



*“Why do I feel so dirty?”*

## **JESUS IS MY EXPIATION**

*“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.”*

*-William Cowper, “There is a Fountain”*

There’s nothing wrong with having “STEVE” tattooed across your chest. Unless, of course, you’re marrying Dennis.

This is just one of many real-life stories captured by Emily Wills in an article about the rise of laser tattoo removal—a costly (and painful!) process by which unwanted tattoos can be erased. Wills calls this procedure “a facelift for young people, a chance to start over.” She says that if “tattoos are the marks of an era...then tattoo removals are about regret, confessions that those landmarks are in the past. They’re about the realization that whatever you believed in with such force that you wanted it eternally branded on your skin is now foreign to you.”<sup>1</sup>

Wills tells the story of Wayne Stokes, who got his first tattoo at age 16. In the years that followed, he’d used layers of ink to craft his tough-guy exterior. His eyes are circled by tribal designs. His hands spell out “S-U-F-F-E-R-I-N-G” when held side by side. Wrapped around his neck are three words: “Life Is Pain.” Only now, at age 34, Stokes was healing. Having been through therapy, he hoped to mentor kids who, like himself, were healing from abuse. For Stokes, that meant sitting through up to 25 agonizing sessions with the laser. In the end, it’s worth it. “Each time I get [part of it] removed,” he says, “it’s like I can exhale. Sometimes I do dread coming in. But...I want to look in the mirror and see myself again.”

For some, a tattoo is a souvenir you can never lose. For others, a tattoo is a stain you can never erase. But that’s true for a lot of life, isn’t it? Some of us carry stains—deep, irreparable stains—that go well beneath the surface of the skin. Some of us walk around with stains on our very souls. For us, the question isn’t always “How do I move on?” Instead, the question is what to do when we feel so disgusted with the face that we see in the mirror. “Why do I feel so dirty?” we ask. And, more importantly, how can I ever be clean?

## SIN CONTAMINATES

As far as we know, King David never had any tattoos. But he understood a little something about regret. One of the Bible's most famous Psalms is a blues ballad, written by David in the wake of his moral failure:

**Psalm 51:1-4** *To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.* Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

This is one of the few Psalms where David recorded his reason for writing. If you're not familiar with the story, buckle up, because it's enough to make a grown man blush. While David was king over Israel, he sent his troops to battle while he lounged around the palace. He ended up spying on Bathsheba, the neighbor girl—who also happened to be the wife of one of his top lieutenants and closest friends. Not that that stopped him. He had to have her. He took her for the night—and the language of “taking” seems to imply conquest, raising questions as to whether their encounter was fully consensual.<sup>2</sup>

David's sins multiply once Bathsheba delivers the devastating news: “I'm pregnant.” To hide his sin, David has her husband killed. It wasn't until the prophet Nathan confronted him that realization struck him across the face. Psalm 51 is David's confession of that sin, as well as his plea to God for mercy.

His words reveal much about his state of mind. He confesses that “my sin is ever before me”—like a tattoo he can't conceal. More significantly, he asks God to not just forgive him, but *cleanse* him. David recognizes that his transgression is against God (verse 4 makes that perfectly clear). But David's words highlight a truth we may know all too well. Sin doesn't just make us guilty—it makes us *dirty*. Sin contaminates to a depth and degree that no laser can erase.

### ***Sin as pollution***

Long before germs were understood, ancient societies emphasized a relationship between physical dirt and cosmic order. Israel was no different. Much of the Old Testament Law was organized around the categories of “clean” and “unclean.” To be clean meant that you were in right standing before God. To be unclean meant you were morally guilty and deserving of judgment. This was no small theme. One scholar notes that some variation of the word “unclean” appears 132 times in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> Worse, contamination could spread through physical contact. Jewish Law outlined a variety of ways that a person could become unclean. Eating bacon? Unclean. Touching a dead body? Unclean. Having an affair with the neighbor girl? Sorry, David,

but you were most assuredly rendered unclean. No wonder he feels so contaminated; these categories were woven into the cultural imagination. And no one was immune. “All of us have become like one who is unclean,” wrote Isaiah. “All our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment” (Isaiah 64:6).

All of this must sound primitive to modern ears. But the concept of a “polluted garment” is nearer to our hearts than we may think. In a famous experiment, Paul Rozin asked people if they’d be willing to wear a sweater that had previously been worn by Adolf Hitler. And, of course, nearly everyone said “no.” So Rozin kept changing the conditions. What if no one knew it belonged to Hitler? What if the sweater could be thoroughly laundered? What if the sweater were unraveled, re-dyed, then completely re-knit? In every case, the answer was the same: “No.”<sup>4</sup> It’s as if even we moderns associate evil with a kind of contamination.

But contamination isn’t just external, like a sweater. Psychologists have discovered that “feelings of dirtiness” are commonly associated with moral wrongdoing. Washing hands or showering does little to erase these feelings. One study participant says that “I look clean but still feel dirty.” Another said: “Dirt can be washed away, but not *this*.”<sup>5</sup>

And, like King David, there’s one form of contamination that’s utterly unique: sex. Just consider all the ways that we describe sex as “dirty” in today’s culture. Dirty websites. Dirty pictures. Dirty talk. And, if you pardon the examples, the very first impulse of a rape survivor is to take a shower. What is it about sex that’s so defiling?

### ***Why sexual sin pollutes us***

To be clear, Christianity doesn’t teach that sex is dirty at all. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that sex is a marvelous gift. There’s even an entire collection of love poetry found in the Old Testament. The Song of Solomon explores a young couple’s romantic adventures in surprisingly lurid detail. Modern scholars observe that “the Hebrew is quite erotic...There is no shy, shamed, mechanical movement under the sheets. Rather, the two stand before each other, aroused, feeling no shame, but only joy in each other’s sexuality.”<sup>6</sup>

Christianity is far more sex-positive than you may think. So, again, why does sex so often leave us feeling broken and dirty? It’s because sex is not only pleasurable, but *powerful*. In Genesis, God says that when man and woman come together, they become “one flesh”—a metaphysical union later affirmed by both Jesus and Paul (Genesis 2:24). This isn’t just a metaphor for the act itself. It’s a way of expressing the deep intimacy that occurs between two lovers, and the way that physical union merely reflects the emotional and spiritual bond that sex produces. Christianity basically teaches: *you can’t say with your body what you’re not willing to say with your soul*. That’s why sex is reserved for a committed marriage between husband and wife.

King David had clearly violated God’s design for sex and marriage. As do we, each time we indulge our sexuality outside the way God intended. This doesn’t just include extramarital affairs. It includes any form of sexual expression outside the bounds of marriage. Jesus even intensified the Old Testament laws concerning adultery, saying that “everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28). By that standard, who could possibly claim to be clean?

For years, modern culture has insisted that this kind of thinking is psychologically and sociologically repressive. Does God really care who I sleep with? Surely we don’t use Bronze-age literature to guide our sexual decisions. But sexual brokenness isn’t just found in religious communities. Christian Smith led a team of researchers from the University of Notre Dame to investigate the life choices of young adults. What they found was shocking. Smith writes that many interviewees broke down into tears, as if they were carrying emotional burdens more commonly seen in those who had gone through a bitter divorce.<sup>7</sup> He explains that those who treat sex too casually “feel they have lost a part of themselves that they cannot recover. They nurse wounds that are slow to heal. Some have difficulty trusting in new relationships. Others become indifferent or hardened to their own feelings or those of others.”<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, he concludes that “not far beneath the surface appearance of happy, liberated [sexuality] lies a world of hurt, insecurity, confusion, inequality, shame, and regret.”<sup>9</sup> One young woman admits to “feeling guilty, feeling dirty, and ‘easy.’” Another woman calls herself “damaged goods.” Even young men express deep regret and shame.<sup>10</sup> And as we hinted in an earlier chapter, some feel shame not from their own sin, but from the sins committed against them. Here, I’m speaking directly to victims of rape and sexual assault. You, too, may be feeling broken, defiled, and used, as if nothing could erase the stain of what happened to you.

### *The danger of external cleansing*

Our most natural instinct is to try and clean ourselves up. If you’ve ever felt dirty over sexual sin, your cleansing can take many forms. Maybe it’s a vow to never again visit those dirty websites. Maybe you try to balance the scales of shame by throwing yourself into church or volunteer work.

If you’re an assault survivor, you know the hours spent scrubbing your skin raw, or disposing of the clothes you wore during your attack. You know the temptation to withdraw from others—or even yourself—to numb yourself to the crushing weight of shame. Some survivors even become sexually promiscuous to reclaim control over their sexuality.<sup>11</sup>

But external cleansing will never work. Through Jeremiah, God cautions those burdened by guilt: “Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me” (Jeremiah 2:22). But as much as you might clean your browser history, you can never erase what you’ve done—or the pain of what’s been done to you. Your life takes the shape of Lady

MacBeth, who imagined her hands permanently stained by sin. And no amount of washing could make up for it. “Out, [darned] spot!” she famously cried. “Will these hands ne’er be clean!” If external cleansing won’t work, then we need healing to come from inside out. That’s what happens through the cross.

## THE CROSS CLEANSSES

King David continues his prayer by intensifying his request for purity. While his vocabulary differs from that of the sacrificial system, we nevertheless hear faint echoes of the language of atonement:

<sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. <sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:7-10)

Some modern Bible teachers define “atonement” as simply God “covering over” sin. But this is inaccurate. If you read the introduction carefully, then you recall that the word “atone” most basically means “to wipe away” or maybe even “wash.” God doesn’t merely “cover up” our sin like an unwanted tattoo; he wipes it away entirely.

This is the doctrine of expiation. Expiation refers to the process by which God removes sin. Technically, this “cross word” doesn’t appear directly in Scripture, though the concept is found everywhere. In fact, the Hebrew Scriptures overflow with the promise of cleansing and renewal. It’s part of God’s fundamental character. Through Isaiah, he says: “I...am he who blots out your transgressions...and remembers your sins no more” (Isaiah 43:25). And through Jeremiah, he says: “I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me” (Jeremiah 33:8). King David isn’t simply whistling in the dark. He’s counting on God to make him clean again.

### *Expiation and atonement*

For Israel, expiation occurred each time that blood was shed for sin. On the Day of Atonement, expiation was made for the entire nation. In our last chapter, we emphasized that blood sacrifice removed the wrath of God (propitiation). But this same sacrifice also removes sin. As David McLeod observes, propitiation and expiation “cannot be separated. God can be propitiated only if sin is expiated; and sin is expiated only in order that God may be propitiated.”<sup>12</sup> So the same ceremonial act that erased God’s anger also erases the stain of human sin.

Leviticus tells us that on the Day of Atonement, the priest would perform a specific ritual inside the holy of holies:

<sup>18</sup> Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. <sup>19</sup> And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel. (Leviticus 16:18-19)

Did you catch that? The blood shed on this day would remove the “uncleannesses of the people of Israel.” That’s expiation. The remains of the goat would be burned and discarded outside the camp.<sup>13</sup>

Now, here’s where things get interesting. Recall that the Day of Atonement required two goats to make atonement for the sins of the people. The first goat was killed outright. But the second goat—the famous “scapegoat”—had another function:

<sup>21</sup> And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. <sup>22</sup> The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:21-22)

Symbolically, the scapegoat would carry the people’s sin and shame far into the wilderness. On the one hand, that’s beautiful. Imagine your relief as you saw your sin, your shame, your browser history, all disappearing into the woods. But you might also find your stomach knotted over a very practical fear: *what happens if the goat comes back?* To solve this problem, the people built something of a relay system. A series of volunteers would be stationed in the wilderness. Each volunteer would drive the goat to the next volunteer, and so on. The volunteer at the end of this relay chain would have the thankless job of shoving the goat off a cliff (!).<sup>14</sup>

This next part isn’t found in Scripture, but it tells us something deeply significant about what the people believed God was doing. Before the scapegoat was released, the people would dip a string in the blood of the dead goat. They attached this bloody string to the tail of the scapegoat. Then, they dipped *another* string in blood, this time tying the string to a pole in the camp. According to Jewish legend, when the scapegoat finally went over the cliff, the bloody string back at camp would turn white. Not being in Scripture, we can’t say for sure whether this legend is true. But it shows that the ancient people believed that the ritual achieved expiation. Leviticus even summarizes: “For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins.” (Leviticus 16:30).

### ***The cross makes us clean***

When Jesus dies, he completely fulfills the promise of the Day of Atonement. In the book of Hebrews, we read that “Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people

through his own blood” (Hebrews 13:12). This shows us two important ways that Jesus achieves expiation for all people.

First, Jesus “suffered outside the gate.” Most literally, this could refer to Golgotha, the hillside outside Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. But in Jewish culture, to be “outside the gate/camp” had a different meaning. Purity demanded proximity. To be outside the camp was to be in a state of physical and spiritual exile. Outside the camp was where the people disposed of the burned remains of sacrificial animals. And so this region would be spotted with scavenging birds and wild dogs. Outside the camp was where the people would stone blasphemers, those who deliberately offended God. Outside the camp was where lepers were sent into exile, their skin condition rendering them unclean and unworthy of the contact of the community. Outside the camp was impurity and death. So when Jesus goes outside the gate, it means that he went straight to where shame and isolation dwell. He went there—died there—to make even the most unrighteous clean again.

In his novel *The Power and the Glory*, Graham Greene tells the story of a wayward priest who finds a leper colony while fleeing from authorities. It’s here, among the untouchable exiles, that he understands the magnitude of Christ’s mercy. “It was for this world that Christ had died,” he concludes. “It was too easy to die for what was good or beautiful, for home or children or a civilization—it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt.” R. Kent Hughes puts it beautifully, saying:

“By suffering outside the gate, moreover, Jesus identifies himself with the world in its unholiness. While we are unable to draw near to God because of our sin, God draws near to us in the person of his Holy One who on our unholy ground makes his holiness available to us...Through the shedding of his blood outside the gate he sanctifies his people...through the removal of defilement and guilt, and thereby of setting apart as holy unto the Lord.”<sup>15</sup>

Second, Jesus suffered “in order to sanctify the people with his own blood.” Jesus completes the intended purpose of the Day of Atonement.<sup>16</sup> He absorbed the dirt and defilement of our sin. As Herman Ridderbos frames it, Jesus absorbed the “sickness” of human sin so that his blood would deliver cleanliness and a cure.

Jesus is our expiation. David’s prayer to be made clean finds its final answer in the cross. There, even the deepest stains can be made clean. John picks up on this same theme, saying:

...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin...<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:7, 9)

God’s forgiveness comes with all the relief of a cleansing shower. Only—and here’s the important thing—the cross doesn’t just clean my exterior contamination. It’s an inner cleansing, one

sufficient to “cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” My sins, once a shameful stain, have been removed. I am clean. I am whole. I am *forgiven*.

When Jesus suffers outside the camp, it means that he comes to you in the place that no one else can enter—the place of brokenness and filth so that you can be made clean and whole. There is no spot, no stain, no guilt—even the deepest scar—that lies outside the power of his atoning work. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).

## GOD CLOTHES US IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jesus does more than remove our stain. The gospel grants us an entirely new identity. In Zechariah, we read a startling account of this kind of transformation:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" <sup>3</sup> Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. <sup>4</sup> And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." (Zechariah 3:1-4)

As the high priest, Joshua is responsible for representing the people before God—such as when offering the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement. To ensure that they would be ritually clean, priests would spend weeks in seclusion prior to performing their duties. On the actual day of service, they would wash themselves thoroughly before putting on clean linen garments.

Only today, Joshua seems ill-prepared. Hebrew scholars point out that his entire outfit is smattered in excrement. You can imagine how the Hebrew people would gasp with a mixture of fear and disgust. Their chosen representative was standing before the Lord in a state of complete defilement. Imagine, for a moment, that you’re about to have surgery. Before you go under, the surgeon walks in. But instead of wearing clean scrubs and a pair of surgical gloves, she’s covered in horse manure. Here, Joshua’s contamination is far worse, as it impacts the souls of the nation. Satan stands there, ready to hurl insults. Now, this probably isn’t the actual devil—in Hebrew, “Satan” can simply mean “an accuser.” But regardless of who this is exactly, the point is clear: Joshua is defiled. How can he be made clean again?

God commands the angels to remove Joshua’s filthy robes. And in their place God promises to clothe him with “pure vestments.”

What better picture of the gospel.

God removes the stain of your sin. But he also clothes you in righteousness. Isaiah once sang “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with

the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (Isaiah 61:10). And Paul says that those who have experienced new life in Christ “have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). You have a new wardrobe. A new identity. And that changes everything about your life from this point forward.

### ***For those who have sinned***

First, this is good news for those overcome by sexual sin. Your thoughts may be haunted by memories of pornography or extramarital activities. You may find yourself feeling unworthy. Hopeless. But if Jesus is your expiation, then your past has been dealt with. It’s been removed. In its place, God offers you the clean white robes of his own righteousness.

Do you see how this changes everything? Your sin doesn’t have to cling to you like filth. You don’t have to feel like you are cast “outside the camp,” exiled from God and others. When Jesus dies, he doesn’t just give you a light rinse. He removes your stain permanently. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the most famous preachers of all time, puts it this way:

“You shall be so cleansed, that not the shadow of a spot, nor the sign of a sin, shall be left upon you. When a man believes in Christ, he is in that moment, in God’s sight, as though he had never sinned in all his life.... This is the most wonderful thing about the gospel. This does not take away part of our sin, but the whole of it; it does not remove it partially, but entirely; not for a little time, but for ever.”<sup>17</sup>

Paul even tells his readers “you were washed, you were sanctified” (1 Corinthians 6:11). Notice the past tense. It reveals that Christ’s cleansing work was completed. You can live *today* in the confidence of your new identity.

To be clear, sexual sin may still carry earthly consequences. You may still have to deal with an unwanted pregnancy or STI. If you’ve been unfaithful in your marriage, your spouse has Biblical grounds to initiate divorce. But expiation means that God will never hold this sin against you. It will never be a barrier to fellowship with him. And if you see yourself as “washed” and “sanctified,” then you will seek to live consistently with your new identity. If Jesus is your greatest treasure, then lust can no longer claim you as its own.

### ***For those who have been sinned against***

Second, this is good news for survivors of sexual assault and abuse. For you, expiation works a bit differently. You may feel “stained” by the actions of your abuser—but *you do not need to be forgiven for the sins committed against you*. But the gospel can still cleanse you from the shame of your past.

Writing in *The Atlantic*, a survivor explains that her experience left her feeling broken and “undesirable”—as if she deserved what happened:

“I told no one. In my mind, it was not an example of male aggression used against a girl to extract sex from her. In my mind, it was an example of how undesirable I was. It was proof that I was not the kind of girl you took to parties, or the kind of girl you wanted to get to know. I was the kind of girl you took to a deserted parking lot and tried to make give you sex. Telling someone would not be revealing what he had done; it would be revealing how deserving I was of that kind of treatment.”<sup>18</sup>

Jesus may not have gone “to a deserted parking lot.” But as someone who “suffered outside the camp,” he knows what it’s like to enter a place of exile and defilement. On the cross, Jesus was stripped, violated, and dehumanized. In doing so, he bore your shame and your scorn. He absorbed the shame that was never yours to carry. And while your experience may have been an act of conquest, what Jesus has done for you was an act of love.

Now, you can rest in a new identity. Your experience likely left you feeling exposed and vulnerable. It may have twisted your perception of who you are. But you are not simply another victim or statistic. God has placed a robe of fine linen around your shoulders. You are clean. You are whole. You are *his*.

I don’t mean to suggest that the gospel immediately lifts away years of shame and abuse. Your journey forward may still require time—and wise counseling. But it starts, at least, with dealing honestly with where you’ve been, and learning to see yourself through the mercy of Jesus Christ.

## CAST INTO THE SEA

In the darkness of shame and dirtiness, King David found relief in the mercies of God. And so can we. Jesus is my expiation. There is no amount of dirtiness or moral contamination that can’t be washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

Expiation is about cleansing. It’s also about *removal*. The prophet Micah says that God “will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).

How deep is the sea? On average, the ocean is around 3,700 meters deep. That’s about 2.3 miles. On land, that’d be a good distance for a daily jog. But there are places that are deeper still. The Challenger Deep, located in the western Pacific, has a depth of roughly 11,000 meters—nearly 7 miles. If you could somehow sink Mount Everest into this trench, the mountain’s top would still be located nearly a mile below sea level. That’s how far your sin is gone from you. Your sin isn’t lying around for future inspection. God doesn’t store your sins in a drawer or the back of the closet,

waiting to confront you with reminders of your shame. No; he throws it where it can't be retrieved, a place where no accusation can follow, and no stain can resurface. The sea does not return what it has swallowed—and neither does God.

Your sin has been washed away. Your shame has been borne by another. You have been stripped of filthy garments and clothed in righteousness. The stain is gone. The record is gone. And because Jesus has purified you from inside out, you are free at last to stop scrubbing, stop hiding, and stop fearing the mirror. Your sins, though once scarlet, have been made white as snow.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Emily Wax, “Rethinking the Ink: Tattoo Removal Becomes a Growth Industry,” *The Seattle Times*, March 10, 2013, accessed January 28, 2026, <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/rethinking-the-ink-tattoo-removal-becomes-a-growth-industry/>.
- <sup>2</sup> See Richard M. Davidson, “Did King David Rape Bathsheba? A Case Study in Narrative Theology,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 2 (Autumn 2006): 81–95.
- <sup>3</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 161–84.
- <sup>4</sup> Paul Rozin, Linda Millman, and Carol Nemeroff, “Operation of the Laws of Sympathetic Magic in Disgust and Other Domains,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50, no. 4 (1986): 703–12.
- <sup>5</sup> Nichole Fairbrother, Sarah J. Newth, S. Rachman, “Mental pollution: feelings of dirtiness without physical contact, Behaviour Research and Therapy,” Volume 43, Issue 1, 2005, pp 121-130, ISSN 0005-7967, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2003.12.005>.
- <sup>6</sup> Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman III, *Intimate Allies: Rediscovering God’s Design for Marriage and Becoming Soul Mates for Life*, p. 253–54.
- <sup>7</sup> Christian Smith, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 61-2.
- <sup>8</sup> Christian Smith, *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 193.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> For a series of bitter stories, see Smith, *Lost in Transition*, pp. 156-159.
- <sup>11</sup> Rellini, Alessandra. “Review of the Empirical Evidence for a Theoretical Model to Understand the Sexual Problems of Women with a History of Childhood Sexual Abuse.” *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 5, no. 1 (2008): 31–46.
- <sup>12</sup> John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 96.
- <sup>13</sup> Richard E. Averbeck, “Atonement,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).
- <sup>14</sup> See relevant section on “scapegoat” in Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965).
- <sup>15</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, 2 vols. in 1 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).
- <sup>16</sup> See William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, Word Biblical Commentary 47B (Dallas: Word Books, 1991).
- <sup>17</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, “The Silver Trumpet,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1861), 151.
- <sup>18</sup> Caitlin Flanagan, “The Conversation #MeToo Needs to Have,” *The Atlantic*, September 20, 2018, accessed January 27, 2026, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/09/me-too/570520/>.