

THE RED HEIFFER SACRIFICE

Compiled by Shari Freeland

Numbers 19: ¹³Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.

We have death all around us. Cemeteries infest the hills and prairies. Abortions and miscarriages are too numerous to count. Murders and their network news portrayal occur everywhere daily. Death, the consequence to the first sin, is ever present, contaminating us. In Numbers 19, however, we are given a remedy to cleanse us from this defilement. This remedy calls for a sacrifice of a red heifer, which has not been possible for approximately 2000 years. Do not fear, for the sacrifice of Christ still cleanses us today. The following verse-by-verse account (NASB version) shows how perfectly his sacrifice completed every detail. [My commentary is in brackets.]

Numbers 19: ²This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect and on which a yoke has never been placed. [Yoke represents slavery, blemish represents sin. Jesus was without sin. We are enslaved to sin.]

- Luke 23:13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us;"
- Hebrews 4: ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.
- Hebrews 9: ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- 2 Corinthians 5: ²¹He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

³You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence. [The priests brought him out of the city gates to be crucified.]

- Mark 15: ¹Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate. ... ²²Then they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.
- Luke 23: ²⁶When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus. ... ³³When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.
- Hebrews 13: ¹¹For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹²Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

⁴Next Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. [He bled from seven parts of His body].

Nailed 2 Hands + 2 Feet::

- Acts 2: ²²"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just

as you yourselves know-- ²³this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

- Colossians 2: ¹³When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
- Luke 24: ³⁹"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.
- Psalm 22: ¹⁶For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.

Scourged Back:

- Matthew 27: ²⁶Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.
- Mark 15: ¹⁵Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.
- Isaiah 53: 5b The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.

Beat & Pierced Head:

- Matthew 27: ²⁹And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head.
- Mark 15: ¹⁷They dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; ¹⁸and they began to acclaim Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him.
- Genesis 22:13: Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.

Pierced Side:

- John 19: ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.
- Isaiah 53: 5a ⁵But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
- Zechariah 12: ¹⁰"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

⁵Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide and its flesh and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned. [An uneaten sacrifice had to be burned on the 3rd day (Lev. 7:17, Lev. 19:6 – He descended into fiery Hell.)]

- Psalm 16: ¹⁰For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.
- 1 Samuel 2: ⁶The LORD kills and makes alive;
He brings down to Sheol and raises up.
- 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.
- Revelation 1: ¹⁷When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

⁶The priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet material and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer. [Wood, hyssop and scarlet were used in the crucifixion.]

Wood:

- Galatians 3: ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—
- Philippians 2: ⁸Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Hyssop:

- Mark 15: ³⁶Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down."
- John 19: ²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth.

Scarlet Material:

- Matthew 27: ²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. ²⁸They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.
- Luke 23: ¹¹And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.

⁷The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening. [The previously unbelieving priest, Nicodemus, believed that evening that He was the Son of God. Notice he goes into the camp (one of the Jews).]

- John 3: ¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ... ⁹Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"
- John 19: ³⁹Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. ⁴⁰So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

⁸The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening. [The previously unbelieving centurion believed that evening that He was the Son of God. Notice he doesn't go into the camp (not a Jew).]

- Matthew 27: ⁵⁴Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"
- Luke 23: ⁴⁷Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent."

⁹Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin. ¹⁰The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; ... [Man who is already clean is a believer.]

- Matthew 27: ⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.
- Mark 15: ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. ⁴⁵And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

- Luke 23: ⁵⁰And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man ⁵¹(he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; ⁵²this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.

... and it shall be a perpetual statute to the sons of Israel and to the alien who sojourns among them. [It is forever (perpetual) for those who have circumcised hearts and have Jesus as their Passover sacrifice.]

- Exodus 12:48-49 But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to THE LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you.

¹¹The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days. ¹²That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. [One is purified by faith by looking to the third day resurrection of Christ and to the seventh day return of Christ.]

- Genesis 22:4-5: "On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you."
- Hosea 6:2: "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him.
- Acts 10: ⁴⁰"God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, ⁴¹not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.
- 1 Corinthians 15: ⁴and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
- Romans 6: ³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.
- Exodus 31: ¹⁶So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.' ¹⁷"It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed."
- Hebrews 4: ⁹So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. ¹⁰For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.
- 1 Thessalonians 4: ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.
- Revelation 20: ⁴Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

- Romans 4: ¹⁶For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷(as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."
- Galatians 3: ⁷Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." ⁹So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

¹³Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him. [See commentary and scripture for verse 30 below.]

¹⁴This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days. [This would be the equivalent of going to a wake or funeral. This uncleanness only lasts for seven days.]

¹⁵Every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, shall be unclean. [We are open vessels, and Christ is our covering.]

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

Genesis 8:13b Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. [God covered Noah in the open vessel to shield him from death.]

Exodus 26:14 You shall make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red and a covering of porpoise skins above. [The tabernacle, a foreshadow of our bodies filled with the Holy Spirit, had a covering.]

Ruth 3:9 He said, "Who are you?" and she answered, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a [kinsman redeemer]."

Psalms 105:39 He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to illumine by night. [He covered them with a cloud in the wilderness.]

¹⁶Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days. [Again, this uncleanness only lasts for seven days.]

¹⁷Then for the unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel.

- Jeremiah 2:13: "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."
- John 19: ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.
- John 7: ³⁸"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

¹⁸A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave. ¹⁹Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening. [The water is sprinkled by preaching the gospel; by making disciples of Jesus.]

- Matthew 28: ¹⁸And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- Mark 13: ¹⁰"The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.
- Ephesians 2: ¹⁸for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,
- Acts 4: ³³And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.

²⁰But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean. [Without Christ, we cannot be clean, and we cannot enter into God's presence.]

- Matthew 22: ¹²and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. ¹³"Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
- 2 Chronicles 23: ¹⁹He stationed the gatekeepers of the house of the LORD, so that no one would enter who was in any way unclean.
- Nehemiah 7: ⁶⁴These searched among their ancestral registration, but it could not be located; therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

²¹So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening. [At evening, they are clean.]

- Ezekiel 36: ²⁵"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.
- Hebrews 10: ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- 1 Peter 1:1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, but the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure."

²²Furthermore, anything that the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening." [Uncleanness is contagious.]

- Haggai 2: ¹³Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?" And the priests answered, "It will become unclean." ¹⁴Then Haggai said, " 'So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,' declares THE LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.
- Isaiah 64: ⁶For all of us have become like one who is unclean,
And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;
And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
- Jeremiah 13: ²⁷"As for your adulteries and your lustful neighings,
The lewdness of your prostitution
On the hills in the field,
I have seen your abominations
Woe to you, O Jerusalem!
How long will you remain unclean?"

What then shall we do?

- John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."
- John 12:44 The Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me."
- Hebrews 10:1 "For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. ... 9 then [Jesus] said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will.' He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."
- Isaiah 43:25: "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins."
- Jeremiah 50:20: "'In those days and at that time,' declares the LORD, 'search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.'"