a mother and her daughter and granddaughter together: To have a relationship with a woman and also make her daughter or granddaughter a sexual object is an act that breaks down the boundary between generations. The passage clearly calls this *"wickedness."*

"They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness."

This is the picture of one person's desire swallowing up several generations of one family. God does not let people be treated as objects for satisfying desire. The dignity of a person, the order of the family, and covenantal faithfulness come before sexual desire.

—Verse 18—the act of taking the wife's sister while the wife is alive: It says not to take even her sister while the wife is alive and make the two sisters rival and envy each other.

This word goes beyond simply setting the range of kinship; it prevents the relationship between sisters and the marriage relationship from turning into hostility because of one man's desire. The pain and rivalry that appeared in the relationship of Leah and Rachel, who were the wives of Jacob, also show the tragedy that such a marriage structure brings.

The direct focus of verse 18 lies in forbidding the act of taking the wife's sister as well while the wife is alive, making the wife jealous.

6. Does this word mean to be justified by the law

Leviticus 18:6–18 is the holy and just law of God. But the fact that this law is righteous does not mean that a person can keep this law perfectly and obtain salvation by his own strength.

Jesus did not limit adultery to the outward act, but exposed even the lust harbored in the heart (Matthew 5:27–28). Therefore before this word one cannot justify oneself, saying, "I have not actually had sexual relations with a relative, so I am perfectly clean." The law exposes not only the outward act but also the desire and sinful nature within us.

The role of the law is not to permit sin to be called good, but to make clear what sin is. At the same time it makes a person give up his own righteousness and look to the Savior.

7. The remission of sins seen from the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The sexual immorality and the evil desires that Leviticus chapter 18 exposes are also included in the sin of the world that Jesus bore.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which He bore all the sins of the world and accomplished the righteousness of God (Matthew 3:15). John the Baptist testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Jesus, bearing that sin, received the punishment of sin on the Cross and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood is the truth (1 John 5:6–8).

Therefore one is not saved by the self-righteousness of not having committed sexual sin. Even a person who committed

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serious sexual sin in the past can receive the washing of sin and justification if he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"Such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

The word *"such were some of you"* means that the past of a sinner does not block the possibility of salvation. But at the same time the expression *"were"* also contains the meaning that the person who has believed the gospel must not go on holding on to his old sins as a normal way of life.

8. The remission of sins is not a license for sexual immorality

To the question whether one may go on living in sin so that grace may abound, Paul answers, *"Certainly not"* (Romans 6:1–2).

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not saved by the merit of having kept the law well. But because he is a person who has been washed of all sins by the gospel, he must now present his body not as an instrument of sin but as an instrument for the righteousness of God.

"Flee sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18).

The Bible does not only say to try to overcome sexual immorality; it says to *"Flee."* Sexual temptation is not something to keep near while testing one's own will. If relationships, places, contacts, and media repeatedly draw one into sin, one must put an actual distance between oneself and them.

The body of a person who has been saved is not a possession for his own desire alone.

"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

That the body is one in which the Holy Spirit dwells does not mean that sexual desire never arises at all. It means that when desire moves in a direction that goes against the word of God, one is to refuse it following the leading of the Holy Spirit, and present the body to God.

As the word *"this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality" (1 Thessalonians 4:3)* says, the holy life of the saints is not a condition for paying the price of salvation, but the fruit that the person who has been saved must bear.

9. What should one do when one has committed sin

When a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has fallen into sexual sin, he must avoid two extremes.

First, one must not take sin lightly, saying, "Jesus has removed all sins, so it is all right." Sin is still sin, and leaves deep wounds on the family, the spouse, and the community.

Second, one must not despair either, saying, "I have committed this kind of sin, so I have been excluded even from the salvation of Jesus." Jesus bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross.

What is needed is neither to change sin into good, nor to try to pay the price of sin again by one's own suffering or good deeds. One must clearly acknowledge the wrong before God, look again by faith to the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has already been completed, and actually turn from the

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relationship and environment of that sin. While protecting the safety and privacy of the victim, one must take responsibility for one's own wrong and set up concrete boundaries to prevent a recurrence.

In the word Jesus spoke to the woman caught in adultery, two things are together.

"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

"Neither do I condemn you" is the grace of the remission of sins, and *"go and sin no more"* is the word that calls the person who has been saved to a new life. If one removes either of the two, one distorts the gospel.

10. When applying this word to the victims of sexual abuse

This passage is not a word for condemning the victim. The subject of the repeated command is the person who approaches sexually. The person who approached and coerced, using power or age or family relationship, must bear the responsibility.

In particular, the responsibility for the sin must not be shifted onto a minor or a person who was coerced. Demanding silence from the victim for the sake of "the honor of the family" or "the peace of the church" is also contrary to the purpose of the passage. Protecting the family is not hiding the act of harm, but stopping it immediately, keeping the victim safe, and having him or her receive the necessary legal, medical, and professional help.

Conclusion

Leviticus 18:6–18 can be summarized as follows.

—God established the family not as an object of desire but as a relationship to be loved and protected.

—He treats intruding on the one-flesh covenant formed by marriage as seriously as violating a blood relationship of near kin.

—The law exposes our outward acts and the desires of our hearts and makes us know that we cannot become righteous by ourselves.

—Jesus bore even these sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us.

—The person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel does not justify sin, but must regard his own body and the bodies of others as precious, following the Holy Spirit.

—A holy life is not the price that buys salvation, but the fruit of faith offered to God by a person who has already been bought at a price.

Leviticus chapter 18 is not simply a list of prohibitions saying "this relationship is not allowed." It is the word of holiness by which God protects the homes, the bodies, and the weak among the people He has saved, and makes them put covenant and love and life before desire.

Leviticus 18:19–23—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The whole flow of Leviticus 18:19–23

In this passage appear five prohibitions that look different

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from one another.

—Sexual relations with a woman during her monthly period

—Adultery with another man's wife

—The act of offering children to Molech

—Sexual relations between a man and a man

—Sexual relations between a human being and an animal

The common core is not to make the body, life, marriage, and children instruments for human desire or for idols. God wanted His people to be holy not only in the hour of worship but also in the most private sexual life and family life.

When we look at this word within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can know what God calls sin and how Jesus Christ bore that sin. The person who has received the remission of sins must believe this grace and live according to the word of God.

2. Sexual relations with a woman during her monthly period

"Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity" (Leviticus 18:19).

Here "*customary impurity"* refers to the monthly period of a woman. Leviticus chapter 15 prescribes the monthly period as a ceremonially unclean period.

What must first be made clear is the fact that the monthly period itself is not a moral sin of the woman. The monthly period is a natural physiological phenomenon. The 'uncleanness' spoken of in Leviticus does not always mean that an individual has committed an evil sin. Even in cases that are not sin, such as childbirth or contact with a dead body, a state of ceremonial uncleanness arose.

Therefore, on the ground of this word, one must not treat a woman during her monthly period like a sinner or despise her as an inferior and unclean being. The prohibition of the passage does not condemn the existence of the woman, but forbids the act of approaching her sexually during that period.

—Self-control that respects the command of God: God commanded Israel not to have sexual relations during the monthly period. In the life of the saints, too, one must put the word of God before one's own desire and respect the body and circumstances of the other person.

It is not that, just because it is a marital relationship, the desire of one side always has the right to dominate the body of the other. Sexual life within marriage, too, needs love and consideration and self-control. Demanding sexual relations while ignoring the bodily condition and pain of one's spouse is not love but self-centered desire.

—When applying it to the saints of the New Testament: One must not regard the monthly period itself as a moral sin and despise women or treat them as people not qualified to come to God. The ground of the remission of sins and salvation is not the merit of having kept the ordinances of cleansing, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

Therefore the saints must not make their own deeds the merit of salvation, but must respect the word of God and control their own desires. Between husband and wife too, one must respect the body and circumstances of the other and treat him or her with love.

3. Do not lie carnally with another man's wife

"Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's

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wife, to defile yourself with her" (Leviticus 18:20).

Adultery does not end merely as a personal choice between two adults. It is an act that intrudes on the marriage covenant God established, deceives the spouse, and destroys another home and the community.

The passage says that by adultery one not only defiles the other person but "defiles oneself." Sin not only wounds other people but also darkens the heart, body, and conscience of the person who commits it.

In the New Testament too, the holiness of marriage is clearly emphasized.

"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

—Does the gospel of the water and the Spirit make adultery light: It does not. That Jesus bore all the sins of the world does not mean that adultery is no longer sin. Because adultery is sin and the wages of that sin is death, Jesus had to bear even that sin.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that legalizes sin, but a gospel that saves the sinner from sin and judgment. The way of the remission of sins is open to the person who has committed adultery as well, but that person must not make the gospel a shield while loving sin.

The faith that one has received the remission of sins must appear in fruit like the following.

—One actually stops the illicit relationship.

—One acknowledges the wounds inflicted on the spouse and the victim.

—One abandons lies and concealment.

—One does not avoid what one must take responsibility for.

—One sets up boundaries in relationships and contacts so that the same sin is not repeated.

—If necessary, one receives the help of a trustworthy pastor

or counselor.

Recovery may need time, and it is not that broken trust is restored immediately just because one has received the remission of sins. The remission of sins and the process of restoring relationships must be distinguished.

4. Do not offer your children to Molech

"And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 18:21).

Molech is a pagan god associated with a sacrifice in which children were offered in the fire. The expression "pass through the fire" is not a mere symbolic game. Deuteronomy 12:31 says that the Gentile nations *"burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods,"* and Jeremiah 32:35 also declares that making children pass through the fire to Molech was an abominable thing that God neither commanded nor had in mind.

—The picture of idolatry swallowing up life: Parents must protect their children. But in the worship of Molech, parents committed the abominable act of offering their children to an idol. The one who should protect turned into the one who sacrifices.

In the end an idol demands even the life a person must protect most preciously. If a person serves success, power, fear, and desire more greatly than God, he ends up offering to that idol not only himself but also the lives of his children and the people around him.

One cannot say that today's competition for success or the greed of parents is literally identical with the sacrifice offered to Molech. But the picture of parents crushing the personhood and

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life of their children for the sake of their own reputation and desire must be examined gravely through this word.

—Why it profanes the name of God: The people of Israel were the covenant people who bore the name of the LORD. If such a person offered his children to Molech, he was calling on the LORD with his mouth while serving another god in his actual life. This is what profanes the name of God.

Profaning the name of God is not simply a matter of pronunciation or words. Claiming to believe in God while destroying life, and packaging that evil deed as if it were the will of God, is what profanes the name of God.

5. Sexual acts between a man and a man

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination" (Leviticus 18:22).

What this verse directly forbids is sexual acts between a man and a man. The passage does not try to define every question of sexual orientation or identity, which are terms of modern psychology, but makes the concrete sexual act the object of the command.

The judgment *"an abomination"* shows how God sees that act. What *"It"* in the sentence refers to is that sexual act. On the ground of this expression one must not deny the human worth itself of any person, or justify insult, hatred, and violence. Every person is a precious life made in the image of God, and every sinner alike is one who must hear the gospel.

—Sexual ethics that continue in the New Testament as well: Romans 1:26–27 mentions both relations between a woman and a woman and relations between a man and a man, and deals with sexual desires and acts that have departed from the order of

creation. 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 also lists sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, and homosexuality together with various other sins.

Therefore it is difficult to dismiss Leviticus 18:22 as merely a ceremonial regulation like the food laws of ancient Israel. It is because that moral judgment continues in the New Testament as well.

But it is not a biblical attitude either to single out this sin alone for condemnation while taking lightly heterosexual adultery, pornography, sexual violence, greed, drunkenness, and lying. The list in 1 Corinthians deals not only with homosexuality but also with adultery, greed, drunkenness, reviling, and extortion together. The word of God must not be a stone for attacking others, but first a mirror that reflects oneself.

—Being tempted, on the one hand, and harboring sin and acting it out by following that temptation, on the other, must be distinguished. But one cannot say that even the lust harbored in the heart is not sin just because one has not put it into actual action (Matthew 5:28). The saints must examine their own hearts and conduct before the word, but must not despise or exclude the person who fights temptation; they must help him by faith.

At the same time, one cannot automatically acknowledge a desire as good just because the desire arises. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must judge good and evil not by his own desire but by the word of God. The community of faith must help, not with condemnation and mockery but with truth and love, so that people can walk the way of self-control together.

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6. Do not mate with an animal

"Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion" (Leviticus 18:23).

This word applies to both men and women. Sexual relations between a human being and an animal are an act that breaks down the boundary between human beings and animals that God distinguished from the time of creation.

In Genesis, God made man in the image of God, and established the man and the woman as spouses fit for each other. An animal cannot be the partner of a human marriage covenant or of personal consent. Therefore bestiality seriously distorts the purpose of sex and the order of creation, and is also abuse inflicted on the animal.

The passage calls this *"perversion."* This does not simply mean that it looks strange socially, but means that it is an act that mixes up and breaks down the boundaries God established.

This verse forbids the act of having sexual relations with an animal. If such a thing has actually happened today, one must not hide it or cover it with religious words, but must stop it immediately and take the necessary legal and professional measures.

7. Why the worship of Molech is included among the sexual prohibitions

In verses 19–23 the worship of Molech is included among the sexual sins. Idolatry and sexual licentiousness have in common that both use the body, life, and relationships God has given according to one's own desire.

—Adultery makes the marriage and body of another person an instrument of desire.

—The worship of Molech makes the life of a child an offering to religious desire.

—Sexual acts between persons of the same sex depart from the order of marriage between a man and a woman that God established.

—Bestiality breaks down the boundary of creation between human beings and animals.

In the end this word rebukes the thought that "my body and my children are mine, so I use them as I want." The final Owner of life and the body is not man but God.

8. These sins and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Leviticus 18:19–23 makes clear what man must not do. But prohibitions alone cannot make the heart of man new. A person comes to know sin by the law, but does not receive the remission of sins by the merit of having kept the law perfectly.

So Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in sinless flesh. Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including adultery, idolatry, and all kinds of sexual sins, with the baptism He received from John. And bearing those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin. Jesus rose again from death. Thereby He completed the work of righteousness that saves the person who believes from sin and death.

Therefore even the person who has committed the sins listed in this word can be saved by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If he acknowledges his sin and believes the salvation Jesus accomplished, he can receive the washing of sin and justification.

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"Such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

In the word *"such were some of you"* are contained three truths.

First, whatever sin one committed in the past, one is not excluded from the salvation of the gospel.

Second, the washing of sin and justification are received not by human asceticism or good deeds but by believing the salvation of Jesus Christ.

Third, the person who has been washed must not resign himself to having to remain in his old sins, but must live by faith the new life the Lord has given.

9. The remission of sins and a holy life are not opposed to each other

That one has received the remission of all sins by believing the gospel and that one must keep away from sexual sin do not contradict each other.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not" (Romans 6:1–2).

The remission of sins is not permission to go on committing sin. The event that shows how heavy sin is and how deserving of judgment is none other than the Cross. Jesus died because of that sin; how can the person who believes that grace say that that sin is light?

But the word that one must live a holy life does not mean to complete salvation by one's own deeds either. Because the saints have already been saved, they refuse the old desires, led by the Holy Spirit.

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

The ground of salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, and a holy life is the fruit of faith that appears in the person who has received that salvation.

10. How should it be applied in actual life

—One must not change the name of sin. One must not change what God has called sin into good with the words love, freedom, rights, or the changing times. At the same time, one must not condemn others by singling out only the sins one does not have oneself.

—One must not keep temptation near and test one's will. Living by the Holy Spirit is not an abstract feeling. It is avoiding the relationships, places, contacts, and videos that draw one into sin, and actually setting up the necessary boundaries.

—When one has committed sin, one must not hide the sin or despair. If one has committed sin, one must acknowledge it as sin. But one must not try to repay the price of sin again by self-punishment and good deeds; one must look by faith to the baptism Jesus, who bore even that sin, received from John, and to the Cross. Within that faith one must cut off the relationship of sin, and if there is harm, one must take responsibility.

—One must protect the victim. In cases involving coercion or violence, crimes against children, or animal abuse, one must not cover them over with religious exhortation alone. One must stop the act immediately, protect the victim and the weak, and obtain the necessary legal, medical, and professional help. The victim must not be made to share the responsibility for the sin of the perpetrator.

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—One must preach the same gospel to all people. What the person who has committed adultery, the person who has fallen into idolatry, the person who has committed sexual acts with a person of the same sex, and the person who has committed other sexual sins all need is not insult but the word of truth. One must say that sin is sin, but must also fully preach the gospel of salvation that Jesus bore even that sin.

Conclusion

Leviticus 18:19–23 proclaims the sovereignty of God over sex and life.

—The monthly period itself is not the sin of the woman, and verse 19 is the word that forbade sexual relations during that period. The saints must respect the word of God and control their own desires.

—Adultery is not a matter of personal pleasure but a sin that destroys the marriage covenant and one's neighbor.

—The worship of Molech is a horrible sin in which the desire and idol of parents swallow up the life of their children.

—Verse 22 forbids sexual acts between a man and a man, but gives no right to hate people or treat them violently.

—Bestiality is an act that breaks down the boundary of creation between human beings and animals and makes life an instrument of desire.

—Jesus bore even all these sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

—The person who has been washed by believing the gospel must not make grace an excuse for sin, but must keep the body, life, and marriage precious, following the Holy Spirit.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that

changes sin into something that is not sin. It is the gospel that clearly exposes sin, and yet washes that sinner with the perfect salvation of Jesus Christ and leads him to a new life.

Leviticus 18:24–30—what does this word say from the perspective of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

1. The place and central message of Leviticus 18:24–30

Leviticus 18:24–30 is the conclusion of the prohibitions concerning sex, family, and idolatry recorded in verses 6–23. After forbidding incestuous relations, adultery, the worship of Molech, sexual acts between persons of the same sex, bestiality, and the like, God declares that such acts do not affect only the individual but defile even the community and the land.

The flow of the passage is as follows.

—Sin defiles the person himself.

—The abominable acts God forbade defile the person who does them.

—The land too was defiled by the abominable acts of its inhabitants.

—God is longsuffering, but He does not connive at sin endlessly.

—The judgment that came upon the nations of Canaan can apply equally to Israel.

—Therefore the people of God must not make the status of having been saved a safeguard for sin, but must live holy lives.

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2. Do not defile yourselves with *"these things"*

"Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you" (Leviticus 18:24).

"These things" refers to the whole of the acts listed in verses 6–23. God did not permit people to treat some sins as great and regard other sins as light according to their own taste.

Incestuous relations are sin, adultery is sin, offering children to Molech is sin, and acts that break down the order of creation in sex are sin. One must not single out the sins absent from one's own life to condemn others while taking lightly the greed, adultery, lying, and violence one commits oneself.

—The meaning of *"Do not defile yourselves"*: Sin is not God defiling a person; it is a person defiling himself by choosing sin. God said beforehand what defiles a person and forbade it.

Even if sin is committed in the name of individual freedom, its spiritual and relational consequences do not disappear. Adultery breaks down the spouse and the home, sexual exploitation destroys the weak, and the worship of Molech swallowed up the lives of children. What God has called sin has in fact the character of destroying life and relationships.

3. Why were the nations of Canaan cast out

Verse 24 says that *"by all these the nations are defiled"* concerning the nations of Canaan. This does not mean that God simply favored Israel and cast out the Canaanites who had done nothing wrong.

In Genesis 15:16 God said that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet complete. Leviticus chapter 18 says that the land too

was defiled by the abominable acts of the inhabitants of that land, and that God punishes that evil.

Therefore the conquest of Canaan must not be interpreted as racial superiority. The Canaanites were judged not because they were a particular people, but because they continually committed abominable acts that defied God.

Nor can any people or religious group today claim on the ground of this passage that "we are holy, so we may take their land." The judgment of Canaan was an event carried out within the special command of God and a period of the history of redemption; it is not a license for conquest with which modern people may justify their own desires.

4. The meaning of the land being defiled

"For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants" (Leviticus 18:25).

This verse shows the influence of sin extending from the individual to the community and from the community to the land.

In the Bible the land is not a thing that man owns absolutely. God said, *"The land is Mine"* (Leviticus 25:23). Both Israel and the Canaanites were residents living on the land God made.

Therefore one cannot claim the right to own that land forever while rebelling against God who gave the land.

—The expression "the land vomits out": It does not mean that the land actually judges and acts like a person. It is a very intense expression of the judgment in which God expels from the land the inhabitants defiled by sin.

Just as the body cannot bear what is harmful and vomits it out, it is the picture of the land God set apart as holy no longer

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bearing continual abominable acts and sending out its inhabitants. The Subject of the judgment is not a god called the land but God.

The word *"I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it"* makes this clear.

5. How the sin of an individual defiles the land and the community

The passage says that by the abominable acts of the inhabitants they themselves and the land were defiled. Also, in verse 29 it warns of judgment on whoever commits even one of these things. Therefore it is not that sin becomes a problem only when it has hardened into the customs of the whole society. The saints must not take even their own sins lightly, but must examine them before the word.

When sin is socially normalized, the following things happen.

—One becomes unable to call sin sin.

—The harm done to the weak is concealed.

—The trust of home and marriage breaks down.

—Young lives become means for the desires of adults.

—Religion and power justify evil.

—The next generation learns it as a culture taken for granted.

When sin thus goes beyond individual acts and becomes an institution and a custom, the whole community reaps its fruit. Galatians 6:7 says, *"Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."*

But with this principle one must not rashly conclude, looking at a particular earthquake, epidemic, or economic failure, "That person was punished by God because he committed that sin." Leviticus chapter 18 explains the covenantal and historical

judgment of God toward Canaan and Israel. We today cannot claim to know the hidden reason of God for every individual's suffering.

Sin surely has consequences, but every illness and disaster must not be mechanically connected with the sin of a particular individual.

6. The same standard for the Israelite and the stranger

"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you" (Leviticus 18:26).

This prohibition of God applied equally to the person of Israelite blood and to the stranger dwelling among Israel.

This shows two facts.

First, that this regulation is not a mere ethnic taste of Israel. God set the same moral boundary for the Israelite and the stranger.

Second, that the status of being an Israelite does not exempt one from sin. They were not sins permitted or forbidden to only one side, whether Israelite or stranger.

The church today, too, must not apply the standard of sin differently according to a person's position. It must not hide the sin of a pastor or leader for the sake of the reputation of the church while dealing strictly only with the sin of the laity. Nor must it apply different standards to the rich and the poor, to longtime members and new members.

The holiness of God does not change according to status, nationality, or power.

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7. A society in which sin has become custom

"For all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled" (Leviticus 18:27).

Verse 27 repeats verses 24–25. The reason God repeated the same content is to keep Israel from taking the customs of Canaan lightly.

The sin of Canaan was no longer the secret deviation of a few individuals. It had become the custom practiced by *"the men of the land."* Sin had become culture, become religion, and become social order.

People easily think that if many people do it, it is not sin. But in the Bible the choice of the majority is not the standard of truth. Even if a society acknowledges some act as normal, what God has called sin does not change into something righteous.

At the same time, the church must not mock the people of the world and have a sense of superiority. Israel too could follow the customs of Canaan, and actually did follow them. Holiness is not an attitude of looking down on others, but an attitude of examining oneself before the word of God.

8. Even the chosen Israel can be vomited out

"Lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you" (Leviticus 18:28).

Israel had received the choice of God, but that choice was not a license for disobedience. The righteousness of God that applied to the Canaanites applies to Israel as well.

God did not say, "You are the descendants of Abraham, so whatever you do, you are safe." Rather, because they were the

people who knew God and had received the covenant, they had a greater responsibility.

Israel afterward ignored this warning. Repeating idolatry, violence, sexual immorality, and injustice, the northern kingdom of Israel was driven out of the land by Assyria, and the southern kingdom of Judah by Babylon. But the fall of Israel must not be simplified as being because of sexual sin alone. It was the result of idolatry, oppression of the poor, violence, false worship, and violation of the covenant accumulated together.

—The warning it gives to the saints today: The saints of the New Testament are not citizens of a theocracy established in the land of Canaan. Therefore the expression "the land vomits out" cannot be applied literally in the same way to the saints of the New Testament.

Nor must this be interpreted to mean that a person who has been saved immediately loses eternal salvation once he commits sin. But the spiritual principle of this warning is clear.

—One must not make the salvation God has given an excuse for sin.

—One must not despise the word of God, thinking that one has already been saved.

—One must know that the confession of believing the gospel and a life that deliberately holds on to sin contradict each other.

—If one goes on justifying sin, the conscience is darkened, the community is damaged, and the life of faith collapses.

So Paul, pointing to the history of Israel, says that it was written as a warning to the saints who have met the last days, and exhorts as follows.

"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

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9. *"Cut off from among their people"*

"For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people" (Leviticus 18:29).

The word "cut off" means the grave judgment of being cut off from among the people of Israel. Only, verse 29 itself does not record who carries out that punishment and by what procedure.

What is important is the fact that God did not regard these acts as trivial. People may say, "It was only once," "we liked each other," "no one knows," but the holy judgment of God is not changed by human excuses.

—The meaning of "*any*": This means that there is no exception by which some of the sins mentioned above are permitted. But it does not mean that there is no possibility of restoration at all for the person who has once committed sin.

The law shows the weight of sin and judgment. The gospel shows who bore that judgment vicariously. Because the law declares sin gravely, the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross are necessary.

The church of the New Testament is not the theocracy of ancient Israel, so it does not directly carry out the punishments of Leviticus. Nor has the church received the right to remove or kill sinners violently. The church must deal with sin clearly, but must aim at repentance and restoration. Only, if a crime such as child abuse or sexual violence is involved, it must not cover it over with exhortation inside the church alone, but must protect the victim and follow the legal procedures of the state.

10. Do not follow the customs but keep the commandment of God

"Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 18:30).

Chapter 18 begins with the declaration *"I am the LORD your God"* and ends with the same declaration. Because God had saved Israel, the standard of their lives too had to be in God.

The *"customs"* of verse 30 means a way of life in which sin has gone beyond individual acts and hardened socially. Of customs people say, "Everyone does so," "in that age it is taken for granted." But the people of God are not people who follow the customs of the age unconditionally, but people who discern the customs by the word.

Conversely, one must not claim that everything is right merely on the ground that it is a custom of the past. The standard of judgment is not whether it is old or new, but whether it accords with the word of God.

11. How the gospel of the water and the Spirit resolves this defilement

Leviticus chapter 18 declares that sin defiles people, the community, and the land. But it does not present a way by which a person can wash away all this defilement by his own effort.

God sent the sinless Jesus Christ in order to save sinners. Jesus bore on His own body the sin and defilement of the whole world with the baptism He received from John. And bearing that sin, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the punishment

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of sin. Jesus rose again from death. Thereby He completed the work that saves the person who believes from sin and judgment.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit did not become righteous because his own deeds were clean. He has received washing and sanctification and justification by believing the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

"Such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Here two truths are together.

—First, the gospel excludes no sinner. Even the person who has committed the sins recorded in Leviticus chapter 18 can be saved by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If he acknowledges his sins and believes the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, he can receive the washing of sin.

The person who has committed sexual sin, the person who has destroyed a home, and the person who has fallen into idolatry too can return to God by believing the salvation Jesus accomplished.

—Second, the gospel does not leave one to go on holding on to sin. The person who has been *"washed," "sanctified,"* and *"justified"* cannot make his former defilement his own normal way of life. The gospel does not change the name of sin; it washes the sinner from sin and makes him live in new life.

"As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15).

A holy life is not an act of paying the price of salvation. It is the fruit of faith that a person who has already been freely saved offers to God who saved him.

12. How the saints who have received the remission of sins live according to this passage

—They put the word of God above the opinion of the age. It is not that something becomes truth because the people are many. Even if society acknowledges sin as a normal custom, the saints must discern by the word.

—They do not condemn by singling out only the sins convenient for themselves. One must look at the whole list of Leviticus chapter 18. One must not hide one's own adultery, lust, abuse of power, and exploitation of the weak while condemning the sexual sins of others.

—They do not reduce sin to a merely personal matter. Even a secret sin affects the spouse, the children, the church, and society. If the sin of a leader is hidden for the sake of the honor of the organization, sin hardens into the custom of the community.

—When they have committed sin, they come out into the light immediately. If one has committed sin, one must not insist that it is not sin or hide behind the gospel. One must acknowledge the wrong before God, look by faith to the baptism Jesus, who bore even that sin, received from John, and to the Cross, and leave the actual relationship of sin.

—They protect the victim first. If sexual exploitation or abuse has occurred, the safety of the victim comes before the reputation of the perpetrator. Forgiveness is not a means of forcing silence on the victim. One must not speak of the remission of sins while ignoring responsibility, protection, and the necessary legal procedures.

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Conclusion

Leviticus 18:24–30 breaks the thought that "sin is merely an individual's private life."

—Sin first defiles the person who commits it.

—When sin is connived at and becomes custom, it defiles the community.

—The expression "the land vomits out" means the judgment of God that expels a sinful community from the holy land.

—Whether Canaanite, Israelite, or stranger, there is no partiality before the righteousness of God.

—The choice and salvation of God are not a license for disobedience.

—But any sinner whatsoever can receive washing and sanctification and justification if he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

—The person who has been saved must not justify sin in the name of culture and freedom, but must live a holy life following the Holy Spirit.

The final standard of this passage is *"I am the LORD your God."* The customs of the world are not the master of the saints; God, who saved us through the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and His rising again from death, is our Master. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Life obtained by the righteousness of God, delivered from the sin exposed by the law

< Leviticus 18:1-5 >

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: I am the LORD your God. According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD."

Dear beloved saints, people easily judge right and wrong according to the environment they have lived in and the thoughts familiar to them. If it is something the people around them have done for a long time, they accept it without any particular doubt. But the standard that judges our lives and our faith before God is the word of God. Something does not become right because many people do it, nor does sin disappear because one thinks oneself right.

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In today's passage God commanded the people of Israel not to follow the customs of Egypt and Canaan but to keep the ordinances and judgments of God. And He said that if a man does them, he shall live by them.

Before this word we must examine honestly what we are like. We must know whether we are people who can live by keeping the word of God fully, or people who must be saved from the sin of having broken the word. When we know rightly what we are like, it also becomes clear why the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is necessary for us.

"I am the LORD your God"

As God gave Moses the word to pass on to the children of Israel, He first made clear who He is: *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 18:2).*

God said that He is their God. Israel was not a people who had gotten out of Egypt by their own strength. They were a people God had led out of the place where they had been slaves. In Exodus chapter 20, too, God first made clear that He is the One who led them out of Egypt, and then gave the commandments.

Therefore the people who heard the command of God had to know to whom they belonged. It was not that they might now live as they pleased just because they had come out of Egypt. They had to live according to the word of God who had led them.

We too must know this fact before God. Believing in God is not attaching the name of God to one's own thoughts. It is knowing who He is and what He has said, and accepting that word. The One who saves us is God, and the One who tells us

the way we are to walk is God as well.

It is the same in receiving the remission of sins. We cannot decide on the method we want and ask God to approve it. We must know how God has saved us. And we must believe that salvation just as He accomplished it.

Familiar customs cannot be the standard of faith

God said to the people of Israel: *"According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances" (Leviticus 18:3).*

Egypt was the place where they had lived, and Canaan was the place to which God would lead them. God told them not to follow, just as they were, either the customs of the place they had come from or the customs of the place they were to enter. Whether familiar customs or customs newly encountered, they could not come before the word of God.

People do not easily give up what they have kept for a long time. If their parents and neighbors lived that way and they themselves learned it that way, they find it hard to accept the fact that it is wrong. But one cannot call right what God says is sin, on the ground that it is a custom.

In faith too there are familiar thoughts. People easily think that if they pray hard, serve, and live good lives, their sins will disappear little by little. Once one has grown used to that thought, even when one hears the salvation God has accomplished, one cannot let go of the heart that tries to become righteous by one's own effort.

We must examine on what ground we are trying to receive

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the remission of sins before God. Is it the religious habits we have kept for a long time? Is it the good deeds we have piled up? The salvation God has given us lies in the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished. We must lay down our familiar thoughts before the word and learn that salvation.

The ordinances of God clearly expose our wrongs

In verse 4 God spoke of the way the people were to follow: *"You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God."*

God did not leave the people in a state of not knowing what they were to follow. He gave His judgments and ordinances and told them what to do and what not to do.

Because there is the word of God, we can know our wrongs. If we judge only by human thought, we let some wrongs go lightly and explain some wrongs to our own advantage. But before the word of God such excuses do not work. Having served something other than God, and having coveted in the heart what belonged to a neighbor, are exposed as sin.

The Apostle Paul said: *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).*

Knowing the law is not a matter of merely confirming one's own righteousness. Rather, one comes to know the fact that one is a person who has not lived according to the will of God. Even if one looked all right when compared with other people, when one examines oneself in the light of the word of God, sin is exposed.

At that time we must not try to lower the word to fit ourselves. We must acknowledge the fact that we have broken the word.

We must accept that the word of God is right and that we who have broken that word have sin. This is the honest heart of a person who needs a Savior.

The person who can stand before the word "do and live"

God said in verse 5: *"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD."*

This word does not say that it is enough just to know the ordinances of God. He said that if one does them, one shall live. The righteousness of the law demands actually doing that word.

The Apostle Paul, too, cited this word in Romans 10:5 and explained that the man who does the righteousness which is of the law shall live by that righteousness. Then we must ask ourselves. Have we fully done the word God commanded? Have we lived loving God alone, not harming our neighbor, and not coveting even in the heart?

A person can put forward the few things he has kept. But the fact that there are things he has kept does not make the word he has already broken disappear. Even if one resolves to do well from now on, the sins of the past are not resolved of themselves. There remains for us the problem of the sin of having failed to keep the word and of the judgment for that sin.

Therefore, to hear this word and step forward to complete salvation by one's own strength is not to know rightly what one is like. The law is holy, but we are weak. The law is righteous, but we have broken that word. When we acknowledge this fact, we release our grip on our own righteousness and look to the salvation God has given.

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Jesus Christ has resolved the demand of the law

The Apostle Paul, explaining the righteousness which is of the law, also testified what Christ did: *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4).*

That Jesus became the end of the law does not mean that He changed our sins into something that is not sin. It means that He bore our sins of having broken the law and received the judgment for those sins, and so accomplished righteousness for the person who believes.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth to save us. And He sought to receive baptism from John at the Jordan River. When John tried to prevent it, the Lord said this: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).*

Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John. Just as in the Old Testament sin was passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus received all our sins passed on to His own body by receiving baptism from John.

The Lord, who bore those sins with the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood. Jesus received in our place the judgment that we who had broken the law were to receive. And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

In our salvation there are the bearing of sin and the payment of the price of sin. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment for them with the blood of the Cross. Through this salvation God has had us receive the remission of sins and be justified by faith.

From the heart that tried to establish its own righteousness to the heart that believes in the Lord

To receive the remission of sins, one must turn from the heart that put forward how zealous one had been. One must accept with the heart what God accomplished in order to save us.

If one holds on to one's own righteousness, on a day one has done well it seems one can be saved, and on a day one has done wrong it feels as if salvation has grown distant. It is because one makes one's own conduct the ground of salvation. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit turns our eyes toward Jesus Christ.

When the Lord received baptism from John, He bore my sins as well. When the Lord shed His blood on the Cross, He received the judgment for my sins as well. The Lord rose again from death and became my Savior. This is the salvation we must believe: *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).*

Believing with the heart is accepting what God has done as one's own salvation. It is not stopping at acknowledging from afar the fact that Jesus saved someone, but believing that He is the Savior who bore and removed my very own sins.

God does not tell us to come after completing righteousness by our own deeds. He has us receive the remission of sins by believing the righteousness Jesus accomplished. By this faith we are justified before God.

Let us live according to the word of God who saved us

It is not that the word of God becomes unnecessary because we receive the remission of sins by faith. Because God who

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saved us is our God, the person who has been saved must live regarding that word as precious.

We are not people who try to remove the sins of the past by keeping the word. Because the Lord has removed our sins, we are people who learn and follow the will of God with thanksgiving. When we discover a wrong, we acknowledge it without making excuses, and we do not rely on our own weakness but believe in the Lord who saved us.

Dear beloved saints, the judgments of God are right. Before that word we have come to know our sins. But God did not stop at making sin known; He resolved that sin through Jesus Christ.

Lay down the heart that clung to its own righteousness and tried to accomplish salvation. Believe the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. I hope that you will believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of all sins, and live giving thanks to God, who has given life. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that has washed away even our shameful sins

< Leviticus 18:6-23 >

"None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD. The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness. The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover. The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness. The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she is your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is near of kin to your father. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she is

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your son's wife—you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness. Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive. Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity. Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her. And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion."

Dear beloved saints, in today's passage are recorded sins that people find hard to speak of readily. Specific examples are listed, such as sexual sins between close relatives, committing adultery with another man's wife, and offering children to idols. God did not leave such things to the personal judgment of the people, but forbade them clearly.

When we read this word, we must not think of it only as the story of people who have nothing to do with us. We must know what God calls sin, and must reflect our own hearts and conduct in that word. Even what can be hidden from people is exposed before God.

But the person who has come to know his sins must not

merely remain in shame. He must also know how those sins can be washed away. God speaks of sin clearly, and at the same time has given Jesus Christ, who would save sinners. Through this word today we will look at the salvation of the Lord, who bore even our secret and shameful sins.

He said not to defile close relationships with desire

Verse 6 is the beginning of the several commands that follow: *"None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD."*

Here "near of kin" refers to close blood relatives. God commanded not to commit sexual sin within that relationship. And He made clear that He is the LORD. The standard of this command lay not in human desire or the customs of those around, but in God Himself.

In verses 7–11 He speaks of concrete relationships: the mother and the stepmother, the sister and the half sister on the father's side or the mother's side, the son's daughter and the daughter's daughter, and so on. Whether they grew up in the same house or grew up elsewhere could not be a reason for exception either. God made clear which relationships must not be violated.

In verses 12–16 He speaks of the father's sister and the mother's sister, the father's brother's wife, the daughter-in-law, and the brother's wife. In both relationships connected by blood and relationships joined by marriage there were boundaries to be kept.

The passage tells us that one cannot treat the body of a close person as one pleases. One was not to put that relationship under one's own desire on the ground of being family. One had to govern one's conduct before the word God had established.

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When we read such commands, we must not treat their concreteness lightly. God did not merely say vaguely to live good lives. He made clear concretely the sins a person can actually commit. The word of God must be clearer than the many excuses the heart that hides sin finds.

In the marriage relationship too, the command of God had to be followed

In verse 17 He forbade taking a woman together with her daughter, or her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter. He said that violating at the same time relationships connected by close blood is wickedness.

In verse 18 He forbade taking the wife's sister as well while the wife is alive, making the wife jealous. People easily think only of their own desire, but God spoke also of what that conduct brings about within the relationships that have been formed.

Verse 19 is the ordinance not to lie with a woman during her monthly period. The people of Israel at that time had to follow this command concerning the cleanness of the body as well. In verse 20 He clearly forbade adultery with another man's wife: *"Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her."*

God said that adultery is a sin that defiles a person. Whatever reason a person may attach in his heart, he cannot justify with his own feelings what God has forbidden.

In Exodus chapter 20, too, God commanded not to commit adultery, and said not to covet the neighbor's wife. Not only the conduct that appears outwardly but also what the heart is coveting must be put before the word. God knows even the desire that is not exposed to our eyes.

Therefore we cannot feel at ease on the ground that we were not caught by others. Nor can we call something right merely because there is something we want. What God has said must be the clear standard for us.

Even zeal in serving an idol cannot make sin holy

In verse 21 appears the command not to give one's children to Molech to pass through the fire: *"And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD."*

God forbade giving up one's children to such a thing on the ground of serving an idol. Something does not become a thing in which God delights because the name of a religious act is attached to it. Rather, it could profane the name of God.

Through this word we come to know the fact that zeal in itself does not guarantee the rightness of faith. What one serves and whose word one follows is what matters. What God has forbidden does not become a good deed because one has done it with all one's devotion.

In verse 22 He forbade the act of a man having sexual relations with a man as with a woman, and in verse 23 He forbade both men and women sexual acts with animals. The people of Israel had to keep the command of God concerning these acts as well.

Instead of using this word as words for despising other people, we must listen seriously to the will God has commanded. We must acknowledge that our own desires and conduct too are under the word of God. Being able to point out the sins of others does not mean the remission of one's own sins. Each of us must know his own sins before God.

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The law makes us realize our own sins

In this passage many sins are recorded concretely. It does not mean that every person has done every act on this list in the same way. We must honestly acknowledge before the word the sins we ourselves have committed.

Some may think that they have no sin because they have not done a particular act among these. But God knows the whole of our lives. He knows the times we coveted in the heart what belonged to a neighbor, the times we served something else more than God, and the times we lied to hide our own wrongs.

People try to set up a standard favorable to themselves. They also regard their own sins as small by comparing them with the great wrongs of others. But the standard for realizing sin is not the life of other people but the word of God.

When we know the law of God, we shut the mouth that was making excuses for ourselves. We come to know the fact that we need a Savior. Acknowledging sin is not in order to remain in despair. It is in order to receive the salvation of God prepared for sinners.

Even the sins we had been hiding out of shame before people cannot be hidden before God. Yet neither can they be resolved merely by holding on to those sins and agonizing alone. We must know the Lord, who bore our sins in our place.

God prepared the sacrificial offering for the sinner

In Leviticus, together with the word that forbids sin, the sacrifice by which one receives the remission of sins is also recorded. In Leviticus chapter 4 He had a person bring an offering without blemish when he realized the sin he had

committed: *"And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering" (Leviticus 4:29).*

The person who realized his sin laid his hand on the head of the sacrificial offering. It is passing his sin on to that offering. And the offering that bore that sin died and shed its blood. God had atonement made through the priest and gave that person the remission of sins.

In this sacrifice we learn how the remission of sins is accomplished. It was not that the person who had committed sin removed sin by making himself look good. The offering God had prepared had to bear the sin and be sacrificed in his place.

There must be a heart that regrets the wrong. But our regret itself is not the offering that pays the price of sin in our place. One must acknowledge one's own wrong, but must know through whom God resolved that sin.

God accomplished that salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus became our sacrificial offering, bore sin, and received its judgment. Therefore, from the place where we have realized our sin, we must come to the Lord.

Jesus bore even our secret sins

Jesus, the Son of God, had no sin. Such a Lord received baptism from John at the Jordan River in order to save us. Just as the laying on of hands in the Old Testament was passing sin on to the offering, Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John.

John testified, pointing to Jesus: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

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The Lord bore the sin of the world. It is not that He bore only the sins we can tell people. Even the sins we want to erase from our past, and the sins that shame us whenever they come to mind, the Lord bore.

It is not that a sin is excluded from the salvation of the Lord because it is a sexual sin. Both the sins committed knowingly and the sins committed unknowingly belong to the sin of the world. We cannot justify the sins we have committed, but neither must we think that Jesus did not bear that particular sin.

Jesus, with the body that had borne all our sins with the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood. He received in our place the judgment of sin that we were to receive. And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

Believe the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross together. Believe the fact that my sins were passed on to the Lord and that the Lord received the judgment for those sins. The salvation the Lord accomplished is not a salvation that merely covers our outward appearance. It is a salvation in which He actually bore our sins and paid their price.

The remission of sins is not hiding sin but believing the salvation of the Lord

Some think that they cannot receive the remission of sins because they know their own sins too well. They regard it as if there were salvation for others but not for themselves. But the power of salvation does not depend on how small we feel our sins to be. It lies in the work in which Jesus bore and resolved our sins.

Others, again, say that they have received the remission of

sins while trying not to acknowledge their wrongs. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not change sin into something right. It tells us the fact that the Lord bore that sin in our place and was judged.

Therefore we must acknowledge as sin the sins we have committed. And we must believe in the Lord who has removed those sins. The heart that makes excuses for its wrongs and the heart that believes the salvation of the Lord cannot go together. It is because the person who believes the salvation of the Lord also knows why he had to be saved.

God saves in Jesus Christ the sinner who has nothing to boast of in his own deeds. What justifies us is not our past life but the redemption the Lord accomplished. When we believe that salvation with the heart, we receive the remission of sins, and God gives the Holy Spirit to that heart.

The person who has received this grace must learn to live according to the word of God. He was not saved in order to live tolerating sin. Giving thanks to the Lord who delivered him from sin, he must examine his heart and conduct according to the will of God.

Dear beloved saints, today's word makes us not hide sin but expose it before God. And it makes us know how much we need Jesus Christ. The Lord received baptism from John and bore our sins, and received the judgment for them with the blood of the Cross. Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and be washed from all sin. We give thanks and glory to the Lord, who has removed even our shameful sins. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, who has delivered us from the judgment of sin

< Leviticus 18:24-30 >

"Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God."

Dear beloved saints, people easily think that it is all right even while committing sin, if its consequences do not appear right away. If many people are doing the same thing and they

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themselves have lived until now without anything happening, they suppose there will be no problem in the future either. But the word of God clearly makes known the consequences of sin.

In today's passage God says that the nations of Canaan were defiled by sin and that the land too was defiled. And He warns that if the people of Israel too defile themselves with the same sins, they can be driven out of that land. It was not that they could escape the consequences of sin by the name Israel alone.

Before this word we cannot take our own sins lightly. At the same time we must also know who the Savior is who will deliver from the judgment of sin. God prepared the way to save sinners through Jesus Christ. The person who believes the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross receives the remission of sins and can come before God.

Sin defiles a person and the place where he lives

God said: *"Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you" (Leviticus 18:24).*

Here 'these things' refers to the many sins spoken of before. The sexual acts God forbade, the offering of children to Molech, and the like were practiced in that land. God did not speak of them merely as the way of life of another region. He said that by those things the people were defiled.

Verse 25 tells the result more clearly. He also said: *"For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants."*

The sins the people committed did not end as a small problem of their own alone. The land they lived in was defiled as well, and God punished that evil. The word that the land

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vomits out its inhabitants shows the judgment by which they could no longer remain in that land.

The person who commits sin easily thinks only of what is immediately profitable or pleasant to him. But God sees that sin and its consequences together. The nature of sin does not change because a person repeats it out of habit. Nor does the judgment of God disappear because those around accept it.

Therefore we must not make light in our hearts of what God has called sin. We must examine ourselves before the word and acknowledge what is wrong as wrong. If we do not acknowledge sin, we cannot know our own condition of needing to be saved from sin either.

Sin cannot be covered with the name of the people of God

God gave the same warning to the people of Israel as well: *"Lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you" (Leviticus 18:28).*

The people of Israel were the people God had led out of Egypt. They were the people entering the land God had promised. But that fact was not permission for them to commit the sins God had forbidden as they pleased.

God showed them the sins of the previous inhabitants as a warning. Hearing what became of them, they were not to follow the same way. They were not to disregard the word of God while boasting of the grace given to them.

We too easily rely on a religious name familiar to us. We also reassure our hearts with the fact that we have attended church for a long time or that we hold an office. But such facts in themselves do not remove our sins. Before God we must actually

know and believe the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

The assurance of salvation and self-reassurance must be distinguished. The assurance of salvation comes from the word that the Lord bore my sins and received the judgment. Self-reassurance comes from looking at the conditions one has and thinking one will be all right. We must believe not our own conditions but the salvation the Lord accomplished.

No one is outside the word of God

In verse 26 He says to whom this command applies: *"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you."*

Both the people of Israel and the strangers who dwelt among them had to follow the command of God. It was not that He judged sin differently because one's origin was different. Living among them, one could not do what God had forbidden.

In verse 29 He spoke of the result that would come upon the person who does those things. He also said: *"For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people."*

God dealt with the problem of sin gravely. People easily put what they have done well and what they have done wrong on a scale, and think that if what they have done well is greater, it will be all right. But one cannot wipe out the sins one has already committed by one's other deeds.

What we need is not an explanation that makes our sins look small. It is a Savior who will actually resolve those sins. What the person who has acknowledged his wrong must know most deeply is also this very salvation.

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God did not give the way of the remission of sins only to certain people, looking at their origin or circumstances. Jesus Christ came as the Savior for all people. Whoever it may be must believe the salvation the Lord accomplished, and whoever it may be can receive the remission of sins by believing that salvation.

One must hear the warning of judgment and return to God

When people hear a warning about sin, two reactions can appear. One may try to protect one's own thoughts while avoiding the word, or one may acknowledge one's wrong before the word and return to God.

God gave the people of Israel a warning so that they would not follow the way of sin. In Leviticus chapter 26 that follows, He speaks of the chastening the people would undergo when they went against and resisted the word of God, and also speaks of their confessing their sins and humbling their hearts. God is One who remembers the covenant He has made.

Even when we have realized our sin, we must not stay hidden with our backs turned to God. We must acknowledge that the judgment of God is right and return to Him. We must lay down the heart that hides sin and accept the salvation God has given.

Returning is not merely acknowledging one's wrong and then resolving once more to settle it by one's own effort alone. It is turning the heart to Jesus Christ, who resolved our sins. It is hearing and believing what the Lord did to save us.

The fact that we have committed sin does not disappear by our excuses. But God has given a Savior who would bear that sin in our place. Therefore what the person who has realized his sin must hold on to is not his own despair but the salvation God

has accomplished.

Jesus bore our sins and received their judgment

God is the righteous One who judges sin. At the same time He is the One who loves sinners and saves them. These two appeared together within the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

Jesus came to this earth clothed in human flesh. And He bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. It was not that the Lord received baptism to wash away His own sins. The sinless Lord received baptism from John in order to receive our sins passed on to Him.

Jesus, who had borne our sins, went to the Cross. By dying there shedding His blood, He received in our place the judgment we were to receive. It was not that He covered over our sins by calling them not sin, but that He actually bore those sins and paid their price.

And Jesus rose again from death and became our Savior. God delivers from sin and justifies the person who believes this salvation. It is not that we endured the judgment by our own strength, but that the Lord received the judgment in our place.

This is the remission of sins that the gospel of the water and the Spirit makes known. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment for them with the blood of the Cross. The person who believes that salvation with the heart receives the washing from his sins and comes before God.

Therefore do not hold on only to fear as you read the word of judgment. If you have come to know how grave the judgment of sin is, you must also know how precious a Savior the Lord is,

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who received that judgment in our place. We must believe the price of sin the Lord paid for us.

The person who has received the remission of sins regards the word of God as precious

In verse 30 God, concluding the word of this chapter, commanded again: "*Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God.*"

God made clear again that He is their God. The reason the people must keep the word of God is that they are people who belong to God.

We too, who have received the remission of sins, must regard as precious the will of God who saved us. We must not turn the fact that the Lord has removed our sins into a claim that we may commit sin. It is because we know that because of our sins the Lord received baptism and was sacrificed on the Cross.

We are not people who try to make up for what is lacking in the salvation of the Lord by keeping the command of God. Because the Lord has given perfect salvation, we are people who follow that word with thanksgiving. The ground of the remission of sins lies in the Lord, and the life of the person who has been saved must also be directed toward the Lord.

When your wrong is exposed, acknowledge it before the word. Rather than insisting that your own desire is right, listen to what God says. And believing in the Lord who saved us, we must live following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Receive the grace of being born again of water and the Spirit

Jesus said: *"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5).*

What we need is not merely to look like the people of God outwardly. It is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, actually receive the remission of sins, and be born again. We must believe with the heart the fact that Jesus bore my sins and was judged in my place.

God did not hide the fact that sin defiles people and the land. He also clearly made known the fact that there is judgment for that sin. But He did not merely leave the sinner under judgment. He sent His own Son and prepared the way of salvation from sin.

Dear beloved saints, do not make excuses for yourselves before the warning of sin. Acknowledge your sins, and believe in the Lord who resolved those sins. Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for them by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and became our Savior.

Believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of all sins. I hope that you will give thanks to God, who delivered us from judgment and made us His own people, and live according to that word. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Leviticus Chapter 18

[Question] 1. What kind of life does Leviticus chapter 18 teach that the people of God must live?

Leviticus chapter 18 teaches that the people of God must not follow the wrong customs of Egypt and Canaan, but must live according to the ordinances and judgments of God. In particular, He forbade the sexual acts that damage the relationships of family and marriage, and also forbade the idolatry of offering one's children to Molech.

The first part of this chapter makes clear that the standard of life is the word of God (verses 1–5), and then explains concretely the forbidden relationships and acts (verses 6–23). At the end it warns that these things defile people and the land and bring the judgment of God (verses 24–30).

The central lesson is that the faith that believes in God must be revealed in actual life as well. Even a custom that the people around practice or that has long become familiar must be abandoned if it goes against the will of God. The people who belong to God must examine their own relationships and conduct by the standard of His word.

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[Question] 2. Leviticus 18:3—what, among the ways of life they had picked up in Egypt, did Israel have to abandon, and why?

They had to abandon the customs of leaving God to serve idols and of following the relationships and acts God had forbidden. God delivered Israel out of Egypt and made them His own people. Therefore they could not keep following the wrong customs of that place merely because they had lived there long and grown used to them.

Leaving Egypt did not end with moving the place where they lived. In heart and in life, too, they had to abandon the old habits in which God does not delight and follow His word. This command does not unconditionally reject all Egyptian ways of life and culture, but says not to follow the sinful customs this chapter points out.

We, too, must not take a wrong for granted on the ground that it is an old habit. If we know the grace of salvation God has bestowed, we must examine our former life in the light of the word and abandon what is wrong.

[Question] 3. Leviticus 18:3—why did God say not to accept as they were even the customs of the land of Canaan, where they were going to live?

It was because among the customs the people of that land practiced there were things God regards as abominations. God said that they had been defiled by such things and would be driven out of that land because of that evil (verses 24–27). Just because Canaan was the land to be given to Israel did not mean that they could imitate even the way of life there.

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Even after entering the new land, Israel had to take the word of God as the standard of life. Moreover, God warned that if Israel, too, did the same evil, they could be driven out of that land (verse 28). The name of the people of God did not justify disobedience or enable them to escape judgment.

This word gives the lesson that even things widely practiced around must be discerned as right or wrong. What matters is not how many people follow a thing, but whether that thing accords with the will of God.

[Question] 4. Leviticus 18:4—what is the meaning of God's revealing Himself as *'the LORD your God'* while giving the ordinances?

He made clear to whom Israel belonged as a people and whose word they had to follow. The One who commands them is the LORD God, who delivered them out of Egypt. Therefore the ordinances of God are not the demands of a stranger, but the word given by the God who saves and leads them.

In this word appear together the authority of God and His relationship toward His people. God had become their God, and the people had to believe in Him and live according to His word. To confess God as one's own God while following only other standards in life is not fitting for that relationship.

We, too, must rely on the grace of the remission of sins the Lord has bestowed and follow the will of God, who has made us holy. Obedience is the way the person who has received that grace lives, trusting God.

[Question] 5. Leviticus 18:5—what is the meaning of the word '*live*' that God promised to the person who does His ordinances?

God promised that the person who does His ordinances and judgments will live by them. The command of God is not a word that leads the people to sin and destruction, but a word for life. The people had to do more than hear that word; they had actually to keep it.

At the same time, this word shows that the standard the law requires is actual obedience. Romans 10:5 also cites this word and explains that the person who does the righteousness that is of the law lives by that righteousness. But a person who has sin cannot keep the law perfectly by his own strength and become righteous by himself. Before the law one must realize one's own sin and limitations and look toward the salvation God has prepared.

Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. We are justified and gain life by believing the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Therefore we must not read this verse as meaning that salvation is obtained as the reward of good deeds, but must know together the holy standard of God and the grace of salvation that we need (Romans 10:4–10).

[Question] 6. Leviticus 18:6—what does the command not to have sexual relations with close family or relatives mean, and what lesson does it give?

"*Near of kin*" means relatives close by blood, and the expression 'to uncover nakedness' in this context refers to

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having sexual relations. The ordinances that follow deal concretely not only with blood relationships but also with family relationships formed by marriage, such as a stepmother, a father's brother's wife, a daughter-in-law, and a brother's wife. Therefore it is not a word that forbids simply being close to one another or seeing one another's bodies, but a word that forbids sexually violating the relationships listed in the text.

This ordinance teaches one to respect the relationships and boundaries that must be kept as a family. One must not make family members the objects for satisfying one's own sexual desires, and the closer the relationship, the more one must keep the responsibility and order fitting to it. God did not allow human desire to break down family relationships.

[Question] 7. Leviticus 18:6–23—what are the sexual relations and marriage relationships forbidden in this chapter?

Leviticus chapter 18 forbids the following relationships and acts.

• Sexual relations with a person who is a close relative or in a family relationship (verses 6–16): God said not to violate the relationships specified in the text, such as a mother, a stepmother, a sister, a son's daughter and a daughter's daughter, a father's sister and a mother's sister, a father's brother's wife, a daughter-in-law, and a brother's wife.

• Taking a woman together with her daughter or her granddaughter (verse 17): He called it wickedness to make close family relationships the object of sexual relations together.

• Taking the sister of one's wife as a wife as well while the wife is alive (verse 18): He forbade a union that stirs up rivalry

and jealousy between sisters.

• Sexual relations with a woman in the period of her uncleanness from the monthly period (verse 19): This is a prohibition related to the purity ordinance given to Israel at that time.

• Committing adultery with another person's wife (verse 20): He said not to defile oneself by violating another person's marriage relationship.

• A man having sexual relations with a man as with a woman, and a person having sexual relations with an animal (verses 22, 23): The text forbids these acts as well.

These ordinances show that in sexual relations, too, the boundaries God has appointed must be kept. The prohibition of the worship of Molech in verse 21 appears within this list, but it is not one kind of sexual relation; it is idolatry, forbidden separately.

[Question] 8. Leviticus 18:29—what consequence did God warn would follow for the person who does the acts forbidden in this chapter?

God warned that the person who does these things would be cut off from among their people. This is a solemn word that He does not overlook sin as a light personal fault, but holds people accountable for that sin among the people of God.

In the preceding verses 24–28, He says that these acts defile not only people but also the land they live in. Just as the inhabitants of Canaan were driven out because of that evil, Israel too could be driven out of that land if they did the same things. The consequences of sin do not remain with the individual only, but affect the life of the community as well.

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Therefore the people of God must not put forward their status and regard sin lightly. They must acknowledge their wrong before the word of God and turn back. Moreover, this warning is not a word for despising others, but a word that makes us realize that we ourselves, too, are people who need the grace of God and the remission of sins.

[Question] 9. Leviticus 18:21—when the meaning of forbidding sexual sin and idolatry together is compared with other words of the Bible, what can be known?

It can be known that the faith that serves God and the life lived in the body cannot be separated. While regulating sexual relations, God said not to give one's children to Molech to pass through the fire, and made clear that this was a thing that profanes the name of God.

The same direction can be confirmed in other words of the Bible as well.

• Exodus 20:3–5, 14: The Ten Commandments contain both the command not to serve other gods and idols and the command not to commit adultery. Faithfulness toward God and a life that respects the marriage relationships of one's neighbors are required together.

• Romans 1:24–25: It explains, connecting them, the serving of the creature rather than God and the dishonoring of the body by following lusts. It means that a heart that has left God affects the direction of life as well.

• Galatians 5:19–21: It lists fornication, lewdness, and idolatry all among the works of the flesh. It shows that one must turn from a life that follows one's own desires and be led by the

Holy Spirit.

Therefore one must not regard sin in one's life lightly on the ground that one engages in religious activities. The person who believes in the salvation of God must give his heart to God, and must follow His will in the relationships in which he deals with family and neighbors as well.

[Question] 10. When the sexual customs of that time shown in this chapter are compared with life today, what points must be examined?

This chapter makes clear that among the things the people of that time practiced were violating the relationships of close family, committing adultery with another person's spouse, and engaging in the sexual relations God had forbidden. God said that even though it was a custom practiced in a society, Israel must not imitate it.

In life today, too, we must examine ourselves by the same standard. If one puts momentary desire before faithfulness between husband and wife, or uses the relationships of family and neighbors for one's own gratification, such conduct is connected with the problem this chapter warns about. An act does not become right before God as well merely because it is commonly seen around or because people regard it lightly.

The purpose of this comparison does not lie in blaming only the people of old or other people of today. We must acknowledge that there are wrong desires in our own hearts as well, and examine our own relationships and conduct before the word. Relying on the grace of the remission of sins the Lord has bestowed, we must live a life that is faithful to our spouse, respects our family, and does not make other people the objects of desire. ✉

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◇ About the Next Series

The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

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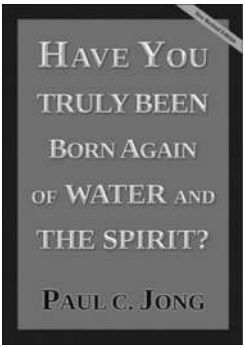
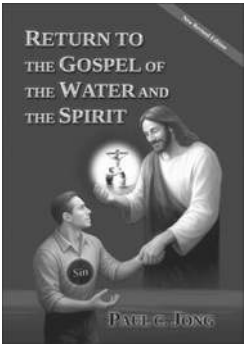
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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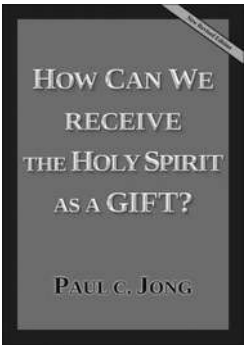
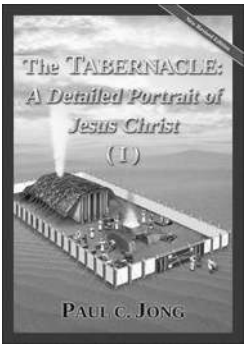
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]

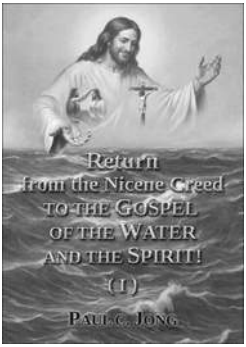


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

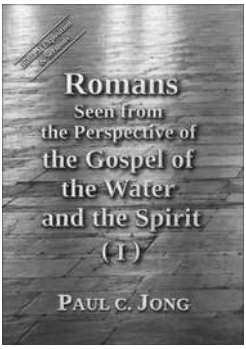
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

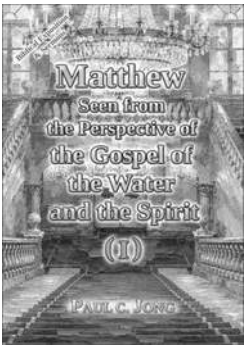
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

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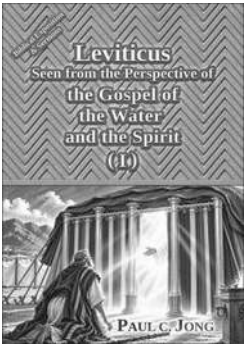
Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

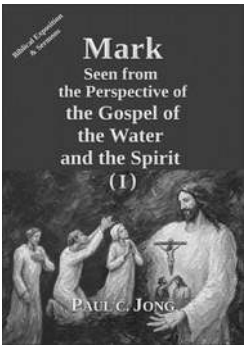


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the consecration ceremony of the priests, Aaron's first sacrifice, and the incident of Nadab and Abihu.

The author, Pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in this book, he also explains the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, connecting it to the sacrifices of Leviticus.

How can a sinner be made sinless? This book gives a clear answer to that question through the Bible.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

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John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

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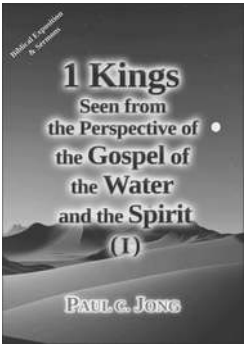
1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

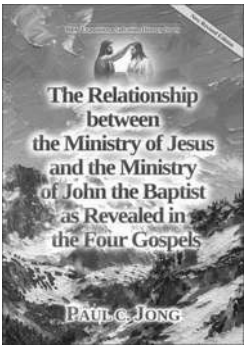


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

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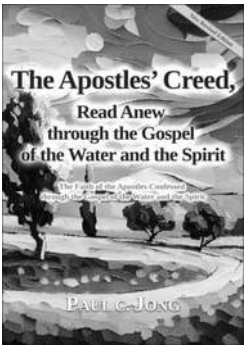
Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

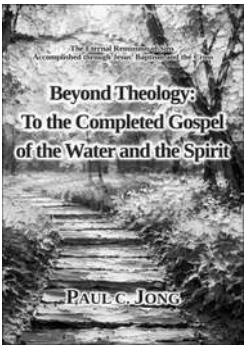


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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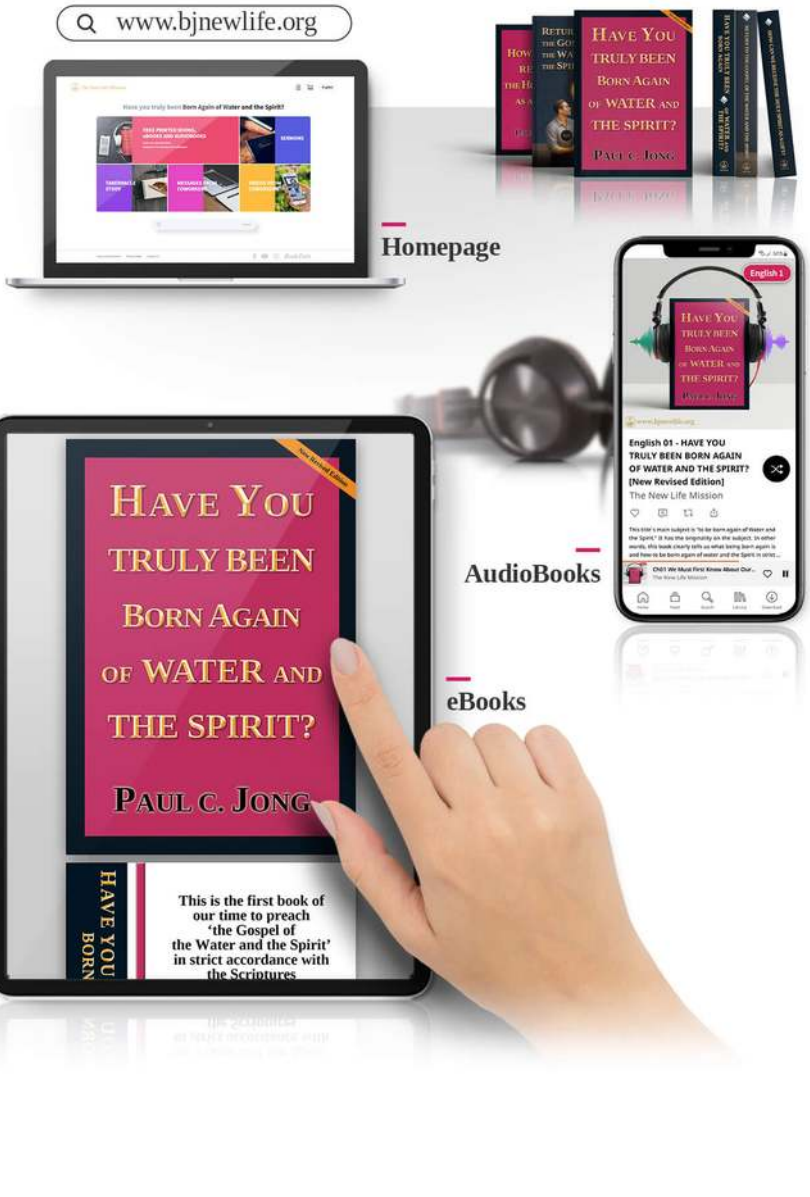

Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

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Please prepare in advance by saving e-books and audiobooks to your external hard drives, USB drives, CDs, mobile phones, or MP3 players, so you can read and listen to them from your personal storage during the last days.

We pray that you will live a victorious life through God's blessings in these last days within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"The New Life Mission's sermon series and audiobooks are available worldwide in multiple languages, offering both paid books and free e-books."

www.bjnewlife.org

Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 110-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Leviticus, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

"For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD." (Leviticus 16:30)

On this day, the Day of Atonement, the high priest Aaron first made atonement for himself and his house with a young bull, and for the people he took two goats. One goat was offered as a sin offering, and its blood was sprinkled in the Most Holy Place. On the head of the other, the live goat, he laid both his hands and put all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all the sins they had committed on its head. That goat, bearing all the sins of the people, was sent away into the wilderness, and the people received the remission of their sins by believing that their sins had been transferred and carried away.

This Old Testament sacrifice, repeated year after year, found its substance in Jesus Christ, who came as the Lamb of God. By being baptized by John, the representative of mankind, the Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all. He shed His blood on the Cross and paid the full price of that sin, and by rising again from death, He completed eternal atonement.

What gives us assurance of the remission of our sins is not our deeds or feelings. It is the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit: the baptism, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection through which the Lord has removed all our sins. We hope that through the word preached in this book, you will be cleansed from all your sins and live a holy life by that faith.

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