

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Propheying Message Seventeen : The water for impurity

I. Overview:

Numbers 19 is a record concerning the water for impurity. The impurity in this chapter does not refer to sin but to death. From the sin of rebellion in Numbers 11 through 14 and in chapter 16, death became prevailing among the children of Israel; and as a result of God's judgment, the entire population of Israel was under the effect of death. 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. The red heifer signifies the redeeming Christ; the slain red heifer was burned, and the priest took cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer. 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. Whenever we are defiled by death, we need 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.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the background of the water for impurity and its efficacy.

The water for impurity was to be sprinkled upon the unclean persons; those who touched a dead body, or came into a tent or were already in a tent in which a man died, or touched one who had been slain with a sword, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave. This is a picture of the situation of the children of Israel at that time. The uncleanness of death was everywhere. Thus, there was the need for the water for impurity to heal and cleanse the situation.

B. Explain according to the typology in the Old Testament, sin is not as dirty as death.

Death is an ugly, abominable thing. Therefore, we need to abstain from death. The death from which we should abstain is spiritual death. Not only sinful, worldly places but even the most moral, ethical places are full of spiritual death. If one sinned, he could be forgiven and cleansed immediately by offering a trespass offering. But if one touched death, he had to wait a few days to become clean.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the meaning of the heifer being without spot and never having come under a yoke.

The red heifer refers to the Lord Jesus, who was to be without spot, defect or blemish and was never to have come under a yoke. Being without spot and blemish refers to His life. Never having come under a yoke refers to His work. He never touched the things of sin. He was never oppressed by sin or dominated by sin. He was never provoked to sin. He is completely free. Only the Lord Jesus has never been put under the yoke of sin.

B. How does the red heifer signify the Lord coming in the likeness of the flesh of sin to bear man's sins?

Here the color red represents sin. Thus, the red heifer signifies the Lord being made sin on our behalf. However, the color red was only on the skin and hair, signifying that the Lord had only the likeness of the flesh of sin for bearing our sins and did not have the sinful nature. A heifer used here as a type of the Lord. In the Bible the female represents subjective experience. The Lord's redemption, as signified by the heifer, is a matter of subjective experience.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the burning here being different from that of the burnt offering in Leviticus 1:9.

The efficacy of the red heifer's death was toward God and was able to make propitiation before God for man's sins. Numbers 19:5 says, "The heifer shall be burned in his sight; its skin and its flesh and its blood, with its dung, shall be burned." This is different from the burning of the burnt offering in Leviticus 1:9. The burnt offering was to produce a fragrance that was acceptable to God, whereas the burning of the heifer was for the bearing of sins and for dealing with sins completely.

B. Expound while the red heifer was being burned, cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet strands were cast into its midst.

Cedar wood and hyssop have the same spiritual significance in Numbers as they do in Leviticus. Both cedar wood and hyssop signify the humanity that the Lord Jesus put on. Cedar wood signifies the dignified and solid aspect of the Lord's humanity, whereas hyssop signifies the lowly and humble aspect of His humanity.

Day 4 —

A. What do the ashes in Numbers 19:9 signify?

In Numbers 19:9 the ashes refer to the remains of the red heifer, signifying that the Lord's redeeming death in resurrection is eternally efficacious. This eternal efficacy of the Lord's redemption is in His resurrection. The ashes of the heifer being placed outside the camp in a clean place signifies that the efficacy of the Lord's redemption remains in the place of sinners.

B. Why do we say that the burning of the red heifer is for future transgressions?

One aspect of the Lord's work is like that of the ashes of the red heifer. The efficacy of redemption is signified by the ashes. Whenever a man becomes unclean or has touched some unclean things, he only needs to take the ashes of the red heifer that was offered once and mix them with water and sprinkle them on the body. His redemption accomplished everything. He made provision for all of our future uncleanness and future sins.

Day 5 —

A. Expound to be sprinkled by the ashes mixed with running water in order to be clean.

According to Numbers 19, whoever touched death or was defiled and thus became unclean needed to be sprinkled by the ashes mixed with running water in order to be clean. This corresponds to 1 John 1:7; this means that if we realize that we have sinned, we should take the blood of the Lord Jesus in order to wash away our sins for the purpose of restoring the fellowship between God and us.

B. Explain in Numbers 19:12, what purifying himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day means.

The third day signifies resurrection, and the seventh day signifies completion. If we are defiled, we need to be in resurrection in order to allow the Holy Spirit to apply the efficacy of the Lord's redemption to us. On the third day the water for impurity was sprinkled, and on the seventh day the unclean person became clean. This signifies that after we apply the efficacy of the Lord's redemption in resurrection, we will become clean according to the time of completion.

Day 6 —

A. Explain the spiritual meaning of in these ashes being the skin, the flesh, and the blood.

Ashes are the final state of everything in the world. Everything of the heifer is burned. In these ashes are the skin, the flesh, and the blood. This means that in these ashes are the redemption of Christ and the eternal efficacy of His redemption. Christ is eternally efficacious before God. He has become the ashes. The shedding of His blood is eternally efficacious.

B. Expound the significance of being put into the living water to become the water for impurity.

If there are only the ashes of the red heifer without the living water, they will not be of much use. With the Lord's work, there is still the need of the Holy Spirit that will we be purified and cleansed. The ashes of the red heifer represent the eternal and immutable efficacy of the Lord's work on the cross. It is this efficacy that is cleansing us. Because the Lord has died, the efficacy becomes eternal, and by the Holy Spirit He is now applying this efficacy to us.

III. Conclusion:

The background of Numbers 19, there were five times of rebellion among the children of Israel. After the severe judgement of God, death became prevailing among them. For this God's divine provision prepared a water for impurity to get rid of the effect and impurity of death. A red heifer was burned and the ashes were used to make the water for impurity; the ashes typified the eternal efficacy of Christ's redemption, which fulfilled the word in Hebrews 9:12 that the eternal and incorruptible efficacy of the ashes is applicable for our use not only today but also specifically for the future. These words are practically applicable in First John 1:7 and 9, "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.", "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."