

Message Five

The Water for Impurity

MR Hymns: 639

Scripture Reading: Num. 19

- Num 19:1 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,
Num 19:2 This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Tell the children of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which is no blemish and upon which a yoke has never come.
Num 19:3 And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and someone shall bring it outside the camp and slaughter it in his presence.
Num 19:4 And Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle its blood toward the front of the Tent of Meeting seven times.
Num 19:5 And the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its skin and its flesh and its blood, with its dung, shall be burned.
Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.
Num 19:7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; but the priest shall be unclean until the evening.
Num 19:8 And he who burns the heifer shall wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until the evening.
Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.
Num 19:10 And he who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. And it shall be a perpetual statute to the children of Israel and to the stranger who sojourns among them.
Num 19:11 One who touches the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days.
Num 19:12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he shall be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall not be clean.
Num 19:13 Whoever touches a dead person, the body of a human being who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of Jehovah; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.
Num 19:14 This is the law when a man dies in a tent: Anyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean seven days.
Num 19:15 And every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, is unclean.
Num 19:16 And whoever in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or a dead body or a human bone or a grave shall be unclean seven days.
Num 19:17 And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering, and running water shall be added to them in a vessel;
Num 19:18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one who died or the grave.
Num 19:19 And the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day, and on the seventh day he shall purify him. And he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean in the evening.
Num 19:20 But the man who shall be unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the congregation, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Jehovah; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean.
Num 19:21 So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening.
Num 19:22 And whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.

I. Numbers 19, a very special chapter in the Old Testament, is a record concerning the water for impurity.

Num 19 be omitted.

II. The impurity in this chapter does not refer to sin but to death—vv. 11, 13-16:

Num 19:11 One who touches the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days.

- Num 19:13 Whoever touches a dead person, the body of a human being who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of Jehovah; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.
- Num 19:14 This is the law when a man dies in a tent: Anyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean seven days.
- Num 19:15 And every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, is unclean.
- Num 19:16 And whoever in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or a dead body or a human bone or a grave shall be unclean seven days.
- A. Death issues from sin, and sin is the root of death—Rom. 5:12:
- Rom 5:12 Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned-
1. Death is more defiling in the eyes of God than sin—Lev. 11:24-25; Num. 6:6-7, 9.

Lev 11:24 And by these you shall become unclean; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening,

Lev 11:25 And whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.

Num 6:6 All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person.

Num 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head.

Num 6:9 And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him so that he defiles the head of his separation, then he shall shave his head on the day he becomes clean; on the seventh day shall he shave it.
 2. The most hateful thing in the eyes of God is death; death is an ugly, abominable thing, and we should detest it—vv. 6-7.

Num 6:6 All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person.

Num 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head.
 3. The death that we need to avoid is spiritual death—Rev. 3:1-2; Rom. 5:12, 14:

Rev 3:1 And to the messenger of the church in Sardis write: These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you are living, and yet you are dead.

Rev 3:2 Become watchful and establish the things which remain, which were about to die; for I have found none of your works completed before My God.

Rom 5:12 Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned-

Rom 5:14 But death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a type of Him who was to come.

 - a. Spiritual death is more prevailing on earth than physical death—v. 17.

Rom 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
 - b. Spiritual death is everywhere; not only sinful, worldly places but even the most moral, ethical places are full of spiritual death.
- B. From the sin of rebellion in Numbers 11 through 14 and in chapter 16, death became prevailing among the children of Israel—v. 49:
- Num 11-14 be omitted.
- Num 16 be omitted.
- Num 16:49 Now those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died on account of Korah.
1. After the rebellion of the children of Israel in Numbers 16 and as a result of God's judgment, the entire population of Israel was under the effect of death—v. 49.

Num 16:49 Now those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died on account of Korah.
 2. The filthiness of death had spread everywhere, and the people were in a situation of impurity.

3. In chapter 19 God told them to prepare the water for impurity with the ashes of a red heifer so that they might use the water to remove the filthiness of death with which they had been affected.
Num 19 be omitted.

III. The red heifer, the principal component of the water for impurity, signifies the redeeming Christ—v. 9:

- Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.
- A. The color red signifies the likeness of the flesh of sin, which is for the bearing of man's sin outwardly—Rom. 8:3; John 1:29.

Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
 - B. The red heifer was without defect; this signifies that although Christ was in the likeness of the flesh of sin, He did not have the sinful nature—v. 14; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin.

Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

2 Cor 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
 - C. That the heifer was without blemish indicates that Christ was perfect—Num. 19:2; Exo. 12:5-6.

Num 19:2 This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Tell the children of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which is no blemish and upon which a yoke has never come.

Exo 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Exo 12:6 And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole congregation of the assembly of Israel shall kill it at twilight.
 - D. The heifer having never been under a yoke signifies that Christ was never used by anyone, especially by or for God's enemy, Satan—Num. 19:2; cf. Exo. 12:5.

Num 19:2 This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Tell the children of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which is no blemish and upon which a yoke has never come.

Exo 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.
 - E. The red heifer was brought outside the camp and slaughtered; Christ was crucified outside the camp, on Calvary, a small mount outside the city of Jerusalem—Num. 19:3; Heb. 13:12-13; Matt. 27:33.

Num 19:3 And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and someone shall bring it outside the camp and slaughter it in his presence.

Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Heb 13:13 Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

Matt 27:33 And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,

IV. The slain red heifer was burned, and the priest took “cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer”—Num. 19:6:

- A. Cedar wood signifies the honorable and uplifted humanity of the Lord, which enables Him to be our Savior—v. 6; cf. 1 Kings 4:33:
- Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.
- 1 Kings 4:33 And he discoursed about trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that shoots forth out of the wall; he also discoursed about animals and about birds and about creeping things and about fish.
1. In the Bible a cedar, a tall and strong tree, refers to a humanity that is filled with glory—S. S. 1:17.
S. S. 1:17 The beams of our house are cedars; / Our rafters are cypresses.
 2. Cedar, in typology, indicates the resurrected, ascended, glorified, and honored humanity of Jesus.
 3. Cedar wood signifies Christ’s heavenly humanity, His glorified humanity, and His heavenly human life—8:9.
S. S. 8:9 If she is a wall, / We will build on her a battlement of silver; / And if she is a door, / We will enclose her with boards of cedar.
 4. Just as the cedar tree far transcends over all other trees, Christ is the only glorified man among all men—5:15; Phil. 2:9-11.
S. S. 5:15 His legs are pillars of white marble, / Set upon bases of gold; / His appearance is like Lebanon, / As excellent as the cedars.
Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
Phil 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.
 5. As signified by cedar, Christ is a person who has ascended into heaven and whose excellency and uplifted and noble humanity transcend all others—S. S. 5:15.
S. S. 5:15 His legs are pillars of white marble, / Set upon bases of gold; / His appearance is like Lebanon, / As excellent as the cedars.
- B. Hyssop, which is among the smallest of plants, signifies that the Lord was willing to be lowly, becoming in the likeness of men, so that He might be near to man and become man’s Savior—Num. 19:6; 1 Kings 4:33; Phil. 2:7.
- Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.
- 1 Kings 4:33 And he discoursed about trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that shoots forth out of the wall; he also discoursed about animals and about birds and about creeping things and about fish.
- Phil 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;
- C. On the one hand, the Lord has the highest standard of humanity, as typified by cedar wood; on the other hand, He was willing to become lowly so that He might be available to us, as typified by hyssop.
- D. Scarlet, a dark red color, implies much in typology—Num. 19:6:
- Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.
1. The color scarlet signifies the shedding of blood, referring to the redeeming work of the cross—Heb. 9:12, 14, 22; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.
Heb 9:12 And not through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood, entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, obtaining an eternal redemption.

- Heb 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- Heb 9:22 And almost all things are purified by blood according to the law, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- 1 Pet 1:18 Knowing that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that you were redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers,
- 1 Pet 1:19 But with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ;
2. In Leviticus 14:4 scarlet signifies that the Lord lowered Himself to become a man that He might do the will of God and shed His blood for our redemption.

Lev 14:4 Then the priest shall command that two living clean birds and cedar wood and scarlet strands and hyssop be taken for the one who is to be cleansed.
 3. Scarlet signifies the blood of Christ shed for our redemption in its highest significance—Num. 19:6.

Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.
- E. The high and dignified Christ and the lowly and humbled Christ in His redemption were elements for the composition of the water for impurity—v. 6.
- Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

V. The ashes of the heifer were gathered up and placed outside the camp in a clean place to be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity—v. 9:

- Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.
- A. Ashes signify the result of Christ's death:
 1. In the Bible ashes signify something in its final form—Lev. 6:10.

Lev 6:10 And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers he shall put on his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has consumed the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar.
 2. To be reduced to ashes is to be reduced to nothing.
 3. In Numbers 19:9 ashes signify Christ reduced to nothing—Mark 9:12.

Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.

Mark 9:12 And He said to them, Elijah does indeed come first and restore all things. And how is it that it is written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be counted as nothing?
 - B. After the cedar, the hyssop, and the scarlet strands were burned with the heifer, the ashes were gathered up and kept in a clean place; this is what makes the red heifer unique.
 - C. The eternal efficacy of Christ's redemption can be seen in the type of the ashes of the red heifer that was slaughtered and burned—Num. 19:9; Heb. 9:12.

Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.

Heb 9:12 And not through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood, entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, obtaining an eternal redemption.
 - D. These ashes were kept for the water for impurity; it was a purification of sin, or a sin offering—Num. 19:2, 4, 6, 9, 11-12:

Num 19:2 This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Tell the children of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which is no blemish and upon which

- a yoke has never come.
- Num 19:4 And Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle its blood toward the front of the Tent of Meeting seven times.
- Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.
- Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.
- Num 19:11 One who touches the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days.
- Num 19:12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he shall be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall not be clean.
1. If an Israelite touched something unclean and became unclean before God, a clean person could mix the water for impurity with the ashes and sprinkle it on the unclean person; this would remove the person's uncleanness—vv. 11-12.

Num 19:11 One who touches the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days.

Num 19:12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he shall be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall not be clean.
 2. The ashes were used to remove uncleanness; they were prepared for the future and would be used when uncleanness was detected at a later time.
- E. One aspect of the work of the Lord Jesus is like that of the ashes of the red heifer—vv. 2, 9:
- Num 19:2 This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Tell the children of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which is no blemish and upon which a yoke has never come.
- Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.
1. The ashes of the red heifer signify the eternal and unchanging efficacy of the Lord's redemption—v. 9:

Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.

 - a. The ashes of the red heifer signify the Lord's redemption, which He has accomplished for us—Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7.

Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace,
 - b. His redemption is forever unchanging and incorruptible—Heb. 9:12.

Heb 9:12 And not through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood, entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, obtaining an eternal redemption.
 2. Whenever an Israelite touched something unclean, he needed only to have the ashes of the red heifer mixed with the water for impurity and to have it sprinkled on his body—Num. 19:11-12.

Num 19:11 One who touches the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days.

Num 19:12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he shall be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall not be clean.
 3. The Lord's redemption has accomplished everything; He made provision for all our future uncleanness and future sins:
 - a. The ashes are specifically for the future.

- b. The ashes of the red heifer tell us that the past work of the cross is applicable for our use today.
- c. The red heifer has been burned once for all, and its ashes are enough to cover our entire life.
- d. We thank the Lord that His redemption is sufficient for our whole life.

VI. Numbers 19:17 speaks of the burning of the red heifer and the running water that was added to the ashes in a vessel:

- Num 19:17 And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering, and running water shall be added to them in a vessel;
- A. The running (literally, living) water in Numbers 19:17 signifies the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Christ—John 7:37-39.
 - Num 19:17 And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering, and running water shall be added to them in a vessel;
 - John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
 - John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
 - John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
 - B. In the water for impurity, there is the efficacy of Christ's redemption with the washing power of the Spirit of His resurrection.

VII. Because death was prevailing among the children of Israel, there was the need for the water for impurity, and whenever we are defiled by death, we need Christ as the reality of the red heifer for the water for impurity—Num. 16:49; 19:2, 9:

- Num 16:49 Now those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died on account of Korah.
- Num 19:2 This is the statute of the law which Jehovah has commanded, saying, Tell the children of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which is no blemish and upon which a yoke has never come.
- Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.
- A. In Numbers 19 the water for impurity cleansed away and annulled the effect of death that came from the great rebellion in chapter 16.
 - Num 19, 16 be omitted.
 - B. The water for impurity, to which the ashes were added, typifies the efficacy of Christ's redemption, which continually cleanses us by the living water of life in order to restore our fellowship with God—1 John 1:7.
 - 1 John 1:7 But 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 every sin.
 - C. Only the working of Christ's redemption, through His dignified and humbled humanity, with His death and the Spirit of His resurrection, could heal and cleanse the situation from the uncleanness of death—Num. 19:6, 9, 17.
 - Num 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer.
 - Num 19:9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering.
 - Num 19:17 And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering, and running water shall be added to them in a vessel;