

Numbers 19:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

Analysis

The law states: 'He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.' Contact with death brought ceremonial uncleanness, requiring purification via red heifer ashes mixed with water (v.17-19). The Hebrew 'tame' (unclean) indicates unfitness for worship and community. This teaches that death - sin's consequence - pollutes and separates from holy God. The seven-day period with purification on days three and seven emphasized thoroughness. This foreshadows how sin's defilement requires Christ's cleansing blood (1 John 1:7, 9). Death's reminds us that only Christ conquers death, making believers clean and acceptable to God (Heb 10:19-22).

Historical Context

This law addressed frequent death in wilderness - whether from natural causes, plagues, or warfare. Proper purification maintained camp holiness with God dwelling in tabernacle's midst. Failure to purify defiled God's sanctuary (v.13) and brought excommunication. The ritual's complexity (red heifer sacrifice, cedar wood, hyssop, scarlet, running water) emphasized death's serious pollution. The paradox that those preparing purifying water became unclean (v.7-10) pointed to Christ who bore our uncleanness to make us clean (2 Cor 5:21). After 70 AD without temple, Judaism lost this purification system; only Christ's blood truly cleanses from death's defilement.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding death's polluting nature deepen your appreciation for Christ's victory over death?
2. Are you seeking daily cleansing from sin's defilement through confession and Christ's blood, or tolerating spiritual contamination?

Interlinear Text

שְׁבֻעַ תִּשְׁבַּח	וְיִתְמַצֵּא	תְּבִימָה	לְכָל	בְּמִתְּבִּיאָה	עַל	אֶל	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת
He that toucheth	the dead	H3605	body	of any man	H120	shall be unclean	H2930	seven				

יְמִינָה:

days

H3117

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 5:2 (Parallel theme): Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead:

Numbers 31:19 (Parallel theme): And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

Leviticus 21:1 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:

Leviticus 21:11 (Parallel theme): Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;

Numbers 9:6 (Parallel theme): And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:

Numbers 19:16 (Parallel theme): And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

Numbers 9:10 (Parallel theme): Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD.

Hebrews 9:14 (Parallel theme): How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Ephesians 2:1 (Parallel theme): And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Romans 5:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: