

The Red Heifer

Numbers 19:1-3



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FOCAL Read Responsively Numbers 19:1-4 And the LORD spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, {2} **This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke: {3} And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face: {4} And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times ...**

When the Old Testament Saint took the **red heifer**, killed it, and **sprinkled its blood seven times before the tabernacle of the congregation**, the Saint did not understand why this was significant. When the heifer was **burned - her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung** – the Saint did not understand what he or she was doing. When the priest took **cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer** – it made no sense to the people. Yet the people did this because God commanded it. They did it because the Lord said **“it is a purification for sin”**. They did it because God said:

Hebrews 10:38 Now **the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.**

The Old Testament Saint would have said, “Explain it? No, I can't explain it. But I will do it because My God has decreed it. I will do it because I love the Lord, and

because He saved me I will follow His direction”.

These Old Testament sacrifices – like the **red heifer** – were **types and shadows of good things to come**. A few of God's key people understood what was going on. Jesus said of **God's servant Moses**:

John 5:46 For ... Moses ... wrote of me.

Moses knew that the key to understanding the **sacrifice of the red heifer** was tied to the Coming Messiah, Jesus Christ our Lord. Prior to Moses the Lord said that **Abraham the father of faith**:

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Saw the Coming Messiah, and rejoiced in that vision. If we want to understand the Old Testament sacrifices – and why God had Israel do them – we need to do as Moses and Abraham did. We need to understand that the **law was but a shadow of the Coming Savior (Hebrews 10:1), and as a shadow these things were to pass away once He – Jesus Christ – came**. The

Galatians 3:24-25 ... law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. {25} But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Christ has come. Faith has come. We are saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are no longer under the schoolmaster. But we can learn something

about our Christian faith by studying the red heifer.

Note The Differences In The Sacrifices

The **red heifer sacrifice** was quite different from the **Passover Offering** and the **Burnt or Whole Offering**.

PASSOVER The **Passover** was slain, then eaten whole (as we studied last Sunday). Once it was killed its Blood was placed on the door posts of the household *where it was to be eaten*.

Exodus 12:7-11 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. {8} And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. {9} Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. {10} And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. {11} And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover.

The **Passover** symbolized the intensity of the true believer's faith in Christ. Christ must be eaten – consumed – by faith. He becomes a part of the believer.

The **Lamb of God** was *roasted whole*, symbolic of our sins being poured out on Him and judged. The Lamb was *eaten in its entirety, no bone being broken*. This symbolized the *consuming faith that the true believer in Christ has*. Jesus said:

“**John 6:53-56** Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. {54} Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. {55} For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. {56} He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”**

BURNT

The **Burnt or Whole Offering** illustrated the *intensity of our sins* poured out on Christ.

This was one of the earliest offerings. A Burnt Offering was made by **Noah** when he and his family departed the Ark:

Genesis 8:20-21 And **Noah built an altar unto the LORD**; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and **offered burnt offerings on the altar. {21} And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have**

done.

The **Burnt Offering** made atonement or a covering for man's sin. The Burnt Offering was killed, and its Blood scattered. It was beaten – flayed after its killing – and *burned in its entirety*. None of it was eaten, though the Burnt Offering was *without blemish*.

Leviticus 1:3-6 If his offering be a **burnt sacrifice of the herd**, let him offer **a male without blemish**: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. **{4} And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. {5} And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. {6} And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.**

Leviticus 1:9 **But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD.**

The priest laid his hand on the head of the Burnt Offering – then it was violently killed and burned in its entirety. None of it was kept. Our sins were transferred to Jesus Christ on the Cross – poured out on Him and judged – *intensely*. The Bible says:

Isaiah 53:4-5 Surely **he hath borne our griefs, and**

carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. {5} But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

RED HEIFER The Red Heifer Offering was a quite different sacrifice. The Red Heifer was *unique*. God had to cause a red heifer to be born. Dr. Thomas Constable writes:

A heifer is a young female cow older than a calf. The priest killed it as a sin offering (vv. 9, 17). Probably God required a female because the female was the bearer of life, and continued life is what this sacrifice provided. The Lord may have intended the red color to emphasize sin or perhaps the vitality of the heifer's life. The animal was in its full strength having never borne a yoke. Of course, it was to be without a blemish (v. 2). The Israelites were to slay the animal outside the camp because of its connection with sin and death. The high priest was to observe the slaying making sure the person in charge did it properly. This was a very important sacrifice. The sprinkling of the blood shows that this slaying was a sin offering. The animal died for the sin of the congregation (v. 4).

The Red Heifer Offering symbolized the *continuing nature of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross*.

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The heifer was burned in its entirety, and its ashes were gathered and saved to be mixed with water. This water, the water of purification, was sprinkled on the people *daily* – for we all sin *daily*. It is significant that the Red Heifer Offering was introduced *after the rebellion of Korah*, who:

Numbers 16:2 ... rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

Let us look to this text and learn three great truths that the Red Heifer Offering teaches us:

1. The True Believer In Christ Is Subject To The Daily Defilement of Sin

When you came to God by faith you were justified by faith. The Bible says:

Romans 3:24-25 Being justified¹ freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: {25}

1 G1344, δικαιοῦ, dikaiōō, dik-ah-yo'-o, From G1342; to render (that is, show or regard as) just or innocent: - free, justify (-ier), be righteous.

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation {or satisfactory payment} through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

The word “**justified**” is a Greek word that means “**to render or declare innocent or righteous**”. The word doesn't mean that you are **made righteous**, but it means that the Righteous Judge – Almighty God – has looked at the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, looked at your heart and your acceptance of that Sacrifice, and has said “**I accept what Jesus Christ My Son did on your behalf. You are now righteous in My eyes and before My Holy Judgment – not because of anything you have done – but because of what Christ has done**”.

What the Passover and the Burnt Offering looked forward to and illustrated became an eternal reality in Christ.

“**He that believeth in the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him**”. (John 3:36)

“**He that believeth on Christ is not condemned, but He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the Only Begotten Son of God**”. (John 3:18)

We are not justified by faith PLUS works. We are “**justified by faith**” in the finished work of Christ. What does the Scripture say?

Hebrews 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God;

“**Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins forever**”. No one helped Him, no one added to that which He did. Our justification – the fact that God has declared us righteous – has absolutely nothing to do with our works. We are justified by faith, Sons of God because of what Jesus did.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

“**By one offering He hath perfected forever them ...**”. That which the Passover and the Burnt Offering looked forward to has come. Yet we who believe are not sinless.

God's Israel was saved – Egypt was far behind her – and yet she still needed a daily covering or atonement for sin.

We as Christ's Church Age believers also need a daily cleansing from sin. I have met people who say “I no longer sin now that I am saved”. It is true that a believer *hates sin*. We hate it because of what it did to our Savior. We hate it because it caused the pouring out of His Blood, the pouring out of the burning wrath of God on Him, the pouring out of His precious life like water for a creature such as I. No Christian in his or her right mind revels in sin. Yet Beloved, we are *not sinless*. The Bible says:

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

You who are Christians will *never stand before the Great White Throne Judgment of God*. You will never be cast into the **Lake of Fire that burneth forever**. Why? Because you are

Titus 3:7 ... justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

You are “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”. Your heritage is in yonder Heaven because of Jesus – but you are not perfect. We daily come into contact with the death and dearth of sin.

CONTEXT Numbers 19:16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

God's people come in contact with the dead thing, with the spiritually dead. The best person among us is polluted by contact with evil. The Apostle Paul cried out:

Romans 7:22-24 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: {23} But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. {24} O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

We receive sin by contact with other sinners. Look again at your context:

Numbers 19:14 This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

We don't have to touch the dead just to be defiled by it. When we cross the street and see the scantily clad woman or man sin worketh in us. When we walk in the proximity of the blasphemer, dead in his sin and in his language, sin worketh in us.

I once heard a foolish Christian tell me that “**Christ went to the publicans and prostitutes, went where they lived, and witnessed to them**”. Dear friend, you are not Christ! Go where the dead are very carefully, lest the stench of death cling to you. Remember, you cannot play in the sandbox and not get sandy.

It is not possible for a mere mortal to look on another man's sin and not receive some measure of contamination.

Solomon said

Song of Solomon 1:6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me

If we are not careful in our Christian walks – if we do not cover our hearts – like God expected His people to

cover their water jugs:

CONTEXT Numbers 19:15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean.

ILLUSTRATE Then sin can creep into our lives. You can have a candle inside a glass lantern house and – because of that covering – the candle will not be extinguished. Remove that covering and that watchfulness and the slightest breeze will extinguish the brightest of flames. The devil will wander about the lantern of your life looking for a crack by which he can introduce sin. **Do not give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27)**. What does the Scripture say? **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7)**. And again:

1 Thessalonians 5:5-10 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. {6} Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. {7} For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. {8} But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. {9} For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, {10} Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

2. The True Believer In Christ Has A Sure Solution For Our Daily Defilement

CONTEXT Numbers 19:17-19 And for an unclean

person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: {18} And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: {19} And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

What is the solution for the daily pollution of sin? It is exactly the same solution that we enjoyed at the point of salvation.

It's all about Jesus. It's all about the Blood of Calvary. The ashes of the Red Heifer – the unique creature sacrificed and burned under the Judgment of God – are gathered and mixed with **running or fresh water**. This ash - water mixture was then sprinkled on the defiled person. The water made that person clean.

What did the water and ash mixture symbolize?

The water symbolized the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus told us:

John 7:38-39 He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. {39} (But this spake he of the Spirit,

which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

When you were saved by faith in Christ God sent His Holy Spirit to live and abide within you. The Sacrifice of Calvary – symbolized by the ashes of the Red Heifer – are mixed with water – a symbol of the Holy Spirit. You are a Child of God because of the Sacrifice of Calvary. You are a Son of God because of the indwelling Holy Spirit. When defiled by sin, we who are believers turn to our Father in faith. We

1 John 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. {9} If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“confess our sins, believing Him to be faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”. The Christian is a person who now has communion with God. **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

“What is there opened for the house of David, for sin, and for uncleanness? A cistern? A cistern that might be emptied, a water pot, such as that which stood at Cana’s marriage feast, and might be drained? No, there is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness. We wash, the fountain flows; we wash again, the fountain flows still. From the great depths of the deity of Christ, the eternal merit of his passion comes everlastingly welling up. Wash! Wash! It is inexhaustible, for it is fountain-fullness.”

What did the Apostle say?

1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: {2} And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

It is God's desire that **we sin not**. The Lord knows how destructive sin is. But **if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus the righteous. He is the atonement – the satisfactory payment for our sins.** He is the fulfillment of the Red Heifer Offering. He was:

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

I pray that you know Him.

May God touch your hearts with His Word!

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