

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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### ***“Purge Me With Hyssop”***

By Johnny O Trail

Most scholars believe David wrote the fifty-first Psalm after his transgression with Bathsheba. If this is the case, it is one of the most penitent Psalms in the Old Testament. From the passages recorded in Psalm fifty-one, it appears the writer was heartsick over his sins. Psalm 51:11-12 says, *“Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”* He did not want to lose the relationship that he enjoyed with Jehovah God.

The author of Psalm fifty-one knew that there had to be some sort of response for his violation of God’s laws. This is akin to what was happening in the book of Acts on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:37 says, *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”* Just like the Psalmist and those assembled on the Day of Pentecost, our sins should devastate us since it harms our association with God.

In part, the writer of Psalm fifty-one asks that his sins be purged with a plant called hyssop. Psalm 51:7 says, *“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”* This statement brings about the question, “What is hyssop and what roles did it play in purification and its associated rituals?”

Hyssop is mentioned in various pieces of literature. Hyssop is a type of bush that is rather small. It produces purple flowers that grow on long stems, and it is in the mint family. The plant can be used for medicinal applications and is aromatic enough to be used as a pleasant-smelling aroma. It can also be used for cooking. In scripture, hyssop is mentioned in connection with various ceremonies, cleansing rituals, and religious exercises.

The first mention of hyssop is during the Passover in Egypt (Exodus 12:22) and, it is also mentioned in connection with Christ’s crucifixion (John 19:29). The import of this happening on both occasions is not missed. Namely, that Christ was the Lamb of God and lambs were sacrificed during the first Passover. John 1:29 says, *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”*

The sour wine saturated into a sponge was presented to Christ on the stems of a hyssop plant, and this was done just prior to His death. In John 19:29-30, *“Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”*

Again, the significance of this in the completion of His atoning sacrifice and the meaning of Passover cannot be missed by the studious reader. Jesus was being offered as the perfect sacrifice for sins. Notice Hebrews 9:14, *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

The Psalmist is believed to have used the term “hyssop” mostly in connection with the purification ritual mention in Numbers nineteen. An entire, unblemished, red heifer that had never been yoked was to be burned as a purification sacrifice. While the heifer was being burned, the priest was to place cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop



into the fire (Numbers 19:6). These items were most likely reminiscent of the color red (scarlet) and were symbolic blood's color in sacrificial applications.

Moreover, cedarwood, scarlet, and hyssop were used in other purification rituals. These items, among other things, were used to purify lepers. Leviticus 14:4 says, "*Then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedarwood, scarlet, and hyssop.*" Perhaps the author of Psalm fifty-one saw his sin as a type of leprosy that needed the most powerful cleansing agent available.

By the same thought, we must seek the most powerful cleaning agent available for our transgressions—the blood of Jesus. His blood is the only thing that can possibly cleanse us from our sins (cf. Ephesians 2:11-16; I Peter 1:18-19; I John 1:7; Revelation 1:4-6).

Since contact with any dead thing made one unclean, a clean individual was charged with removing the ashes from the camp and storing them in a clean place for purification from sins (Numbers 19:9). In turn, the person who removed the ashes for purification became unclean because of touching this deceased animal. One Rabbi alludes to the irony of this arrangement saying, "*They purify the defiled and defile the pure.*"

In some respects, Christ is an antitype of this sacrificial red heifer. To the extent that Christ was pure and without sin (I John 3:5), He took upon Himself the sins of the world (II Corinthians 5:21) so that He might purify all who obey the gospel (cf. Hebrews 9:22; I Peter 1:22).

To summarize, II Corinthians 5:21 says, "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" Thus, the pure (Christ) becoming impure so that others (Christians) might be purified.

Furthermore, the sacrifice of this red heifer took place outside of the camp (Numbers 19:3).

In the same sort of way, the sacrifice of Christ happened outside the city of Jerusalem. Hebrews 13:11-13 says, "*For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.*"

In consideration of these things, David wanted to be purified from his sins. He wanted his relationship with God to be restored. He wanted a pure, undefiled heart. He realized these things were impossible without God. He says, in Psalm 51:9-11, "*Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*"

We should want purification and cleansing from sins. Like the Psalmist, we should continually want a pure heart that qualifies us for a relationship with God. Through baptism (Acts 22:16) and faithfulness (Revelation 2:10), we have an assurance of these things.

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## **“Great Merchants”**

By Doy Moyer

Revelation 18:21-24 gives three reasons for the fall of Babylon:

1. Merchants were great men, “nobility of the earth.”
2. “*Nations were deceived by your sorcery,*” (Revelation 18:23), and
3. “*In her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all those slaughtered on the earth*” (Revelation 18:24).

Points 2 and 3 are understandable, but why 1? Why would merchants being “great men” be a cause for judgment?

I believe this is in direct contrast to the way they saw God: the men were great (cf. Isaiah 23:8); God was not. Their own success and glory were great; God was pushed aside. Yet Revelation stresses the greatness of God (Revelation 4:11; 5:12-13; 7:12; 15:3-4; 16:9; 19:1,7), demonstrating that our purpose is to glorify Him.

Only God is truly great and awesome, so describing the city as “great” in this context is showing its own hubris (Daniel 4:30; Revelation 11:8; 14:8; 16:19; 17:5,18; 18:2,10,16,19,21,23). The merchants may have been “great” or “men of renown” who controlled their economy (so they thought), but they perverted their purpose and instead of glorifying God, they were glorifying self.

That never ends well. When we diminish God in favor of ourselves, we will fall. Glorify God today. He alone is worthy of our worship.

# **“Trust In The Lord”**

Lesson Text: **Proverbs 3:5-6.**

## **T — TURN To The Lord.**

1. **Acts 26:20**
2. Turning Away From Evil— **Acts 26:18; 14:15; John 12:37-40.**
3. Obeying The Gospel— **Acts 3:19— Acts 2:38.**

## **R — Rely On The Lord.**

1. **Psalm 37:1-7a.**
2. Is The Lord Worthy of Our Trust? Where Else Can We Go?  
**Psalm 73:23-26.**
3. The Last Words Of Polycarp- *“86 years have I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?”*  
**Revelation 2:10.**

## **U — Understand The Will of the Lord.**

1. **Ephesians 5:15-18.**
2. It Requires Study of God’s Word-
3. It Requires Submission and Obedience-

## **S — Serve The Lord.**

1. **1 Thessalonians 1:9; Colossians 3:23-24; 1 Timothy 4:6.**
2. **Romans 12:11; 1 Peter 4:11; Hebrews 12:28.**
3. **James 5:7-8.**

## **T — Triumph In The Lord.**

1. **Psalm 37:40; Psalm 34:22; 1 Chronicles 5:20.**
2. **2 Corinthians 2:14-16.**
3. Do you trust Christ with your life to win the prize?

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Steve Switcher, Roy Robinson, Danny Cottrell (Dan's Dad).

**Those Who Serve:**

<b>Announcements:</b>	Jerry Kennemur
<b>Opening Prayer &amp; Scripture Reading:</b>	Sam Johnson <i>Proverbs 3:5-6</i>
<b>Song Leader:</b>	Lee Busby
<b>Lord's Supper:</b>	Fred Johnson
<b>Preaching:</b>	Brian Meade
<b>Sermon:</b>	<i>"Trust In The Lord"</i>
<b>Closing Prayer:</b>	Nathan Meade



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