

# Numbers 19:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean.

## Analysis

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**And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean—**

Even inanimate objects in the contaminated space became unclean, extending death's defiling reach. The phrase "no covering bound upon it" (tsamid patil, צָמִיד פָּתִיל, lit. "tight fastening") indicates that only sealed vessels escaped contamination. An open vessel absorbed the spiritual defilement permeating the death-space.

This detail reveals death's pervasive, atmospheric contamination—not merely physical contact but proximity defiled. The covering represents protection through separation, suggesting that intentional precautions can prevent defilement. Spiritually, this anticipates believers being sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30), protected from sin-death's contaminating power. Open vessels, exposed and unprotected, illustrate spiritual vulnerability when we lack divine covering. The requirement underscores that God's holiness demands comprehensive purity, attending to details that might seem trivial.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Israelite households used pottery jars, leather bags, and woven baskets for storing water, grain, oil, and other necessities. In a tent where death occurred, these open containers would become ritually unclean and require purification or disposal. Sealed vessels with tight lids could be protected. This law created practical incentive to keep storage vessels covered, which also provided hygienic

benefits. Archaeological discoveries show that ancient Near Eastern cultures practiced similar concerns about contamination, though Israel's system had deeper theological meaning.

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does the open vessel's vulnerability illustrate spiritual exposure to sin's contamination?
2. What does the protective covering symbolize regarding God's provision of spiritual protection?
3. In what ways should Christians maintain spiritual "coverings" against worldly defilement?

## Interlinear Text

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וְכֵל	כָּל י	כֶּת וְח	אֵין אֶשֶׁר	צֶמֶד יד	כֶּת יל	
H3605	vessel	And every open	H834	H369	which hath no covering	bound
	H3627	H6605		H6781	H6616	

עַל יו	טִמֵּא א	הוא:
H5921	upon it is unclean	H1931
	H2931	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Leviticus 14:36** (Parallel theme): Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house:

**Leviticus 11:32** (Parallel theme): And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the even; so it shall be cleansed.

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