

## The Water of Separation

(Numbers 19)

- I. This law provided for cleansing after contact with a dead body, bone or grave. Jesus alluded to the defilement of a grave in His poignant rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees. **LUK 11:44.**
  - A. The cleansing was primarily ceremonial as a condition to restoration to the congregation after defilement, a *purification for sin* (v. 9).
  - B. As with certain other such ordinances (e.g., the law of leprosy, **LEV 13-14**), there were also health benefits. c/w **EXO 15:26.**
  - C. The Egyptians violated principles contained in God's laws and this led to diseases.
    1. "Several hundred remedies for diseases are advised in the *Papyrus Ebers* (an Egyptian medical book written about 1552 B.C.)...The drugs include lizards' blood, swines' teeth, putrid meat, stinking fat, moisture from pigs' ears, milk, goose grease, asses' hoofs, animal fats from various sources, excreta from animals, including human beings, donkeys, antelopes, dogs, cats, and even flies."  
(*None of These Diseases*, S. I. McMillen)
    2. These diseases of Egypt were known and feared by the Jews. **DEU 7:15; 28:60.**
  - D. Washing after coming into contact with a dead body was recommended by Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis, who was given charge over an obstetrical ward in a Vienna hospital in the 1840's.
    1. One out of every six women was dying in the maternity ward. Semmelweis noted that physicians were examining maternity patients without washing their hands after performing autopsies.
    2. When he required the physicians to wash their hands, the statistics changed to one out of every eighty-four dying in that ward.
- II. All the various offerings of the law with their several purposes point to the one sacrifice of Christ which perfectly comprehends all their purposes. **HEB 10:1; 9:11-14, 23; 7:19.**
- III. This law required a red heifer without spot or blemish upon which never came a yoke. v. 2.
  - A. The Hebrew word translated red is *adom*, meaning rosy: red, ruddy.
    1. It comes from the word *adam* which means to show blood (in the face), i.e., flush or turn rosy: be (dyed, made) red (ruddy).
    2. The name *Adam* also derives from *adam* and means red.
    3. God became red, ruddy in the Person of Christ the last Adam to cleanse us from sin.
  - B. heifer: A young cow, that has not had a calf.
    1. This animal had never given milk, nor drawn a cart or plough.
    2. It was never in the service of man.
    3. It was wholly for God's service in purifying men.
  - C. Its being unspotted and unblemished pointed to the perfect purity of Christ. **1PE 1:18-19.**
- IV. She was brought forth without the camp and slain (v. 3). This points to Christ Who was led forth and suffered without the gate of Jerusalem. **MAR 15:22 c/w JOH 19:20; HEB 13:11-12.**
- V. She was slain before the face of Eleazar the priest. v. 4.
  - A. He sprinkled it before (in front of) the tabernacle of the congregation, the institution of communion with God. So Christ loved and died for the church. **EPH 5:25.**
  - B. He sprinkled the blood with his finger seven times.
    1. Seven being a number of completeness, this points to complete redemption by

- Christ's blood once for all. **HEB 10:10-18.**
2. Here was a complete satisfaction of God in a *sprinkling* of blood, not a red-wash. c/w **HEB 12:24.**
  3. Christ offered Himself through the Spirit, the finger of God. **HEB 9:14 c/w LUK 11:20 c/w MAT 12:28.**
- VI. The heifer was wholly burnt, including her dung. **v. 5.**
- A. This points to the complete sacrifice of Christ's soul and body to God's fiery wrath against sin. **ACT 2:31.**
  - B. Those who are so delicate or holy as to wish "dung" were not even mentioned in Scripture would rob from God this picture of His Son's complete consumption.
- VII. This ordinance sets forth a curiosity: the same object which purified all the unclean upon whom it was sprinkled also defiled all who had a hand in producing and applying it. **vs. 7-10, 18-19.**
- A. So the sinless Christ was made sin for us whom He cleanses with His blood. **2CO 5:21.**
  - B. A clean man was to gather and lay up the ashes in a clean place for impending cleansing (**v. 9**). So Christ, after expunging our sins, entered into the heavenly clean place with His blood as "...holy, harmless, undefiled..." (**HEB 7:26**) for the purging of our consciences and provision for our cleansing from defilements. **HEB 9:12-14; 10:22; 1JO 1:7, 9.**
  - C. This was provided for Israel and strangers. c/w **1JO 2:1-2.**
- VIII. One defiled by a dead body of man was unclean seven days and he needed two purifications with this special water. **vs. 11-12.**
- A. Other defilements such as the carcass of an unclean animal only made a man unclean until evening and required one washing with common water. **LEV 11:24-25.**
  - B. This underscores the filth and depravity of man under sin and the need for the God-man to suffer, nothing less. **HEB 10:4.**
- IX. The defiling attribute of a dead body has been taken away by Christ Who rendered death benign.
- A. The N.T. has no such ordinance of law as **NUM 19.**
  - B. What we do have is an ongoing struggle to not touch the dead body of sin lest we be defiled. **ROM 6:6-7; 7:24; 2CO 6:17.**
  - C. Sin not confessed to God and forsaken (**PRO 28:13; 1JO 1:9**) still defiles God's tabernacle (c/w **NUM 19:20**) and invites destruction. **1CO 3:17.**
- X. Israel was promised a perpetually available fount of cleansing in the day of Messiah's piercing. **ZEC 12:10-11; 13:1.**
- A. Only relatively few in Israel have availed themselves of it; most have remained in bondage to the law.
  - B. It is not that the fount has not been opened but rather their minds. **ROM 10:3; 2CO 3:14-15.**
  - C. Much of Israel is as her type, Hagar, blind to the refreshment at hand. **GAL 4:21-26 c/w GEN 21:19; ISA 28:11-12.**