

# Numbers 5:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water:

## Analysis

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The holy water in an earthen vessel combines the sacred and the common. Holy water from the laver used for priestly consecration is placed in a common clay vessel, then mixed with dust from the tabernacle floor. This mixture of holy, common, and even base elements creates the water of testing. The earthen vessel may represent humanity—containing what is holy yet being common clay. The dust recalls the curse on the serpent and on Adam—'dust you are and to dust you shall return.'

## Historical Context

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The laver stood in the tabernacle courtyard between the altar and the tent entrance. Priests washed there before entering God's presence or offering sacrifices. The water was thus associated with purification and preparation to approach God. The tabernacle floor's dust came from the very ground made holy by God's presence.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What does the combination of holy water and common dust teach about God's ability to use all elements for His purposes?
2. How does the earthen vessel symbolize humanity's role as bearers of what is holy?
3. In what ways does the dust element recall the curse and point toward the need for redemption?

## Interlinear Text

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וּמִן	תָּרֶשׁ	בְּכֵלִי	קֹדֶשׁ יִם	הַמַּיִם:	הַכֹּהֵן	יִקַּח
shall take	And the priest	it into the water	holy	vessel	in an earthen	H4480
H3947	H3548	H4325	H6918	H3627	H2789	
יִקַּח	הַמִּשְׁכָּן	בְּקֶרֶקַע	יְהִיָּה	אֲשֶׁר	הָעֹפָר	
shall take	of the tabernacle	that is in the floor		and of the dust		
H3947	H4908	H7172		H6083	H834	H1961
הַמַּיִם:	אֶל	וְנָתַן	הַכֹּהֵן			
it into the water	and put	And the priest				
H4325	H5414	H3548				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 30:18** (Temple): Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.