

There has never been any genuine Bible-believing Christian from the time of the Apostles up to the present day who would deny there is physical healing and perfect health provided in the Atonement of Christ.

However, some may not have always been aware that even under the Old Covenant God was greatly concerned for the physical well-being of His people and gave laws to provide for better health and an improved mortality rate!

For example, the Book of Numbers and Leviticus reveal a very advanced quarantine system for the prevention of disease. The ancient Israelites would not have understood the important significance behind these instructions, as in that time most people were not even aware that such infectious diseases existed!

But we now know that germs from a dead human body are extremely dangerous to other humans because of the high risk of transmission. Now Moses ordered the Israelites to wash their bodies in fresh "*running water*," and similar instructions were given to those who had dealings with any afflicted with an infectious disease. What was so important about this?

The Encyclopaedia Britannica documents that in the year 1845 a young doctor in Vienna was surprised at the terrible death rate of women who were giving birth to their children in hospitals; almost thirty per-cent died after the delivery!

This particular doctor noted that other doctors would examine the bodies of dead patients and then go directly to the next ward and examine pregnant women without washing their hands. Even when some *did* wash their hands, they did so in a bowl of water, which obviously would allow the germs to remain. It was only when he insisted they wash their hands in running water before examination that the death rate dropped!

God also commanded the Israelites to throw out broken pottery, and to scour bronze pots. Again, this is because cracks would contain harmful germs and the pots would need to be disinfected and rinsed with running water to eliminate them.

Another important Old Testament ritual that had a combination of spiritual and physical benefits can be found in the red heifer sacrifice described in detail in chapter 19 of the Book of Numbers.

After being slaughtered with a large knife outside the camp by the young Levitical Priest, the body of the red heifer was completely burned, together with cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool, in a large fire.

The ashes were to be placed in a clay vessel and deposited outside the camp in a clean place to be used for the "*waters of purification.*" The ashes that remained from the previous sacrifices were added to the new ashes to provide a sacred continuity.

The aim of this sacrifice was to purify people who had become ritually defiled by touching a dead corpse. However, in addition to the spiritual significance of the red heifer sacrifice, we now know that the water of purification actually had the ability to kill dangerous germs and destroy infection!

Take for instance the hyssop. This would produce hyssop oil. One commentator explains that this oil is known today in medicine as a very effective antiseptic and antibacterial agent!