

Numbers 19:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

Analysis

This verse reveals the gravity of remaining ceremonially unclean: 'he hath defiled the tabernacle of the LORD' and 'that soul shall be cut off from Israel.' The defiled person's presence threatened the holy congregation and God's dwelling among them. The phrase 'cut off' (Hebrew 'karat') could mean excommunication or, in severe cases, divine judgment unto death. This underscores that unconfessed, uncleansed sin separates from God's presence and the covenant community. The New Testament parallel is clear: unrepentant sin grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) and disrupts fellowship (1 John 1:6).

Historical Context

Written during the wilderness period when death was frequent (due to plagues, warfare, and natural causes), this law maintained the camp's holiness. The tabernacle stood at the center of Israel's camp, making ceremonial purity essential for corporate worship. Failure to purify oneself showed contempt for God's holiness and the covenant relationship.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How seriously do you take the need for daily cleansing through confession and repentance?
2. What unconfessed sin might be defiling your personal 'tabernacle' - your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	הַנִּגֵּעַ	יָמ וְ	הַנֶּפֶשׁ	הָאֶדָם	אֲשֶׁר
H3605	Whosoever toucheth	that is dead	and that soul	of any man	H834
	H5060	H4191	H5315	H120	
וְ	יָמ וְ	אֶת	מִשְׁכַּן	יְהוָה	
	that is dead		the tabernacle	of the LORD	
	H4191		H4908	H3068	
		וְנִכְרְתָהּ	הַנֶּפֶשׁ	וְ	מִשְׁכַּן
	not himself defileth	shall be cut off	and that soul	H1931	from Israel
	H2930	H3772	H5315		H3588
		וְ	זָכַר	עָלָיו	
	because the water	of separation	was not sprinkled	H5921	
	H4325	H5079	H2236		
		וְ	עָלָיו	טִמְאָתוֹ	בּוֹ
	upon him he shall be unclean	H1961	H5750	his uncleanness	H0
	H2931			H2932	

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 15:31 (Temple): Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them.

Leviticus 22:3 (References Lord): Say unto them, Whosoever he be of all your seed among your generations, that goeth unto the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from my presence: I am the LORD.

Leviticus 7:20 (References Lord): But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.

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