

The Waters of Ma'-rah



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Numbers 5:17-18

*...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:
And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord,
and uncover the woman's head,
and put the offering of memorial in her hands,
which is the jealousy offering:
and the priest shall have in his hand
the "bitter water" that causes the curse...*

John 18:11

*Then said Jesus unto Peter,
"Put up thy sword into the sheath:
the cup which My Father has given Me,
shall I not drink it?"*

Preface

I am not any different than any other human being. Yet, each of us was created to be unique. We are the same and we are different. The bible tells us that we all suffer like afflictions and that no temptation comes to us except that which is common to man.

We are living in dangerous times. We read the scriptures and know what is coming. Still, we feel uncertain. We want things to stay the same because there is a sense of security in the familiar. But our lives are about to change.

Prophecy is being fulfilled on a daily basis now. Jesus told us to watch, be vigilant, pay attention...as the days of Noah...as the days of Lot...but there is something He wants us to pay closer attention to.

He wants us to pay close attention to the condition of our hearts. He wants us to understand more and more the height and depth and length and breadth of His love toward us. Just how much was He willing to suffer for us? What else could He have done to save us from the total destruction that our enemy, the devil, is bringing on this earth?

The dress rehearsal is over. The stage is set. The players are in position. We are waiting for the curtain to rise. And rise it will. What we are hoping for is the total redemption that has been promised.

Redemption is an interesting word. The scope of my understanding was "redeeming my coupons" at the store! Let me give you the true meanings of the word redeem. It may help.

- 1. To regain possession of by paying a price.*
- 2. To pay off and receive back.*
- 3. To set free, rescue, ransom.*
- 4. To rescue from sin and its penalties.*
- 5. To make amends or compensate for.*
- 6. Payment of a debt or obligation.*

Yes, He has done all this and more.

Job 19:23-25

Oh, that my words were written!

Oh, that they were printed in a book!

*That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the
rock for ever!*

For I know that my Redeemer liveth,

and that He shall stand at the latter

day upon the earth...

What Shall We Drink?

When I first read Numbers Chapter 5 all the way through, a gazillion specific words and phrases popped right off the page like a musical 3-D movie. Each word plucking a different chord that grated on my nerves. The closest description would be a sour note like “b flat”. I didn't particularly like what I was reading but I found myself reading it over and over. The passage speaks of a spirit of jealousy, bitter waters, and the curse. Then there was mention of Holy water in an earthen vessel and the hidden truth of adultery. There is so much in this single chapter that I felt a little overwhelmed but I could not let it go. What did the Lord want me to see in this? I wanted to understand what the Lord was trying to tell me. So I took my request to the “Revealer of Secrets”(Daniel 2:47).

I waited. I knew the Lord would answer. Meanwhile, in the course of my day, I found myself meditating in and out and around what I had read and I had to go back and read it again. I realized the Holy Spirit was prompting me. Bitter waters...Bitter waters...something about bitter waters. Then I recalled the story of Moses and the children of Israel after they had come through the Red Sea...something about bitter waters. That's when it happened. Scriptures began to “click” together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Since I wanted to see the big picture, the Holy Spirit began to bring things to my remembrance as He had promised to do. The Lord wants to teach us something. He likes to teach. So, as directed, I went to *Exodus 15:22-27.*

So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

And when they came to Ma'-rah, they could not drink of the waters of Ma'-rah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Ma'-rah.

And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet; there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them,

And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.

And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

Hmm, interesting you say? I said the same thing. Bitter waters made sweet. A tree? What tree? What kind of tree? But there He proved them. (proved-Hebrew-nacah- to test.) It is important to note that the Lord led them for three days away from Egypt. He removed them. The more accurate word would be “separated.” The Lord separated them unto Himself and placed them in a position that after three days without water it would mean death to try to turn back to Egypt. “***And there He proved them.***”

So, He tested them there. After the test He made the bitter water sweet and then led them to twelve wells of water and they “encamped” there. What was the test? The Lord had just delivered them from the bondage of Egypt through the hand of one man (Moses). And that was after they had witnessed ten miraculous plagues of monumental proportion. They were protected by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud led the way by day. And here they were, just three days after they crossed through the middle of the Red Sea by the power of God Almighty, and they were complaining about their needs. Did they question God's abilities? Surely not! Then what did they question? What did God test?

It is easy to believe something you can see but can you believe something you cannot see? Like the heart of the Father. It was easy to believe what their eyes had seen. It was a different matter when it came to having confident “faith” in His love, and care, and willingness to provide all that they needed. But isn't that the very same question that the Lord tests us with in every decision we make? The answers we give determine the course of our lives just as it did for the children of Israel who ended up wandering in the wilderness for forty years. After all, wasn't it the Lord God that led them to the bitter waters? Good question! The Lord's willingness to heal and provide is well documented throughout the New Testament. One only needs to open to any page and start reading. Jesus was and is and ever more shall be the expressed image of the Father. He told Phillip “*when you see Me you see the Father.*” And Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil...See John 14:9.)

II Peter 3:9 tells us that:

The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish...

One of the most interesting facts about the bitter waters of Ma'-rah is that when the Lord turned the bitter water into sweet water it was the first miracle after the children of Israel came out of the “baptism” of the Red Sea.

I Corinthians 10:1-2 explains:

Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

And all were “baptized” unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea...and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

But also, John Chapter 2 shows us that “*after the baptism*” of Jesus by John the Baptist, the first miracle Jesus performed was changing water into wine. The best wine. And the containers used to change these waters were “*waterpots of stone, after the manner of purifying of the Jews.*”

Then, I researched more about this mysterious tree. I say mysterious because there is no record in scripture or Jewish literature that hints at what sort of tree was used to sweeten the bitter waters of Ma'-rah. But fear not. The Holy Spirit knows all things and He is the Revealer.

So I continued my quest for answers and the Lord did not disappoint. He led me first to understand the word “bitter.” Here is what I found in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance:

1. Hebrew-4843-Marar-Bitterness (as in the waters of Ma'-rah),

bile, gall.

2. Hebrew-4845-Mrorh-Bitter bile, gall.

3. Hebrew-4846-Mrorah-a bitter thing, venom of a serpent.

4. Hebrew-7219-Rowah- gall, poison, hemlock, venom.

The first mention of the word “gall” in the scripture is found in ***Deuteronomy 29:18***. It is an admonition from the Lord not to turn away from Him: (first mention in the Word is always very important.)

Deuteronomy 29:18:

Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations:

Lest there should be among you “a root that beareth gall and wormwood.” (Venom of a serpent and bitterness.)

Wow, now I have a deeper understanding of the meaning of the word bitter. But, do I really? I question what I think I know. So I asked the Lord to help me understand. Understanding dwells with Him. And so He did. He told me to study “Hyssop.” He loves to teach! I asked, “What does this have to do with bitter waters?” He answered again. “Study hyssop.”

Sprinkle with Hyssop

Hyssop-Hebrew-Ezowb-231-a small bushy plant about 1-1/2 feet high, aromatic, pungent taste, thought to have astringent properties, used in most Jewish rituals.

The word “hyssop” is first used in Exodus 12:22-23 for the first Passover. The “firsts” are always highly important. In this case we have a “double first.” So it is doubly important to understand.

And you shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until morning,

For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.

Somehow there is a connection, a thread of sorts, that joins these concepts together but I did not have enough to go on. Because you see, I know that all scripture leads to Jesus. You cannot read God's Word without ending up before the Lord. There is a scripture that is written one time in the Old Testament and repeated exactly one time, word for word, in the New Testament. They are found in **Psalms 40:7** and **Hebrews 10:7**. Which, by the way, are

interesting numbers. Seven being a perfect number, while 40 and 10 are numbers of completion which warns us to pay close attention to this word.

Psalms 40:7 and Hebrews 10:7

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me.

Again, the Lord Jesus Himself confronts the religiosity of that day and of this day when He says: ***“Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.” (John 5:39).***

Then, I heard the Lord say, “You’re on the right path, keep going, I won’t let you down. Stay with the ***“hyssop”*** for now.”

It's amazing how the Lord can make scriptures just 'pop into your mind.' This time He sent me to look up **Hebrews 9:19-23**.

For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

Saying, this is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you.

Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these...

I am looking at these verses. What do I see? The blood...with water...and scarlet wool...and hyssop. And with “these” he sprinkled the tabernacle...all the vessels...the book...and all the

people. It did not come as a surprise to me to find what the Apostle of Hebrews was referring to. It is in **Leviticus Chapter 14**.

It is very lengthy but worth the reading if done slowly and with understanding. But here, I will paraphrase.

The Apostle was “revealing a truth” hidden in the law of leprosy. (v57). It contains the rules of cleansing and restoration back into the camp. You see, the ritual itself was performed outside the camp by the priest. The cleansing had to take place outside the camp (v3) just as Jesus had to die outside the camp for our cleansing. Sin cannot come into the dwelling place of God. Look at **Leviticus 14:4-7**. It explains a lot.

Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean (turtledoves), and cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the 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, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water:

The Jewish Encyclopedia explains that the cedar wood was cut into the shape of a handle. The hyssop and the turtledove were bound to the wood with the scarlet thread of wool. The turtledove's tail was facing down as was the hyssop to form a sort of brush which was then dipped into the blood of the dove that had been killed. Then the blood was sprinkled. Afterward, the living dove was set free in an open field.

And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

It is interesting to me that the first mention of “hyssop” was at the first “Passover” and the second mention of “hyssop” is in reference to “cleansing and restoration.” Food for thought.

“But Lord,” I complained impatiently.

“What does this have to do with bitter waters?”

I thank the Lord for His endless supply of patience. He simply replied, “It’s alright, just keep going.”

So, I did. Many people don’t know about the Red Heifer ritual but that is where I ended up...in *Numbers Chapter 19*. These laws speak of purification for sin and purification from death. Most importantly there is the “truth” of “the water of separation.” (v13). Keep in mind the way the Lord separated the children of Israel three days from Egypt and led them to the water of Ma'-rah.

Once again, I have to say that this Chapter is worth reading slowly and with understanding. The Red Heifer had to be without any spot or blemish. Not even one little white hair was allowed. In the Encyclopedic Dictionary a heifer is defined as: a young cow that has never produced a calf.

The heifer is “killed outside the camp” and then burned. Verse 6 states:

And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Then, “a man that is clean” gathers up the ashes to be used for purification for sin. In particular it speaks of those who have touched anything dead. For the believer, it is important to remember that at one time we were:

“dead in our trespasses and sins and even when we were dead in sins, He quickened us (has given us life) together with Christ (by grace you are saved.) (Ephesians 2:1, 5).

So the purification refers to purification from sin and deliverance from death. The ashes were then placed into an “earthen vessel” to be used for a “water of separation.” (The same type of waterpots was used by Jesus in John Chapter 2 for purifying when He turned the water in the pots to wine.)

And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put into an earthen vessel;

And a clean person shall take “hyssop,” and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day:

But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: The “water of separation” has not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean...(Numbers 19:17-21.)

On page 178 of Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, he comments that:

It was called the “water of separation” because it was used in the ceremonial cleansing of defiled persons *wanting* to separate themselves from uncleanness. In the same sense, the “water of purification” is so-called.

Verse 21 of Numbers 19 above, reminds us that our Creator has always given us a choice. He would that we “would choose life.”

II Corinthians 6:16-18

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God;

As God has said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and they shall be My people.”

“Wherefore come out from among them and be ye “separate,” saith the Lord, and “touch not the unclean thing;” and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

As I am writing this my heart is stirred deep within me. I am overwhelmed by the heart of our Father and Lord. His Holy Spirit loves each of us so very much. He yearns for us. From the beginning He has made “the Way” for us to be able to approach Him once again. He is Holy. Too Holy for us to stand in His presence as Adam did before death entered. So He had a plan. It was a hidden plan that has been slowly revealed throughout the ages. The way back...is through a door.

Jesus said, “I am, the Door,” (John 10:9-10).

So far, the Lord has lead us through bitter waters, bitter waters made sweet by a tree, hyssop dipped in blood for the first Passover, hyssop and a doves tail dipped in the blood of a dove to bring healing and restoration, hyssop dipped in the heifer's ash-waters of purification and separation to make one clean so they can come back into the camp.

“But Lord,” I said. “When are You going to teach me about the bitter waters?”

“Now,” He replied.

“Why did we have to wait so long?” I wondered.

“You needed to understand the reason for these laws and what they represent,” He answered.

The Bitter Water that Causes the Curse

We can finally talk about Numbers Chapter 5. But I must warn you. It is not for the faint of heart. Although it is long, I encourage you to take your time and think about what you are reading. Line by line...precept upon precept. Hidden inside, these words are spirit and truth. I will give you a clue to this mystery: There are no examples of this actually happening to anyone in the Word of God. At least not in the natural. But, spiritually speaking, it has happened over and over. These are the words of God and they were meant for us for:

“all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (II Timothy 3:16-17.)

And again we are told:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (II Peter 1:20-21.)

I can't wait to show you what the Lord has revealed through His Word. What Jesus has done is truly amazing. I pray He stirs your heart as He has stirred mine. We will talk when you have finished reading.

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Numbers 5:11-31

(v11) And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

(v12) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, "If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him,

(v13) And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner;

(v14) And the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled:

Or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

(v15) Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal;

He shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, and an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

(v16) And the priest shall bring her near and set her before the Lord:

(v17) 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:

(v18) And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering:

And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causes the curse:

(v19) And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man hath lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband,

be thou free from this bitter water that causes the curse:

(v20) But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man has lain with thee beside thine husband:

(v21) Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord does make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell;

(v22) And this water that causes the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot:

and the woman shall say, Amen, Amen.

(v23) And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water:

(v24) And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causes the curse: and the water that causes the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter.

(v25) Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and offer it upon the altar:

(v26) And the priest shall take a handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water.

(v27) And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and has trespassed against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people.

(v28) And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then shall she be free, and shall conceive seed.

(v29) This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled;

(v30) Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute this law.

(v31) Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

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Am I the only one that finds this indictment overwhelming? To me, it seems exceptionally unjust and cruel. For example, if a man were taken with a suspicious nature he could just haul his wife before the priest and force her to drink the nasty composite of barnyard dirt that was dragged into the tabernacle on his own shoes. I feel sorrow and pity for the woman. But this was the law whether she was guilty or not. Remember when I told you this passage is like someone plucking sour chords? I feel that way every time I read it. Fingernails on a chalkboard!

My heart cries out to the Lord. “How could these things be? How Lord? Surely this woman would become sick from drinking perfectly clean water that was made to be bitter! Even if she were innocent,” I argued.

He always listens to me even when I am ranting. This time He was quiet. I had to calm down. I was too “churned up” inside to listen to the Holy Spirit. You know that the voice of the Spirit is a still small voice. He never raises His voice so therefore we have to be still and quiet to hear Him speak. **(I Kings Ch.19).**

Then He said to me, “You are looking at this from the flesh.”

He was right, of course. All my reactions were responses of the flesh. Then He said, "Look again and tell Me what you see."

So I looked and considered. Then it dawned on me...and I answered.

"I see a jealous husband and a woman, a wife, who may or may not be guilty of adultery."

"What else do you see?" He asked.

"I see fear, intimidation, accusation, and condemnation."

"Where do you see them?" He added.

I thought for a moment...

"I see them in the earthen vessel of bitter water."

Suddenly, my entire perspective changed. I wasn't sure where He was leading me but I felt very intrigued and I knew it had to be good. So I asked Him.

"If the woman has to drink the bitter water that causes the curse...then who is the woman?"

"And who is the man?"

He answered, "Don't you want to know what I see?"

"Yes, Lord, of course, you know I do."

Numbers Chapter 5 reveals a relationship. A broken relationship. A relationship between two parties that has become embittered through unfaithfulness. The law was designed to bring forth the truth. Not just the truth of the woman's actions but also that of the man. Was he justified in his accusations? Who was going to end up blessed? If the man loved the woman do you think he could bear to watch her drink the bitter waters? But since he was the one to bring the accusation he would have to because of his pride and unforgiving heart. The Lord points out...

Romans 3:19-23

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested,

Being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:

For there is no difference:

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Did you notice? There is no difference! So, you see, it didn't so much matter who did what to whom. Both parties were being tried. And the end result was to show forth the truth. But yet, there was and is another relationship that the Lord is revealing.

It is a relationship not of the flesh but of the spirit. One in which He is the Husband. And who is the marriage partner? We are!

The Heart of the Husband

There is only one way to describe the heart of the One that calls Himself our Husband. That way is to simply quote the scripture and allow the Lord to show you the way He feels about you personally and the church as a whole.

II Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ...

Isaiah 54:5

For thy Maker is thine husband; The Lord of hosts is His Name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called...

Exodus 34:14

For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is "Jealous" is a jealous God...

Deuteronomy 4:23-24 (see Hebrews 12:25-29.)

Take heed unto yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which He made with you. And make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the Lord thy God has forbidden thee.

For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

So we see that the Lord is possessive of His bride.

Hebrews 12:25-29 starts off with "*See that you refuse not Him that speaks.*" and ends with "*For our God is a consuming fire.*"

This sounds pretty serious to me. The fact is...the Lord is very serious about His bride...He loves us so much that He drank...Oh, wait, I am getting ahead of myself. The Lord wants us to go back to ***Numbers Chapter 5***. He says there are things we need to see first.

The Broken Vessel

I believe you will find the following information as interesting as I did. Let's talk about three different things that are pointed out.

1. The earthen vessel, (verse 17.)
2. The words of the oath of the curse that the priest wrote (verses 19-21.)
3. The "blotting out of the words of the book," (verse 23.)

First of all, the jar or pot was earthen ware because afterward it was to be broken. It also represents each of us. We are the earthen vessels.

Leviticus 11:33

And every earthen vessel, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean: and ye shall "break it."

Psalms 51:16-17

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it, Thou delights not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a "broken spirit": a "broken and contrite heart," O'God, thou wilt not despise.

Jesus also became an "earthen vessel."

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Hebrews 10:5

Wherefore when He cometh into the world He said, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, But a body hast Thou prepared for Me."

I Corinthians 11:24

He took bread...And when He had given thanks, He "broke" it, and said, "Take, eat, this is My body which is "broken" for you: Do this in remembrance of Me."

"Do this in remembrance of Me" shows us that He was also the "memorial offering," which typically brought sin to remembrance. But now because God made our sacrifice to be Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose body was broken for us...we bring to God the remembrance (memorial offering) of what Jesus has done for us.

II Corinthians 4:6-7

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

A Matter of Life and Death

Secondly, in ***Numbers 5:19***, the priest charges the woman...if you have not gone aside...you will be free, but in verse 21, the priest charges ...if you have gone aside...this water make thee a curse...

The choice is always laid out before us. Someone once said: “In the garden of Eden, the wrong choice was always within reach.” It is as true today as it was then.

Deuteronomy 30:19

I call heaven and earth to “record” this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.

Deuteronomy tells us that the blessing and cursing are to be “recorded.” Everything was recorded in ages past and is still being recorded. This, for instance, was the duty of the scribes. But this verse also reminds us that we still have a choice of which way to go. Even in heaven are many books. All our days are written in a book, The Book of Life, The Book of the Lamb, etc... The truth is written in a book.

It's important that we remember the law was to reveal the truth. Truth is very important. So important, in fact, that God sends to us ***The Spirit of Truth (John 14:16-17 – Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive.)***

John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on Him, If you continue in My word, then you are My disciples indeed;

And you shall know the “truth” and the “truth” shall make you “free.”

James 5:19-20

Brethren, if any of you do err “from the truth”, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Thus It Is Written

Thirdly, in **Numbers 5:23**, the priest is instructed by law to ***“write these curses in a book, and he shall “blot them out with the bitter water.”***

When I considered this it didn't seem to make sense. The next verse says, ***“and he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causes the curse.”***

Why would the priest write them and then blot them out? I had to do some research to find the answer. I searched the commentary in Dake's Annotated Bible and then followed up with Jewish traditional teachings from Chabad, and in the Jewish Encyclopedia. In addition to learning what actually took place in verse 23, I also discovered some interesting things about the words: blot, blotting, and blotted.

The mystery was solved. According to Jewish recorded law...after the priest wrote the charges and curse in the book (in this case it was Moses), he would take a sponge, dip it into the holy water in the bowl, and then use it to “blot” the words of the curse off of the page he had written on. The priest would then have the ink and water in the sponge of which he would then squeeze the water with the ink back into the bowl and then force (if necessary) the woman to drink the bitter water...in essence the holy water was made bitter

by the words of the curse. This was also causing the woman to literally drink the very word that was written.

The first mention of the word “**blot**” is used this way...

Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, “blot me,” I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written.

Compare that verse with this...

Then Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

The first verse (Exodus 32:32) is actually Moses as he pleaded with God on behalf of the children of Israel because of their sins. The second verse (Luke 23:34) is of course Jesus when He pleaded with God on behalf of all the children of men. This is quite an interesting parallel.

The word “**blotting**” is used only one time in the New Testament. It is found in Colossians and since it is mentioned only once we should pay especially close attention.

Colossians 2:13-14

And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened (given life) together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

“Blotting out” the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.

Notice also, it was the handwriting of ordinances against us that He took out of the way. Remember Numbers 5:23, the curse written against us?

The word “**blotted**” is used one time as well in the New Testament. It was used by Peter to the people in Jerusalem.

Acts 3:19

Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be “blotted out,” when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.

This was not the first time they had heard Jesus preached. They knew about the Crucifixion. And the children of Israel understood what it meant to have the written law, the ordinances against them, “blotted out.”

I thought about all these pieces of information. Like a jigsaw puzzle spread across the dining room table. Sometimes you just have to sit and try to fit the pieces into place. At times you have to take a break. That is what I did. Amazingly enough, a few minutes later, the Holy Spirit sent me down a side trail that will take us back to the main road. He wants to talk about the dreaded word, “Adultery.”

The Heart of the Matter

Adultery is an amazing word because just about everyone hates it. Men, women, Christians and non-Christians alike simply cringe at the knowledge of this word. It doesn't matter what religion you are or even if you are atheist. It crosses all political and social boundaries.

Even our concept of right and wrong has its deepest connection to the meaning of this word. So, let's look at it a little closer:

Numbers 5:20

But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband and if thy be defiled, and some man has lain with thee beside thine husband...

The word “**adultery**” is not used here but it is described and insinuated. **Exodus 20:14** is the first mention of the word “adultery” in the Old Testament. What is also very interesting is that the exact same phrase is the first mention in the New Testament. It is found in **Matthew 5:2**. One of the Ten Commandments: “**Thou shalt not commit adultery.**”

So once again we have a “double first mention,” meaning it is doubly important and it is in regards to adultery. In **Matthew Chapter 5:27**, Jesus explains that:

Even to look upon a woman with lust, that person has committed adultery in his heart.

But what of the heart? I needed to understand what “adultery” means to the Lord. “**For man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart,**” (I Samuel 16:7b).

1. 5003-Hebrew-Na'-aph – to commit adultery, to break wedlock, to apostatize.

Now I find the word “apostatize” intriguing. My primary reason for this is due to the fact that many bible scholars refer to the time of falling away (that is suppose to happen just before the Lord returns) as the “apostasy.” Let’s look also at other forms that relate.

2. Apostatize-Encyclopedic Dictionary-to forsake one's faith or principles; become an apostate.

3. Apostate - Encyclopedic Dictionary-guilty of apostasy; false

4. Apostasy-Encyclopedic Dictionary - desertion of one's faith, religion, or principles, desertion.

The matter of adultery is so serious under the law that compared to other sins, this one brought death without a stay of execution. There was no offering, no mercy, and no second chances. It is apostasy, a falling away.

This is why in **Numbers 5:15** the law makes reference to oil and frankincense saying:

Then shall the man bring his wife to the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an e-phah of barley meal;

He shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

The oil and frankincense represents grace and acceptance. And the law instructed that oil and frankincense were to be omitted. There is no grace under the law and no acceptance of an offering in the case of adultery. The e-phah of barley meal was also the cheapest of all offerings. It cost only one-third of wheat. The picture in verse 15 is that of a woman in an abased condition. The dust from the floor of the tabernacle in verse 17 indicates vileness, misery, and condemnation. In verse 18, the priest uncovers the woman's head which removes her from being under her husband's protection. (Compare to I Corinthians 11:16.) It was a token of shame.

King David understood all of this quite well. Even though he loved the Lord and was a man after God's own heart, yet still he sinned the sin of adultery and entered into it alongside Bathsheba. He wrote Psalms 51 after Nathan the prophet confronted him concerning his affair with Bathsheba. His heart broke with repentance as he cried out for forgiveness. Read Psalm 51 slowly and hear David's soul.

Psalms 51

Have mercy upon me, O'God,

according to Thy loving-kindness:

According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies

“blot out” my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions;

and my sin is ever before me.

Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned,

and done this evil in Thy sight:

that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest,

and be clear when Thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;

and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, Thou desirest “truth” in the inward parts:

and in the hidden part

Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

“Purge me with hyssop,”

and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness;

that the bones which Thou hast “broken” may rejoice.

*Hide Thy face from my sins,
and “blot out” all mine iniquities.*

*Create in me a clean heart, O'God;
and renew a right spirit within me.*

*Cast me not away from Thy presence;
and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;
and uphold me with Thy “free spirit.”*

*Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways;
and sinners shall be converted to Thee.*

*Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O'God;
Thou God of my salvation:
and my tongue shall sing aloud
of Thy righteousness.*

*O'Lord open Thou my lips;
and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.*

*For Thou desirest not sacrifice;
else I would give it:*

Thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a “broken spirit:”

A “broken and contrite heart,” O'God,

Thou wilt not despise...

*

Surely David understood the law and the consequences of his actions and yet, as mentioned before, “***The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish...***”

But, as merciful and long-suffering as the Lord is, He is still THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS and He is a Holy God. He expects our hearts to be solely His. He will not share us with any other.

Jeremiah 23:9-12

Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of His holiness. For the land is full of adulterers...

This was the cry of Jeremiah but more than that, it is the cry of the Holy Spirit regarding God's people. These words were written by Jeremiah as he was controlled by the Spirit of the living God.

In the New Testament, James speaks quite forcefully in his exhortation to the church. It is closer to a rebuke in many ways. Take a look around. We have allowed the world and the ways of the world to creep into our very existence. We don't even question whether or not what we are doing is acceptable to the Lord. Jesus encouraged those that He was teaching to “***seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...***” (Matthew 6:33).

This is what our Lord wants us to do everyday. Yes, even every moment. His deepest desire for us is that we would ***live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*** Needing Him more than our necessary food and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth should be our hearts cry.

James 4:4-5

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

Do you think that the scripture says in vain, The Spirit that dwells in us lusteth unto envy?

This is speaking to the church! The Lord God, the jealous God, does not want us to fall into apostasy. The “god” of this world is not the God that we serve. (II Corinthians 4:3-4). Nor should we indulge ourselves in it.

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul writes:

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14).

By these few scriptures we can see how the Lord feels about adultery. We see especially how He feels about adultery with the world. Regardless of how much the Lord hates adultery; He loved us so much that while we were dead in our sins, He died in our place in order to give us life. And His love has not changed. But it does change us...

Hebrews 4:14-16

Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

All of this leads us back to **Numbers Chapter 5**. Back to the place where something intended to be holy was made into

something bitter. We have to go back to the bitter waters of Ma'rah. There, the water was too bitter to drink. It was poison water. The bitter water that causes the curse also defined as the “venom of the serpent.” Now there is room for thought.

So, I reasoned with the Lord, “You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. And You always make a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13). So will You show me how You deliver from such fear of condemnation?”

“Yes,” He answered. “Follow the scarlet thread.”

Hangin*g By a Thread*

The first time we mentioned the “Scarlet thread,” was in Leviticus Chapter 14 when the Lord showed us the healing and restoration of the unclean. It was the ritual in which the dove and the hyssop were bound to the cedar wood with the “scarlet thread” and dipped into the blood of the other dove.

Throughout scripture the scarlet thread has been used to depict salvation by blood. For “*without shedding of blood there is no remission,*” (*Hebrews 9:22.*)

Leviticus 17:11

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the alter to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

Here is the grace of God. That He would make a way for us. The soul of man is worth a lot to God. There was only one way to pay the debt we owe for our soul. We must realize that we were sold into the slavery of sin and that the penalty owed, according to the

law, is death. There is no way out for us unless someone who is without any sin can die in our place. The penalty is death. Period.

But God, so great is His mercy, reached out with love and grace to a harlot. Her name was Rahab. She lived in Jericho. It was the most wicked of all cities and was doomed to be destroyed. But because she believed in the One True God, because she had faith, she helped two of the children of Israel. So they gave her something to hang in her window that would save her and her family from destruction. Can you imagine her face when they handed her this “*scarlet thread?*” But even the very acceptance was an act of faith. The very act of hanging this piece of scarlet dyed wool in her window was an act of faith.

In spite of the fact that she was a “harlot” in a city that accepted such practices, this same Rahab became an ancestor of Jesus, our Lord. (*Matthew 1:5.*)

***Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.
(John 1:29.)***

The Leap of Faith

Did you know that there is a law that is stronger than the law of the Old Covenant? There is. It is called, “the law of faith.” It's found in Romans. By the strength of this law, Rahab and her family were saved when the walls of Jericho came tumbling down!

Romans 3:24-27

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the “justifier of him which believes” in Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: But by “the law of faith.”

So you see, He is so wonderful to save us. He did not have to. No one forced His hand. But by sacrificing Himself to save us from this inevitable death...He has shown His true nature. God is love. He was and is the only one that can save us. That is why the scripture says that He who knew no sin became sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. It is very important that we accept Him. He alone has the power to save our souls. Do you remember that earlier we mentioned II Peter 3:9 which tells us that God is long-suffering toward us?

The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but He is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. It is God's will that none should perish...

John 3:16 is probably the most famous of scriptures.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

He felt so strongly about this that He stepped outside of the realm of Jewish tradition to talk with a Samaritan woman. And guess what she was about to do? Draw water at a well. And not just any well. It was Jacob's well. A very, very old well. When I read her story, I see that she has been drinking “bitter water” for a very long time. Jesus knew this. He knows everything. Let's look at what the Lord wants us to see about the woman at the well of water. It is found in John Chapter 4.

How Deep is Your Well?

In **John 4:1-5**, Jesus has left Judea to go to Galilee. He has to go through Samaria and He comes to a city called Sy'char and Jacob's well was there. Let's continue through verse 26.

Verse 6 - Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus on the well: it was about the sixth hour (noon).

Verse 7 - There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus said unto her, "Give me to drink."

Verse 8 - His disciples were gone away to buy meat.

Verse 9 - Then saith the woman of Samaria to Him "How is it that thou, being a Jew, asks of me a drink? Which am a woman, of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."

A few interesting facts jump out at this point. Jesus arrives at the well. It is during the heat of the day, around noon. He sits on the wall of the well. He must be thirsty. He has been traveling through the rugged countryside and He is weary. But He waits. He knows what He is waiting for and who He is waiting for. The woman. The woman who needs living water. Then she comes. This woman is alone. She will be coming to draw water from a well that is old and deep. (She mentions in verse 11 that the well is deep.) She does not speak to Him first. But He speaks to her. She is surprised that He would speak to her. He is a Jew. She is a woman. And she is a woman alone. And a Samaritan. The Jews and Samaritans did not get along. There was an old feud between them concerning which mountain was to be used to worship God. Mount Gerizim or

Mount Ebal. (See Deuteronomy 11:29.) But, Jesus knowing all things concerning her continues the conversation.

Verse 10 – Jesus answered and said unto her, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me a drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given you Living Water.”

Oh! Wait! He is suddenly talking about the gift of God! This blows me away! There isn't anything that He doesn't know about her. Everything about her deserves “bitter water” and He's talking to her about the gift. A gift of Living Water! Not only that, but He is hinting to her about who He is!

Verse 11 – The woman saith unto Him, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?”

Verse 12 – Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us this well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Now she's thinking out loud. Is he greater than Jacob? She's looking at how deep one has to go to get the best of the water from the well and he has nothing to draw with. But she is hopeful now. She is tired of coming here in the hot noon sun. The other women come together in the morning to draw the best of the cool water. But she cannot join them because of her lifestyle. They shun her. She feels rejected. So every day she draws water in the hot sun when the water has become hot and stagnant. But, this man, is making her feel hopeful. Jesus knows her thoughts. He is sitting on the wall of the well and He looks down into the deep dark well. He gestures toward the opening...

Verse 13 – Jesus answered and said unto her, “Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again”:

Verse 14 - “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Jesus understands that her thirst goes to the very core of her being. She only knows that she “needs.”

Verse 15 – The woman saith unto Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come here to draw.”

Now she is revealing her need openly. She is doing as He told her. She is “asking.” The living water is what she needs. She is tired of the bitter thirst and she doesn't want to draw it anymore. But, as in Numbers Chapter 5, there is the matter of the “truth.” She is set before Him. He must get her to confront the truth. He will not accuse her. She must confess on her own.

Verse 16 – Jesus saith unto her, “Go, call thy husband, and come hither.”

Verse 17 – The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said unto her, “Thou hast said well, I have no husband.”

Jesus commends her for telling Him the truth. This is a wonderful moment for her. But then, He completes what she did not reveal and in so doing He confirms that He sees her past as well as her present.

Verse 18 – “For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”

Verse 19 – The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. V.20 - Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Verse 21 – Jesus saith unto her, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when you shall neither worship in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.

Verse 22 – Ye worship ye know not what: We know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

Verse 23 – But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in “truth”: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

Verse 24 – God is spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Verse 25 – The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when He comes, He will tell us all things.

Verse 26 – Jesus saith unto her, “I that speak unto thee am He.”

I am amazed. The level of revelation knowledge the Lord gave to this thirsty woman is incredible. Do you see what happens when we are thirsty? When we thirst for righteousness! The “bitter water” that she deserved was changed to Living Water because she thirsted for God. She wanted to be a true worshipper and He revealed to her the way to worship the Father. In spirit and in truth. He even revealed to her that the Father seeks such. I do not see one word of condemnation here. I see Jesus setting this woman free. She even left her “waterpot” to run back to town to tell the men what had just happened to her and that He told her He is the Messiah, the Christ. Wow! The whole town wanted Jesus to stay! And He did. And they believed. **How sweet is His Water!**

Our Just Desserts

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit does rejoice in God my Savior. What could possibly follow the woman at the well?

“What do You say, Lord?” I ask. Every time we ask, He answers.

He is showing us how He changes the bitterness in our lives into something sweet. Rahab was trapped in a lifestyle of cult prostitution that was acceptable to the idol worship of the society she lived in. Because of her faith in the God that delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, He rewarded her by saving her through the one thing that represented the blood sacrifice. The scarlet thread worked as well as the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and lintel of the households of the Hebrews at the first Passover. In both cases, faith in the blood protected them from destruction.

The Lord is teaching us to trust His love and kindness toward us. Look at *John 1:14* for a moment. I love this verse. It reveals Him.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Jesus is “full” of grace and “full” of truth. When we seek after the truth, and walk in the truth, realizing that He is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life...we will always, always, always find grace. This is what the woman caught in the “very act of adultery” received.

John Chapter 8 is probably the closest parallel to **Numbers Chapter 5** that I have found. It is a stark contrast between law and grace. Let’s take a look and compare a little.

1) Jesus went to the Mount of Olives

2) And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down, and taught them.

3) And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery, and when they had set her in the midst...

I have to stop here for a moment because I see a picture. I see Jesus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords descending from the mountain and going into the temple. His mountain. His temple. I see Him sitting in His temple and He is very comfortable in this place. It suits Him. The people gather around Him and He begins to teach. He loves to teach.

Suddenly, there is a terrible commotion in the temple! The scribes and Pharisees are forcing a frightened woman through the temple courts. And the first thing they do with her is “***set her before the Lord.***”

Verse 3: And when they had set her in the midst... You will see in verse 4 that they continue by accusing her but only after “***they set her in the midst.***”

Numbers 5:16 & 18.

And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord. (16)

And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head. (18)

No, this is not coincidence. The Lord did this intentionally. He has seen the accuser stand before Him before. That is exactly what they did.

John 8:4

4) They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act...

I can see and hear them. Can't you? They are standing over this cowering woman and pointing their self-righteous fingers at her. And with the venom of the serpent they spit as they raise their voices ***"In the very act!"*** Of course the dramatics and emphasis is mine but I believe I am pretty close. They are not done. Now they quote the law.

5) Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6) This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not.

They want to know how He is going to judge. According to the law? Or not? When they say, "What sayest thou?" They are challenging His authority and at the same time prodding Him to be prideful. It didn't work.

Look at verse 6. What does Jesus do next?

It says, ***"But Jesus stooped down," and with His finger wrote on the ground...***

Many have tried to determine what the Lord was writing...some say He wrote on the ground twice because He wrote the Ten Commandments on stone twice (with His own finger I might add). They might be right. But I see ***that "the hand-writing of the ordinances"*** against this woman was being considered.

7) So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

Praise God! He just put their sins on the same level with hers! Jesus was the only one without sin and He did not condemn her. Instead, He caused the others to judge themselves.

8) *And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

Only this time He was fulfilling, in part, **Colossians 2:13-14** in this woman's life. Let's look at it again...it is a wonderful gift.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened (given life) together with Him...having forgiven you all trespasses;

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.

Removing the handwriting of the ordinances as in **Numbers 5:23** when the priest who set the woman before the Lord, writes the curse in a book and then makes her drink the bitter water.

9) *And when they heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the eldest, even unto the last: And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing in the midst.*

The venom is gone. The accusers have left. Fear is dissolving as this woman finds herself standing alone with her Savior. She still trembles but there is a peacefulness washing over her. She simply stands in His presence.

10) *When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"*

11) *She said, "No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

How wonderful and wise He is to show us how gracious He is toward us. **Romans 5:17-21** fills us with the truth of His grace.

For if by one man's offense (Adam) death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one...Jesus Christ.

Therefore as (by the offense of one) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

For as by one man's disobedience (Adam) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus) many shall be made righteous.

Moreover, the law entered, that the offense might abound.

But where sin abounded, grace did that much more abound:

That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

It's hard to describe the grace of God. One has to actually see it. To know that God's grace means His unmerited favor is correct but not enough personal understanding. You really can't know His grace unless you experience it for yourself. The only way to experience it is to realize how horribly deep we have fallen. Each and every one of us have missed the mark. No one is exempt. All have fallen short. In fact, John the Baptist said that he was not even worthy enough to stoop down and untie His shoe laces.

We have all committed spiritual adultery at one time or other in our lives. Even now at this very moment many of us are without excuse. How many of us give more importance to something other than the Lord. Maybe a job, our family, our friends, we can even turn going to church into an idol. Some may have more obvious idols. Like addictions to alcohol, drugs, food, or sex. Some are even addicted to something as innocent as the internet or a hobby. Maybe it's hunting, fishing, or shopping.

The whole point is...we have a Lord that is so full of grace toward us that He will save us from all these things if we will recognize our need to be set free of the hold they have. He is waiting for us to come to Him with our whole heart. Not just part of it. With the Lord it is all or nothing. We must give our “all.”

The reason I know this is that He gave “everything” to save us. He even drank the bitter water.

Saving Your Change

The first time I saw this, I just sat still in bewilderment of what I was suddenly understanding. I felt completely humbled. I still feel that way. Please, follow what I am trying to convey. Each of us deserves to drink the bitter water. For the children of Israel, the waters at Ma'-rah were “too bitter to drink.” It was poison. This is what the men of Israel knew. They understood without a shadow of a doubt that if they drank of the waters at Ma'-rah, they would die. Death would not only come to themselves but also their wives, their children, and all their livestock. Yet, the Lord turned the bitter to sweet and still led them to twelve wells and seventy palm trees.

It is true in the spiritual sense as well. If we reject the Lord as our sacrifice and refuse to believe; we end up drinking bitter water and it brings death into our lives and the lives of everyone around us. The poison enters every area of our lives. This is why God tried them at the waters of Ma'-rah. He needed to know if they would receive from Him through faith. You see, God knew all along that He was going to change the bitter water to sweet water.

So, because they would not believe, He had to give them laws to follow so that they could receive the blessings. But they still had a choice. He will never take away your choice. He also had to make a way for them to come into His presence. They needed a way to

be restored when they sinned. That is seen in **Leviticus Chapter 14**. We have the two doves: One for death and one for new life. We have the tree (cedar wood), the hyssop used for purifying, and we have the scarlet thread (Lamb of God) which binds them all together to the tree. The ritual is sacrifice, healing, and restoration.

Then we have **Numbers Chapter 5**. Its words show us a more serious consequence for going after anything that takes the place of our Most Holy God. That consequence is the ultimate bitterness of soul. It is agony and anguish on a continual basis. Only the grace of God and of our Lord Jesus can save us from such an outcome.

Almost everyone knows the old proverbial illustration of someone pouring water into a glass. The question is, “do you see the glass half full or half empty?” I say it is both. If you pour it into a smaller cup, the cup will be full. If you pour it into a larger cup, the cup will be less than half. For our purpose here it is important to understand that with the Lord, the cup, no matter the size, is always full. In fact, In ***Psalms 23*** it is written, ***“He anoints my head with oil. My cup runneth over.”***

He wants us to talk about ...”the cup.” The first scriptures He is pointing me to is the story of Joseph and Benjamin in **Genesis Chapter 44 and 45**. If you’re not familiar with the story...it’s great. Read it. It is a revelation of Jesus (who is played by Joseph) and the church (which is played by Benjamin,) They were born of the same mother (Rachel) and are greatly loved by the Father (played by Jacob.) Okay, He wants me to move on.

Joseph sends his brothers back home but he hides a “silver cup” in the sack belonging to Benjamin. In God’s word, silver represents redemption. So Benjamin (the church) is given the cup of redemption. But look at what Joseph says about the cup:

Genesis 44:1-2

And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man’s money in his sack’s mouth.

“And put...”my cup”...the “silver cup”...in the sack’s mouth of the youngest”...

What the Lord is pointing out to us, is, that He has given to us a silver cup filled with redemption. But it came at a cost to Him to do it. Because, you see, He had to drink from the cup that we deserved to drink from. Do you remember **Numbers Chapter 5** about the bitter water?

Numbers 5:24

And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causes the curse: and the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter.

Galatians 3:13

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...

Then the Holy Spirit revealed the words of **John 18:11** to me. When I read it, I am speechless. It is so profound. I can picture the disciple in the garden where Jesus had been agonizing over and over in prayer. The anguish within His soul was beyond anything we have ever known. His sweat became as drops of blood. It was dark. But He could feel the darkness surrounding Him. He pleaded with the Father.

Matthew 26:39-42

And fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt. And He left them and went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.

He wanted His companions to pray and wait and watch with Him...He kept reaching out to them...but they slept. Suddenly, Judas emerges into the garden.

He's coming with *“a band of men, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, coming with lanterns and torches, and weapons”* (John 18.)

My heart pounds as I watch it happen in my mind. There is a moment of confusion as the disciples jump up from their sleepy stupor. Peter is always the one that reacts first. His impulse is to protect the Lord at all costs. Peter feels strong as long as he has a weapon. He pulls out the sword and slices through the air in a heart beat of time. The blade slices off the right ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus turns to Peter with desperate pleading in His raspy voice:

John 18:11

Then said Jesus unto Peter, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

This very statement by our Lord pierces into my heart. Jesus knew what He was about to do. He knew what was in the cup. He knew that He was about to take the curse upon Himself so that we can live and not die. Yes, I know what you are thinking. But don't you really understand that this body is just an "earthen vessel"? Your very self, your very soul, your spirit is alive inside this vessel. And as Jesus rose from the dead, so has He promised to raise us up as well. He is alive you know. He has a glorified body and when our time comes, so will we by the same power. To those who believe in the only begotten Son of God...they will not perish but will have ever-lasting life.

Using the Sponge

There is a shocking end to this story. I thought that much of what I was learning about was figurative. You know. Symbolic. But the truth is that none of this is fiction. It is true. And the big shocker is...Jesus "literally" received the bitter water while He was bound to the tree.

This amazed me when He allowed me to see with the eyes of my heart. So, as I put the information before you, I hope you will see and understand having the eyes of your understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Remember back in **Numbers Chapter 5** when the priest would “blot out” the words of the curse from the book? And that I had researched and found out that the “blotting” out was done with a “sponge” dipped into the holy water? Remember the ink from the words of the curse was then in the sponge and the priest would squeeze the water and ink back into the earthen vessel and cause the woman to drink it. So, from there, the Lord told me to look up the word “sponge.” Actually, it is spelled “spunge” in the King James Version and that's the way you have to look it up in Strong's Concordance. This is what I discovered:

The word “spunge” is used only three times in scripture. All three times the word is found only in the New Testament. It is written only in **Matthew 27:48**, **Mark 15:36**, and **John 19:29**. I will write them so you can compare:

Matthew 27:48

and straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar...

Mark 15:36

and one ran and filled a spunge “full” of vinegar...

John 19:29

Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar...

Luke also mentions the vinegar but not the “spunge.” Now, that being said, I need to tell you something important before I go further. I need you to recall that the scriptures point out that all the disciples except for one scattered and went to their homes. The one that followed all the way to the cross and stayed with Jesus, and stood beside His mother to the end was the disciple we know as John.

The reason I point this out, is that John was the only eye-witness to the crucifixion among the twelve disciples. I am going to write out the individual scriptures that reveal the “bitterness” that was placed on the “hyssop” and given to the Lord. Each individual account reveals something a little different. And then there is John's account. I will also give you the Greek definitions so you can see the fullness of what our Lord Jesus has done for us.

Matthew 27:34

They gave Him vinegar to drink “mingled with gall”: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.

Matthew 27:48

And straightway, one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink.

Gall- Greek- 5521- Chole- gall, bile, poison, anodyne (wormwood) from 5514.

5514- khlay- green

5515- Chloros- from 5514-greenish, verdant, green-pale

Mark 15:23

And they gave Him to drink wine “mingled with myrrh”: but He received it not.

Mark 15:36

And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink.

Myrrh- Greek- smurnizo- from 4667- to tincture with myrrh, in essence to embitter.

Luke 23:35-36

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He be the Christ, the Chosen of God.

And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him and “offering Him vinegar.”

Vinegar- bitterness- gall, poison, venom, wormwood, bile, as in the Waters of Ma'-rah.

How many times was our Lord offered bitterness? How many times did He have the opportunity to allow bitterness to enter and yet He rejected it? Even to the end He refused to be embittered. You just finished reading **Luke 23:35-36**...but look at the previous verse. **Verse 34...**

Then said Jesus, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

And the people stood there beholding, hearing, mocking, and the soldiers offer Him bitterness. But John was there. He saw it all. Let's read it.

John 19:28-30

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished,

that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, “I thirst.”

Now, there was “set a vessel full of vinegar:”

and they filled a “sponge” with vinegar,

and put it upon "hyssop."

and "put it to His mouth."

When Jesus therefore "had received the vinegar,"

He said, "It is finished:"

And (then) He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

In **verse 35** John writes:

And he that saw it bare record and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that you might believe...

For me, this is the most difficult part of this revealing of "truth." I am so full of joy and sorrow at the same time and I wonder, "How can this be?" Jesus forgave everyone and then He drank the bitterness. Bound to the wood, by His own blood, and then taking the cup of bitterness, which is the curse, into Himself, and then the ultimate sacrifice of letting the dove go free. With the sponge, He took the curse written against us and drank that we might not have to pay our penalty and that we might have newness of life through His resurrection...

Jesus said unto Peter. "Put up thy sword...into thy sheath...the cup...that My Father has given Me...Shall I not drink it?"

What would have happened to us if He had changed His mind? How can any one of us turn from such a God and Savior? He has "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us"...He took it out of the way, by nailing it to the cross. I can't help but think about the dove. The dove that rested upon Him and remained with Him at the Jordan River...until He had to let it go...

"My Father, My Father, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...By whom also we have access by faith into this "grace" wherein we stand...Romans 4:24-5:2.

Conclusion

I am not any different than any other human being. Yet, each of us has been created to be unique. We are the same and we are different. The bible tells us that we all suffer like afflictions and that no temptation comes to us except that which is common to man.

I sit here with the deepest desire to say something extraordinary that will change your life in a way that you could have never imagined. I asked the Lord what that might be. He told me to simply speak from my heart. Because, you see, He is in my heart and from the abundance of my heart my mouth will speak.

This world is filled with bitterness. Every step we take away from the Lord is one more swallow of vinegar. Everyday we wait to come to Him is a day filled with the venom of the serpent. The serpent desires to have you. He wants you to taste so much bitterness that you rot. Why? Why would that old devil the serpent want you to rot? Here is the answer:

Because Jesus, the King of Glory, came to the earth in a human body to set you free from a life of sin that leads to death and to give eternal life to all that call upon Him in faith. Remember the woman at the well? When Jesus said, "Woman if you knew Who it is that says give me a drink, you would ask of Him and He would give you living water"?

This is your chance. This is your time. He is here. He is now. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. All any of us have to do is ask. The thing He wants more than anything else? He wants you. All of you. Your heart, your soul, your body. He created you. He knows every unique detail. He loves...you. There is nothing hidden from Him. Knowing that makes it easier to ask for His help. When you ask Him to come into your heart He does!

*Bitter water...turned into Living water. Life from death. Changed?
Yes, we are changed! We are...born again.*

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2Corinthians 5:17).

These words are not just for those that have never known the Lord. But for all believers. He calls us to “separate” from the world and to be holy as He is holy.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12:2).

May I call you my brother and my sister? We are of the same household. If you see yourself anywhere in these pages...then go to the well. Jesus will be there waiting for you.

Job 19:23-25

Oh, that my words were written!

Oh, that they were printed in a book!

*That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock
for ever!*

For I know that my Redeemer liveth,

and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth...

Isaiah 53:1-12

Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground:

He has no form or comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him;

He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

Surely, He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:

Yet, we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But, He was wounded for our transgressions,

He was bruised for our iniquities:

The chastisement of our peace was upon Him;

And with His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray;

We have turned every one to his own way;

and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth:

*He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,
So He opened not His mouth.
He was taken from prison and from judgment:
and who shall declare His generation?
For He was cut off out of the land of the living:
For the transgression of my people was He stricken.
And He made His grave with the wicked,
And with the rich in His death;
Because He had done no violence,
Neither was any deceit in His mouth.
Yet, it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;
He hath put Him to grief:
When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see His seed,
He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.
By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;
For He shall bear their iniquities...and He bare the sins of
many...*

*

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