

Title: **THE RED HEIFER**

Text: Numbers 19:1-22

Subject: *Christ Typified by the Red Heifer*

Date: Sunday Morning — February 19, 2012

Tape # AA-51

Readings: *Numbers 19:1-22 or Hebrews 9:1-28*

Introduction:

The children of Israel understood that the strictness of God's law and his utter holiness forbade the possibility of sinful man drawing near to God or even approaching the Tabernacle of his holiness. Back in chapter 17, beginning at verse 12, we read...

(Numbers 17:12-13) "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?"

Sinful man cannot approach the holy God, except God himself make a way for us to do so. In Numbers 19 we have a blessed picture of Christ the Way God has made by which sinners may be made clean and

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come to the holy Lord God. The picture here given, the type here presented is **THE RED HEIFER**, the sacrifice of the red heifer. That is my subject, — **THE RED HEIFER**. Our text will be Numbers 19:1-22.

John Trapp rightly suggested that the words “*red heifer*” might be typed out “Christ covered with his own blood.”

When we read the books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), we should mentally read as the heading over each chapter the words of our blessed Savior, “**Moses wrote of me**” (John 5:46). Take the Lord Jesus Christ with you as a key, and the mysteries of the Mosaic writings will fall open before you. If you do not read each chapter as giving you a picture of Christ, Leviticus and Numbers, indeed all the Old Testament Scriptures will be as useless to your soul as a book written in hieroglyphics.

Among all the laws of the Levitical priesthood

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concerning sacrifices, none is more striking in all its details, as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ than the red heifer. Yet, there is very little written or preached about this instructive type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

Moses was commanded to tell the children of Israel to bring a red heifer without spot, wherein was no blemish, and upon which never came yoke. Eleazar the priest (not Aaron, but Eleazar) was to take her without the camp. There she was to be slain. Eleazar was then to dip his finger in her warm blood and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times. Then the red heifer was to be burned: her skin, her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, all was to be burnt. Next the priest was to take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer. Then the priest was to wash his clothes and to bathe his flesh in running water, and afterward he was to come into the camp, and be unclean until the evening.

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A man that was clean was to gather the ashes of the heifer and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, to be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation, a standing purification for sin. This ceremonial law was a standing law in Israel both to the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourned among them.

Proposition: This law of the red heifer, her selection, her slaughter, her burning, the sprinkling of her blood, and the mingling of her ashes with water for purification, by which sinful men were permitted to draw near to God, beautifully portrays our Lord Jesus Christ and our cleansing from sin by his precious blood.

A RED HEIFER

First, we are told that the sacrifice here required was to be a red heifer, brought by the congregation to the Lord (vv. 1-2).

(Numbers 19:1-2) “And the LORD spake unto

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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.**”

Among cattle the color red is **very rare**. So it is with our blessed Lord Jesus. He is “*one among a thousand*” (Job 33:23). Perhaps the color red has reference to our **Savior’s humanity**. He is called “*the last Adam*” (1 Corinthians 15:45). “Adam” means “red earth.” So this redness is peculiarly applicable to his sacred humanity. — “**Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil**” (Hebrews 2:14).

The Church sings, “**My beloved is white and ruddy**” (Song of Solomon 5:10). “*White*” speaks of the spotless purity of his nature. “*Ruddy*” refers to the sufferings and death as our Substitute. — “*For such*

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*an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). **Our dear Redeemer was red in his apparel, when in his own blood he had stained all his raiment in redeeming us from our sins and conquering our enemies** (Deuteronomy 32:42; Isaiah 63:2-4; Revelation 19:13-15).*

(Deuteronomy 32:42) “I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; [and that] with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.”

(Isaiah 63:2-4) “**Wherefore [art thou] red in thine apparel**, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people [there was] none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. 4 For the day

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of vengeance [is] in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”

(Revelation 19:13-15) “And **he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood:** and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and **he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.**”

The color red brings the idea of blood to the mind. **Blood was always associated with atonement, and the putting away of sin.** When we think of Christ, we should always associate him with the streaming gore pouring forth from his body on the cursed tree. **When we think of our sin, let us remember his red blood.** Poor, needy sinners love to think about upon that red crimson blood of his. I have heard complaints sometimes made of my preaching that

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there is too much blood in it. — “**The blood is the life thereof.**” If there were no blood in our preaching, there would be no life in it, no joy, no true power!

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o’er His body on the tree;
In Him I’m dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me!

My Master’s his face was covered with blood, with ruby red drops of blood around his head. **My Lord is never more lovely to my soul** than when I see him with his back like a river of gore, where with whips he was beaten and lacerated, his hands streaming with crimson, and his feet flowing with scarlet, and his side pouring forth his heart’s blood! I see him arrayed in “*a vesture dipped in blood.*” — “*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him*

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that treadeth in the winefat?” This is our glorious Christ, mighty to save!

Notice also that this red sacrifice was to be **a heifer, not a bullock**, but a heifer. The woman is “*the weaker vessel*” (1 Peter 3:7). Even so, our Lord Jesus came in the weakest weakness of human flesh, and “*Himself took our infirmities*” (Matthew 8:17).

This heifer was to be **without spot**, one wherein there was no blemish, prefiguring the spotless Lamb of God (John 1:29). What could more strikingly portray him “*who with out spot offered himself to God!*” He was “*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*” (Hebrews 7:26). I have read that the Jews were so tenacious about this that if the animal had even a spot of different color from the red, even in a single hair, it was rejected. Surely nothing could be more clearly in reference to the “*lamb of God who was without blemish and without spot*” (1 Peter 1:19).

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And this spotless, red heifer must be one that had never been yoked, “**upon which never came yoke.**” Here again our blessed Redeemer is portrayed in his great redemption work as our Substitute. No one was yoked with him in his work. No arm but his could bring salvation; and of the people there was none with him (Isaiah 63:5). And he was not yoked to his work by any force or constraint except his own free, sovereign love for our souls.

This is, perhaps, the most striking thing in this law, as it is typical of Christ. Among all the sacrifices under the law, the red heifer is the only one required to have never been yoked. There was no yoke, no obligation, upon Christ, but his own free, sovereign love and gracious will, for which he became a sacrifice for his people.

- His suretyship was voluntary!
- His incarnation was voluntary!
- His obedience was voluntary!
- His death was voluntary!

(John 10:16-18) “And other sheep I have, which

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are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Now, be sure you get this: — **The provision of this heifer was to be made from the united expense of all the congregation.** The precept said, “*Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer.*” Why do you suppose that was required? It must have been God’s intent that each person in the camp of Israel might know that he had an interest in the red heifer, in her sacrifice, in the purification found in her.

Hear me, now, my brother. Hear me, now, my sister. — Just as surely as God has given you faith in his Son, Christ is yours in all his fulness and glory, in all

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his obedience and death, in all his merit and efficacy!
He is the gift of the Father to all his seed (1
Corinthians 9:15).

GIVEN TO ELEAZAR

Second, the red heifer was to be given to Eleazar and
slain without the camp (v. 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.”
(Numbers 19:3)

Why was the heifer given to Eleazar and not to Aaron? Perhaps the reason is to be found in the fact that two things are represented by Aaron and his son Eleazar. — 1st, the one who offered the red heifer in the performance of his service himself became unclean. — Yet, 2nd, Aaron, God’s priest, must not, for a moment, while performing his priestly work, become ceremonially unclean.

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- So our Lord Jesus is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Else, he could not be our High Priest and sin-atonement Substitute.
- Yet, in order to make atonement for sin, he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Else, he could not have died under the penalty of God's holy law and justice. — *“He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both [are] abomination to the LORD”* (Proverbs 17:15).

We are told, here in verse 3, that the red heifer was to be slaughtered, not at the sanctuary, not at the door of the tabernacle, but “without the camp.” And our Lord Jesus, that he *“might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate”* (Hebrews 13:12). **Without the camp was the place of uncleanness.** There the lepers dwelt. There every defiled person was put in quarantine. Jesus Christ must be, and was, numbered with the transgressors. He suffered upon Mount Calvary, outside the city gates, as a common criminal, upon

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the cursed tree, on “*the place of a skull.*” — “*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach*” (Hebrews 13:13).

My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there!

BLOOD SPRINKLED

Third, in verse 4 the law required that the blood of the red heifer be sprinkled before the tabernacle seven times.

(Numbers 19:4) “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:”

God who commanded the sacrifice also commanded the sprinkling of the blood. In other words, God the Holy Spirit must and shall effectually

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apply to God's elect the redemption Christ accomplished for them.

The tabernacle represented the whole church of God. That means that all his people shall be brought under the cleansing by the blood of Christ by God the Holy Spirit and receive the atonement (Romans 5:11).

Paul, speaking of the privilege of God's church, the blessed privilege of faith, says, "*Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling.*" **The blood of the heifer shed was not sufficient. — It must be sprinkled.** The blood of Christ is not only shed, but sprinkled, speaking peace from God to the sinner through the infinite fulness of Christ's merits. **Seven times the blood of the heifer must be sprinkled.**

The number seven is used in Scripture with peculiar distinction. It represents completion and perfection.

- God created the world in seven days.
- The seventh day was the Sabbath.
- The seven times seven years was the Sabbatical

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year, the year of Jubilee.

- And the seventh day Sabbath of the Old Testament speaks of the everlasting Sabbath of heaven.

By blood atonement we enter into rest. Blood atonement is our Jubilee. Blood atonement has obtained everlasting rest for our souls with Christ in heaven!

COMPLETELY BURNED

Fourth, the red heifer was to be completely burned in the sight of Eleazar (vv. 5-6). No part was exempted. Her skin, her flesh, her blood, and even her dung were burned together before God's priest.

(Numbers 19:5-6) “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.”

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The burning of the heifer, without question, represented **the unimaginable sufferings** of our Lord Jesus Christ, when in the day of expiation he made an offering by fire; when the wrath of GOD, taking vengeance of our sins in his sacred person, scorched and burned, until in his agony he cried out, “*My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?*” (Matthew 27:46).

Then, the priest took cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet and cast it into the midst of the fire. Wrapped up inside the scarlet of blood atonement is the sweet fragrance of cedar wood (Christ’s perfect righteousness) and the hyssop of God given faith, by which the merit and efficacy of Christ’s finished work is applied to the hearts of God’s elect.

(Leviticus 14:4-7) “Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive [and] clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: 5 And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: 6 As for the

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living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird [that was] killed over the running water: 7 And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.”

UNCLEAN MADE CLEAN

Fifth, we are given a picture of our uncleanness by nature and our complete, perpetual cleansing by the precious blood of Christ (vv. 7-10).

(Numbers 19:7-10) “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. 9 And **a man [that is] clean** shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and

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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**. 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.”

Eleazar the priest and the man who burned the red heifer, though doing the service of God, for the glory of God and the benefit of his people, defiled themselves and became **unclean by their very service!** Even our holy things are contaminated with our iniquity and our righteousnesses are filthy rags!

But, blessed be God, there is “*a Man that is clean*” who has gathered up all the ashes of the red heifer, all the merit and efficacy of Christ’s obedience and death, and carried them into a clean place, though he made himself unclean before God, when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree (vv. 9-10). That Man

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is the God-man our Savior. — “*With his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*” (Hebrews 9:12). Now, the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

UNCLEANNESSE OF DEATH

Sixth, in Numbers 19:11-16 we see that uncleanness is always attached to death.

(Numbers 19:11-16) “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. 14 This [is] the

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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.”

The effects sin upon us are far beyond our comprehension. The wages of sin is, and must be, death. You who are yet without Christ, dead in trespasses and sins, are unclean. Once the sentence of endless death has been executed upon you, you shall be unclean forever in the pit of the damned. And this must have continued forever for us all, had not the Lord Jesus interposed and abolished death by his glorious undertaking, and brought life and immortality to light by his gospel.

Will you hear me? You shall be unclean forever, unless the water of separation is sprinkled upon you, unless God the Holy Spirit sprinkles upon you the

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sin-atonng blood of Christ!

RUNNING WATER

Seventh, the only cleansing there is for our souls is represented in the ashes of the red heifer in the fount of running water (vv. 17-22).

(Numbers 19:17-22) “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. 20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul

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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. 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.”

- The ashes of the burnt red heifer represent the merits of Christ’s righteousness and shed blood.
- The running water speaks of the work of God the Holy Spirit in sanctification, “*the washing of the water by the Word*” in the new birth (John 16:7-14).

(John 16:7-14) “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And

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when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew [it] unto you.”

(Zechariah 12:10) “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.”

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(Zechariah 13:1) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

- There is but one source of cleansing for the home born Israelite and the stranger, the Jew and the Gentile (Romans 9:9-13).
- The running water must be sprinkled upon you.
- Yet, you are responsible to bathe in the water. — You must trust Christ!

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my guilt away.

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Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood,
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more!

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die!

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save!

Amen!