

Week 9
11/15/26

Numbers 5 – Abortion? Women? Jealousy? Does God justify this?

Verses

Numbers 5:11-31
Genesis 1:27-28
Genesis 3:6 & 16
Exodus 34:6
Galatians 3:24
Genesis 3:25
John 8:2-11
John 7:37-38
1 John
Romans 8:1-2

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Numbers 5 – Abortion? Women? Jealousy? Does God justify this?

Recap:

Today we have a question that comes out of an Old Testament passage in Numbers 5. Reading the Old Testament laws through our own cultural lens, it can seem like women get a bad deal... but that is not the case when we account for cultural context. We have spent time in previous years walking through many Old Testament passages that people don't understand, and we see again and again that God has abundant mercy for women (and men) on display through these laws.

John 8 can be seen as a NT parallel to Numbers 5. In John 8, the effect of Jesus' words and actions are immediate as the men start to leave as hidden sins are revealed. The sin of the woman is also openly acknowledged ("go and sin no more"), but the judgment is delivered and no condemnation is given. What's significant is that Jesus is not only playing the role of the priest, but the role of God Himself, because only Jesus could do so. Ultimately, Jesus on the cross silenced both the just and the unjust accusations against all of us.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever caught yourself reading the Old Testament with "chronological snobbery"? How does cultural context change our interpretations?
- How does Gen 1:26-28 shape the way you think about the "battle of the sexes" narrative in our culture?
- Why does it matter that the woman had to stand "before the Lord" and go through a priest, rather than facing her husband's judgment directly?
- There was nothing in the water or dust itself that could hurt the woman. How does that detail push back against the assumption that this ritual was designed to condemn women?
- Read John 8:2-11. What parallels do you see between the Numbers 5 ritual and Jesus' encounter with the woman caught in adultery (the dust, the writing, the presence "before the Lord")?
- How can you rest in Jesus' grace and extend it to others this week?

AMA