

Day 166 - THURSDAY: May 25th

Numbers 19

Numbers 19:1-22 NKJV

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin. And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them. 'He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he

will not be clean. Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him. 'This is the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who are in the tent shall be unclean seven days; and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, is unclean. Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. 'And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean. 'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean. It shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.' "

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll begin with the UCG reading plan: "Here we have one of the most mysterious sacrifices in the Bible. According to author Grant Jeffrey: "The Talmud claims that the Red

Heifer sacrifice was the only one of God's commands that King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, claimed he did not understand" (*The Signature of God*, 1996, pp. 152–153). And indeed, we still may not understand all of the symbolism in this most interesting offering. We do know that we are cleansed by the blood of the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7). And the book of Hebrews confirms that this is part of the symbolism here: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13–14). But there is also the fact that the heifer was a representation of Israel in the Scriptures. Perhaps, then, as was mentioned in the discussion on the sin offering, there is some sense of this offering being fulfilled in the people putting to death their old natures. Indeed, that would seem to tie in with having our consciences purged from dead works. Moreover, though there is not sufficient space to elaborate on it here, Christ stood in Israel's place in a number of respects.

In any event, besides the spiritual significance it certainly had, Jeffrey explains that there was a medical benefit to what God was prescribing here as well, just as there was with the laws for dealing with leprosy. In fact, there were clear similarities (compare Leviticus 14:4). Jeffrey states that "the water of purification described in Numbers 19 actually had the ability to destroy germs and infection. The resulting water of purification solution contained ashes from the Red Heifer sacrifice combined with cedar, hyssop and scarlet thread. This water of purification contained 'cedar' oil that came from a kind of juniper tree that grew in both Israel and the Sinai. This cedar oil would irritate the skin, encouraging the person to vigorously rub the solution into their hands. Most importantly, the hyssop tree—associated with mint, possibly marjoram—would produce hyssop oil. This hyssop oil is actually a very effective antiseptic and antibacterial agent. Hyssop oil contains 50 percent carvacrol, which is an antifungal and antibacterial agent still used in medicine, according to the book *None of These Diseases*. When we note that the waters of purification from the Red Heifer Sacrifice were to be used to cleanse someone who had become defiled and unclean due to touching a dead body, we begin to understand that this

law was an incredibly effective medical law as well as a spiritual law" (p. 153).

Of course, it is not clear how much of the cedar and hyssop oil would remain after burning in the fire. There was probably some. But perhaps God was interested more in the symbolism of cleansing agents here than their actual effectiveness. Burning is itself symbolic of purification. Still, the discussion on open versus sealed containers in the area where someone died should convince any modern reader that God must have had germs in mind to some degree. And it is again worth noting, as in the highlights on leprosy, that there is no way Moses could have understood the need for such advanced medical precautions based on the available knowledge of the time. Divine inspiration is truly the only reasonable conclusion that can be reached."

[END]

Verse 2 – The Hebrew word for “heifer” has already been used a number of times already, but has been translated as “cow” in all previous verses except Genesis 15:9, where it’s translated as “heifer”. This is only the second time we have seen the word “red” in the Bible. The first time was in Genesis 25:30 when Esau wanted Jacob’s red stew. This is the only time where the color of the animal is specified.

It is my assumption, that the color of this animal is meant to serve as a type of the state of our Savior Jesus Christ. Let's review a few passages to examine this. Hebrews 9:13-14 states: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 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? Here we clearly see the author of Hebrews alludes to a variety of sacrifices & offerings, but note the clear connection to "ashes of a heifer" and cleansing/purification physically, to the antitype of the blood of Jesus Christ, who was without spot, for our spiritual cleansing/purification. In the prophetic Psalm 22, in verse 6, it describes the condition of Jesus Christ during the crucifixion process, when it states: "But I am a worm, and no man;" The Hebrew word for "worm" is translated as "scarlet/crimson" 35 out of the 43 times it's found in the KJV. Why? Because this word was used for the color/dye produced from the dried body of a worm "*coccus ilicis*", as well as the worm itself. It is my speculation that Psalm 22:6 would like us as the reader to make the connection between the likeness of smashing/breaking the bodies of these worms and the red crimson color that came out, to the beaten/crushed body of Jesus Christ and the red bloodied state of his body.

We saw in the various aspects of the Offerings of Leviticus how they each brought out different aspects of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, I believe the color of this animal is meant to again to point to an aspect of Jesus Christ's blood for our purification.

It's worth noting, that in September of 2022, 5 red heifers were shipped from Texas to Jerusalem. These animals were just under a year old at that time. At that time, these 5 animals passed the very detailed process of examining them for any hair that was not red and looking for any spot or blemish. These heifers, as of March 2023 were in a secure, undisclosed location in Israel. These animals are now between 1 ½ to 2 years old. According to Jewish teaching, these animals must be 3 years old to be sacrificed, which still leaves time for them to develop a single white or black hair and therefore be disqualified from use. Without going into much detail, the "Temple Institute" claims to have 9 pure priests who have never touched a dead body and the land on the Temple mount for such a sacrifice.

Back to verse 2. The heifer could never have worn a yoke at any time. This may point to the fact that Jesus Christ was never a slave of sin. He was never in bondage to sin. He also was not forced to give His life for our cleansing (John 10:18), but freely gave it for us.

Verse 6 – These three things; cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet were the same as used in the cleansing of a leper (see Leviticus 14:4).

Verse 9 – While the sacrifice was unblemished, it's sacrifice was for sin and therefore it was slaughtered, burned, and ashes stored outside the camp in a clean place. We'll see more of their purpose later in this chapter.

Verse 11 – If someone touched a dead animal, they were only unclean for a day (compared to Leviticus 11:24, 27, 39), but he who touches a dead human body was unclean for 7 days.

Verse 12 – Why 3 and 7? I don't know (haha). We understand that 7 throughout the Bible represent fulfillment, completeness, & perfection.

The following is purely my speculation. The only sign Jesus Christ said He would give to that evil generation was that He would be in the heart of the earth 3 days and 3 nights (Matthew 12:39). Without His resurrection after 3 days/nights, we would still be in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17). We would not be clean, just as Number 19:12 said “But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean.” Is it enough that Jesus Christ was resurrected after 3 days? We also need His second coming. At the second coming of Jesus Christ, the firstfruits of God will be transformed into immortal & incorruptible spirit beings (compare 1 Corinthians 15:52 & 1 Thessalonians 4:14–17). At this time, we will be perfect and complete. Jesus Christ second coming will usher in the government of God and the start of the Millennium. The Sabbath (7th day) has pointed to this time period and step of God’s plan. Could 3 & 7 represent the resurrection and second coming of Jesus Christ which will make our purification/cleansing complete?

Verse 13 – This sprinkling of water was necessary for one to become clean. Without it, a person was not clean. This may be a type of forerunner of the New Testament baptism,

where a person wasn't just sprinkled with water for temporary physical cleansing, but fully submerged in water, joining us to the death & resurrection of Jesus Christ (compare Romans 6:3–5). Without baptism, we as Christians are not cleansed from our sins. These are large topics that I hope each of you will meditate on as entire sermons could be given on these connections.