

The Red Heifer

Text: Numbers 19:1-10

Hebrews 9:13, 14: “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: 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?”

These are exciting days. The Bible says in Matthew 24:32-36, “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” On May 14, 1948 Israel was established once again as a nation. The Bible says in Psalm 90:10, “The days of our years are threescore years and ten....” So whatever constitutes a generation and how much time would be involved is unknown, but if May, 1948 registers the beginning of the final generation, then it would be wise for us to take heed to the words of Jesus who said in Luke 21:28, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

With the recent Blood Moon on the 21st of January, also called the Super Moon or Wolf Moon, everyone began to look up again. And rightly so because the Bible prophesies that the moon would turn to blood in the last days (Joel 2:30, 31; Acts 2:20; Revelation 6:12-14).

The Bible says in Isaiah 35:10, “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Because of this prophecy, the attention of Bible students was captured when the United States moved our embassy on the 70th birthday (May 14, 2018) of the new nation of Israel.

Now I am adding this for interest only, but I did think it was a rather fascinating fact that President Trump was inaugurated as our president on the day that he was 70 years, 7 months and 7 days old.

In the history of Israel, beginning with Moses and Aaron there have been nine red heifers that have been used for purification and dedication purposes, recorded historically. In Numbers 19, the red heifer sacrifice was unique; it stood alone among all the Old Testament sacrifices. The young female cow was killed and burned, then the ashes were saved to use when needed to mix with water. This was the process to take someone from the unclean to the clean state. Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz reported last September 5, 2018, “According to Jewish tradition, there will only be ten red heifers in human history with the tenth heifer ushering in the Messianic era. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides), the most renowned medieval Jewish scholar known by the acronym Rambam, wrote in his

explanation of the *mitzvah* that “the tenth red heifer will be accomplished by the king, the Messiah; may he be revealed speedily, Amen, May it be God’s will.”

Rabbi Chaim Richman, the International Director of the Temple Institute, commented on this on the institute’s website, “If there has been no red heifer for the past 2,000 years, perhaps it is because the time was not right; Israel was far from being ready. But now...what could it mean for the times we live in, to have the means for purification so close at hand? With the words of Maimonides in mind, we cannot help but wonder and pray: If there are now red heifers...is ours the era that will need them?”

August 28, 2018, a rare red heifer has been born in Israel and so far she is fully qualified to one day be sacrificed and the ashes could be used to reinstitute the Temple worship through the dedicatory and ceremonial cleansing process. And there must be a third temple built that will be used and defiled in the Tribulation period just before the Lord returns in glory (Daniel 9:27; II Thessalonians 2:3, 4; Revelation 11:1, 2).

Let’s look at the practical side of the story of the red heifer and see how our Lord is pictured.

I. A PURE SAVIOR

Numbers 19:1, 2

The red heifer cleansing provided an overall cleansing, but contextually it dealt with a cleansing that came from defilement with the dead (Leviticus 19:11, 17). Without Christ we were dead. Ephesians 2:1: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Like the red heifer, our Lord was without spot and blemish and He was never under the yoke of sin (I Peter 1:18, 19).

II. A PASSIONATE SACRIFICE

Numbers 19:3-6

No other sacrifice was sacrificed outside the city limits of Jerusalem. This is prophetic of where and how Jesus would die. Hebrews 13:12,13: “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” We observe in 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.” Christ received seven wounds for us. It is also significant that this was a female sacrifice and the word “church” is translated from the Greek word, “ekklesia.” In the Greek language this word is a feminine noun. Christ purchased His bride by His sacrifice! Numbers 19:6 says, “And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast *it* into the midst of the burning of the heifer.” Christ died on a wooden cross. Hyssop was used to apply the blood of the original Passover sacrifice. It was also given to Christ having been dipped in vinegar as He died upon the cross (John 19:29). The Bible says in Isaiah 1:18, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” So we see the scarlet dyed wool was

thrown into the fire with the red heifer and Christ vicariously was showing this when they stripped Him and placed on Him the scarlet robe (Matthew 27:28).

III. A PERMANENT WITNESS

Numbers 19:7-10

The priest that officiated in this procedure became unclean and needed the cleansing that was offered in the red heifer sacrifice. We also are responsible for the death of Christ because we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Christ took our sin for us as pointed out in I Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." The reason we are now looking at only the tenth red heifer to have ever been used is because of the copious amount of ashes that could produced from just one red heifer. Numbers 19:10 says that "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." This sacrifice not only took care of the Jew, but also the stranger and Gentile (Ephesians 2:13-18). And the effect of the red heifer sacrifice which reflects Christ's sacrifice for us will be forever (Ecclesiastes 3:14)!

-Pastor Pope-