

Numbers 19 Bible Study Notes

1 And the LORD spake 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:

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

God commands Moses and Aaron to tell Israel; bring us a red heifer that is without spot and which has never been used as a work animal.

Notice; this is an action of the nation and not an individual. This would implement a unified national effort of obedience to God.

Why? "a red heifer without spot"

History teaches that the idolatrous nations of the world at this time only sacrificed red bulls and the red cows were sacred to them. God using the red heifer would certainly deter any idolaters from participating in worship of God.

In performing the national effort; Israel would be reminded that God required perfection in sacrifice and forgiveness of sins. This reminds us, as it did Israel, that God, only, is able to create a perfect sacrifice. That which is created perfect is a picture of Jesus Christ incarnate.

Why? "upon which never came yoke" I believe this distinction is made, so that there is a unified national effort made, to observe; when God provided a red heifer, to keep it set apart as a sacrifice for the Lord. Demonstrating that the sacrifice was not to be under bondage to man but was set apart to the service of God only. This reminds us that man does not command the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God does command man.

This gives us the emblematic picture; our works are not an acceptable sacrifice to God, only that which is created perfect by God. Therefore, we can't saddle the sacrificial red heifer with our own works.

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:

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

Why would God use Eleazar and not Aaron? If Aaron had went outside the camp he would have been unclean and unable to perform his required duties. Therefore, God foreknowing this gave commandment that the next priest below Aaron would go forth and perform this ritual.

Notice that Eleazar did not kill the red heifer but he appointed someone to do this according to God's commandments. This thought gives us the picture of the crucifixion of Christ which was carried out, outside the camp, by the very priesthood of the day, the Scribes and Pharisees.

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:

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

Although the sacrifice was carried out outside the camp, Eleazar was still directed to sprinkle the blood of the red heifer before the tabernacle. This emblemizes that it is necessary to be cleansed by the blood before one could enter the tabernacle.

The fact that it was to be done seven times demonstrates; that the blood of Christ was sufficient for all time.

This is a picture for us today, that one must be washed in the blood of Christ and be born again before they can enter the church and claim the forgiveness of sins that Christ has provided for them.

5 And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: 6 And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

We remember in Exodus 12, at the passover supper, there was the use of the blood of the sacrificial lamb, applied with hyssop to the two side post and the lintel of the door.

We remember in Leviticus 14, the cleansing of the leper and the use of the cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet, in conjunction with the blood of the doves and the running water, was the process of the cleansing of the leper.

So what would the tossing of these items into the sacrificial fire have to do with anything and especially us today?

It is emblematic and demonstrates that; being born again, we have been cleansed from the touch of the body of death. It shows that there has already been a cleansing performed for us, that we may approach the tabernacle of our God and not die. The blood already having been applied to the door post, with the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, has given us the forgiveness of sins we need to be in church fellowship with God and one another.

It demonstrates the fulfillment of the sacrificial law in Christ death, burial, and resurrection.

7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. 8 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

The priest and the one that actually burned the sacrifice are both to wash in water and then they can enter back into the camp. Both are to be unclean until the evening, that is the offering of the evening sacrifice that would take away all the actual uncleanness.

The washing in water could give us the picture of the born again sinner joining the church body by walking in water baptism.

9 And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

Notice that the remnants of the red heifer are only ashes. They are gathered together and stored in a clean place. They are kept for mixing with running water to be sprinkled upon the bodies of the unclean in a process of purification.

This gives us a picture of something in time today, what you ask? What is left of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary? There is only his Word of truth, the bible. This is a picture of the ashes being gathered unto one clean place, just as the word of God has been gathered into one book called the bible.

As the ashes were to be mixed with the running water; the word of God must be mixed with the continuous working power of the Holy Spirit, to bring a person to the understanding of the need for purification, that will enable them to truly enter into the church fellowship, and a relationship with our Saviour, and Lord, Jesus Christ.

10 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

In verses 1-10 we have the ritual of the sacrifice of the red heifer.

In verses 11-22 we have the application of the red heifer sacrifice.

We consider, this ordinance was given in answer to the Israelites question in:

Nu 17:12-13 12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. 13 Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?

They are now afraid to come near the tabernacle, because of the death sentences they saw executed upon those who misused the sacrificial law service in any way.

This action, the blood of sprinkling and sprinkling of the water of purification, gave them a cleansing that they could do, that would give them a right attitude when they approached the tabernacle.

11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. 13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

We see in this the picture; the dead and alienated sinner being born again and being cleansed by the washing of the waters of purification. Another reason to join the local church body and be baptized.

We also see the picture; the one who does not cleanse themselves and approaches the altar of sacrifice remaining unclean and lost.

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. 15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. 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. 17 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.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

We notice that the unclean must be ministered to by the clean. This is why the church does not use worldly methods and means to add to the church membership. If the unclean minister the ritual, the unclean will remain unclean.

This reminds us that we can remit sins here on earth as seen in:

Joh 20:23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Only Christ can remove those sins from us, before God the Father, in the eternal perspective.

20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

We are reminded that if one refuses to be cleansed they are cut off from Israel and are not a part of Israel any more.

This is a stark reminder to us; if one professes to be a part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and an that person refuses to live an obedient life to the commandment of Christ, we have evidence that they are not actually a part of the church, and we are to remove them from the church body.

21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even. 22 And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.

Clarke Lee's Commentary:

In summation of this chapter as a whole we see a picture. The picture of the red heifer being emblematic of the church of Jesus Christ in time. How do we arrive at this scene with clarity?

Consider, almost all sacrifices for sin were males and here we have a female. Why? The female usage gives us the picture of the church, the Lamb's wife, the woman betrothed to the man, Jesus Christ.

Where was the red heifer sacrificed? "that he may bring her forth without the camp" This reminds us; Christ Jesus was not offered upon the altar in the tabernacle but was crucified outside of Jerusalem on the hill of Golgotha.

But how do we see the church in this? Who did Christ take to the cross; as He, the perfect created sacrifice, offered himself upon the cross? Every heir of grace, the whole of the church, went with him as he bore us in his bosom, and upon his shoulders, as the high priest bore the names of Israel.

We remember that the high priest didn't offer this sacrifice but the next in line. Christ did not come into the world as a High Priest; He came as the perfect created sacrifice. Having ascended back into the eternal heaven, He is now serving in the office of High Priest forever.

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Well, what about all this ritual of the sprinkling to accomplish cleanness that enabled one to approach the tabernacle to make sacrifice to the Lord?

Emblematically we see; The residue of the burned red heifer was to be mixed with running water and sprinkled upon the unclean on the 3rd and 7th days. We see the 3rd day, the Holy Spirit being given to the church upon the resurrection of Christ. In the 7th day we see, the final resurrection in which all the dead in Christ will be forever freed from uncleanness.

Back to the church and the sprinkling let's look at some New Testament scripture:

Heb 9:13-14 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 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?

Praise the Lord for the finished work of salvation by grace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Praise the Lord for the Church of Grace which is provided for us in time. Praise the Lord, it is the right thing to do.

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