

Ashes Of The Red Heifer

Introduction

Think about all the subjects that man holds as important. Finding the thing that is most important depends on whom you talk to. Some say that family is most important. Others say that the economy is the important issue. Even whole cultures emphasize one area above another. However, consider this: If a man or culture was destroyed, then whatever issues that seemed important would no longer be important. A man must have “life” if he is ever to carry out the things that he personally holds as important. Therefore having life precedes all other needs.

We can be assured that God knows what is important. The first issue with God concerns life. He is the God of the living (cf. Lk. 20:38). The sanctuary that is Christ’s Body flows with life, and living waters gush forth from it. All those who are touched by these waters live (Rev. 22:1, Eze. 47:1, 9), and within the “congregation” that is His Body the issue that remains central is life.

Death is the opposite of LIFE. Christ is life and the fullness of His Body; therefore that which is dead has been cut off from Him. The Law commanded that whatever or whoever had been touched by death had to be put out from among the people to prevent many from becoming defiled through contact with the dead (cf. Num. 5:2). These are spiritual principles that have meaning in the congregation of God even today. We must understand what “touching death” applies to in our generation.

It still remains a mystery to many as to what exactly death is and what the true essence and function of that which is God’s Life is. Even today someone could actually touch death while at the same time be pursuing Life without the ability to discern the difference. It was this dilemma that Eve faced in the Garden of Eden as she determined to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She was yet unable to discern between life and death. The fruit appeared good in her eyes, but when she partook of this tree she was brought into death. As we will discover later, the knowledge of good and evil always leads to death.

The Scriptures declare that those who had touched death were unclean and had to be prevented from entering into the tabernacle. They had become defiled by the death they had touched and were therefore unable to even approach a priest to sacrifice on their behalf since priests could only minister in the tabernacle. When an Israelite had become identified with death by touching the dead, a mere offering to cover a sin was not going to remedy the situation. The defilement of death that was in them disallowed entrance to find help within the tabernacle. It is in this seemingly hopeless place that we discover God’s provision in the red heifer’s ashes. These ashes speak of the very Spirit of Life and how God’s Life responds to that which is dead.

Chapter One: Death Defiles

“He who toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. 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. **Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man who 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 on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.**”

Numbers 19:11-13

The Definition of Death

To become defiled by death is to touch that which has died and has been put away by God. The act of “touching” involves making contact with something. Romans chapter seven declares that a woman is loosed from the Law of her husband if he is dead. Romans six states that our old man is crucified that the body of sin might be destroyed. To continue in a relationship of identification with that which has been crucified could be considered touching that which is dead and determined to be put away forever. The first Adam, the body of death, could be considered a corpse. To touch this corpse means you are identifying with it as though you were one with it.

Those who have touched that which is dead in a manner of identification begin to receive another mind that will bear the image of that which God has put away. This process of defilement brings them into a condition of death that is not “the dead in Christ”, but those who are dead to God’s way. They are dead to the nature of Christ because they are partaking of death rather than Life.

When we are touched by death, our whole view changes. We become critical of everything. We find fault with others. We lack any spirit of Life that would give itself sacrificially in order to remedy the problem. We want to remain in judgment over the brethren in a manner that causes us to leave, pull away, or separate. We may clearly see the problems but have no compassion on the ungodly. We have become contaminated, and our contact with others only spreads division and discontent.

Death’s Delusion

Much of the time those who have touched death and become defiled do not perceive what has happened to them. Many become deceived because the fruit they have partaken of was good. Because we cannot tell the difference between “good” things that bring forth death and the life of Christ, we could feel a sense of righteousness even if our inner attitudes have grown brittle and critical. The justification for our hard stance is that we see what the problems are while others do not. Because we have yet to see the Lamb as Life, we embrace that which is good and right as the ultimate righteous cause and thereby justify our critical

attitudes. But in making such a stand we are giving up spiritual vitality because we are now functioning in death. Our cause may be right, but our spirit is wrong. This is seen in the fact that our words are harsh and our tone is unbending. We have allowed the good that we perceive to deceive us to the true spirit and proper action. This delusion will lift from our eyes only when we comprehend the true mind and nature of Christ. In other words, we must become one with LIFE again and not just be right.

Though the remedy seems simple, few find it. Why? Because the dead justify themselves. They revile back at the person who is wrong instead of demonstrating the Lamb. They do not die for the ungodly, but find fault with them. They have been cut off from the life and nature of Christ. There is no mercy in order for them to obtain mercy. Those who have failed are given the maximum sentence. The whole place is wrong, and they feel no peace. They believe the answer is fixing the problems and not in themselves. Their condition is serious not only because of their defiled status, but because they are in a deceived condition. To remain deceived keeps them among the congregation, which continues to cause everyone they touch to become infected. They pollute the rest of the congregation.

Too many times we are quick to judge by the “smell” of things that are not right rather than the finished work of Christ. Though Lazarus was raised, Jesus told them to take his grave clothes off. The Lord did not want even the touch of death to remain upon Lazarus, for he was now free to move among the living. His life after the grave was to bring not even the touch of death with him. But we may become more aware of the smell that is yet upon him then the life that has just entered into him.

Chapter Two: The Knowledge of Good and Evil

It is much easier to convince a man that his sin is an evil thing than to convince him that his righteousness is evil; hence Jesus told the Pharisees that publicans and harlots *should* enter into the kingdom of God before them. Publicans, harlots, and the like are more open to conviction than self-righteous persons.

From the very beginning the real issues with God have been either life or death. We see this based on the two trees in the Garden of Eden. One was called the tree of Life. The other was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. While it was not called the tree of death, God did say that if Adam and Eve ate of that tree, in that very day they would surely die. So the ultimate end of this tree is death. The problem with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is that it does not blatantly scream, “I am death”. We see this with Eve, who was deceived by the devil. That tree had elements of both good and evil and appeared pleasant and good to eat. She thought that her actions would make her wise and more like God. Her motive was for progress and for God, but her method was through partaking of death. Touching death, no matter how right it may seem, never gets you closer to God.

How is it that a person moves into judging after the flesh instead of having righteous judgment? We do so by perceiving things through the knowledge of good and evil. The thing that makes the knowledge of good and evil so deceptive is that it involves both of these elements — good *and* evil. Usually we contrast these two things and think of them as separate. An example of this might be that some think of the two trees in the garden as one being the good tree and the other being the evil tree; but this is not the case. “Good” is not the better of the two trees but “Life” is. Good and evil are both off the same tree, and God says we are not to eat of either of them. The fruit of this tree always leads to death, whether you partake of the good part or the evil. To engage ourselves with the knowledge of good and evil involves some form of deception by the devil. A person who makes a strong stand based on this knowledge may have an element of right or good on his side, but evil is also woven within the fabric of it. However, the tree of Life had no devil or deception connected to it.

How does the knowledge of good and evil work? Let us consider this example: a person in a church group may identify a problem with that group. The problem may be another person, a leader, a program, an attitude, or some way that the group is proceeding. The person operating by the wrong tree will see both good and evil. They will correctly be able to see what is wrong or what is evil. They may also see what it will take to correct the problem. This is not evil but good. However, what is good is not necessarily what is God. To Jesus, both the identifying of what is evil or wrong and a better solution to the problem are off the same tree — good and evil. Consider this fact! God does not operate off of trying to identify what is bad and remedying it with what is good. **His way is always to inject life into the situation.** Since life comes out of death, God may require a death and a self-giving by the person who identified the problem and was having difficulty with it. Only when we are on the ground of the Cross and the resurrection of Christ will we have the right perspective and the right attitude that goes with it.

The Knowledge of Good and Evil, or Life?

When Jesus saw wrong doctrines, wrong motives, wrong attitudes, and wrong ways, He did not constantly react negatively to those things because the premise upon which He operated was not the knowledge of good and evil but life and nature. When Jesus came, He brought a change of covenant and with it, a new basis of operation. The Old Covenant required men to operate by what was right and wrong, which means that the knowledge of good and evil played right into the hands of the Law. If a person was legalistic, then the Law gave him cause to become self-righteous; but if a person was needy and undone by their own lack, he found no remedy in the Law.

However, the New Covenant is different. When LIFE confronts problems, it tries to bring everything around it to LIFE, not the correctness that the knowledge of good and evil seeks to accomplish. You can tell which tree is a person’s mode of operation by their attitude towards “evil” and according to what they want done. If they want the situation rectified by others changing or fixing the problem, then they operate by good and evil. If they know that it takes a life to get a life, then they will die so that others may come ALIVE in Christ. The answer has nothing to do with the person or the problem. The answer is Life, and this Life

only comes out of love that gives itself for the ungodly — the just for the unjust. If we cannot see this, if we struggle with it, think it is unfair, or still want everything and everyone else to change, then we are probably operating by the knowledge of good and evil.

The Difference between Life and Death

Under the knowledge of good and evil we only see issues as good or evil and not as issues of life or death. However, what is not Christ is essentially dead. If His nature is “the life”, then any other thing functioning through us is considered to be death. Outwardly the act may appear vigorous and totally given for a good cause, but if it is not flowing out from the divine nature, it is dead works (works proceeding from one operating as separate from the life and nature of Christ). I think that the problem lies in the fact that we have not seen that Jesus’ life is the nature in which He does things.

Those who function by His kind of life are able to encompass the long term understanding that if a seed falls into the ground and dies today, eventually much fruit will come forth (cf. Jn. 12:24). Because they understand the way of the Lamb, they are able to lay down their lives and patiently wait for the fruit to come forth in resurrection life in others. Those who are motivated by the knowledge of good and evil will seek for an immediate remedy to the evil they perceive around them. They must command change to extract what it is that hinders the righteous cause for which they stand. This knowledge does not comprehend God’s nature and how His life responds to injustice. Because only LIFE will bring a true and eternal change, the temporary effects that death enforces will not bring any lasting difference. The only fruit that will remain is that which has come forth through death.

Although we may think that we begin to see the dramatic difference between life and death, many factors to the knowledge of good and evil can still deceive those who do not fully see. The issues of such knowledge are right, but they are void of life and therefore dead. The knowledge of good and evil completely misses the Lamb because the remedy it calls for does not come on the ground of death and resurrection. To whatever high degree of rightness for God’s purposes in the earth that the knowledge of good and evil stands for, it will not move to accomplish its purposes through life. It will reject the Lamb as the source of all life and true change and choose the way of death as its method. A believer may have all his doctrines in perfect order and yet reject Him who fulfills all things with His life. Because they cannot see past the blinding injustice and the need for correction that is before their eyes, they do not see the Lamb who came to bear all injustice that all might have life. The Lamb is hidden from their eyes.

Many are satisfied with a form of godliness that has rejected the power thereof. In other words, a person can believe that it is acceptable to be a Christian while functioning in death in actual daily living. For them, a Christian title is sufficient even though all things are not yet alive through Christ. Others feel they have progressed beyond this because they have made their emphasis “Christ-centered”. They strive to make all of their ministry, Bible interpretations, and relationships centered around Christ. But the question yet remains, is it Christ’s life? And even beyond this, there are those who persist to make all that is in their lives “Christ-like”. But once again we must raise the question, has acting like Christ caused

someone to pass from death to life? No matter how perfectly someone can imitate Him, if it is not actually Him, then they are not releasing life and remain in death. When it can be truly stated that it is not I, but Christ who is living in me, then we are found in life (Gal. 2:20).

The Father's Standards

The world honors good and punishes evil. Its standards appear right but have been compromised by the evil one. Even so, many consider God to judge on a basis similar to that which the world does. If we examine our true mode of serving God, eventually we will have to know whether it is through life or death, which is based on the knowledge of good and evil.

Because the Father's standard is His Son, He is not pleased with that which has not proceeded out from the Life of Christ. Some may believe that they can truly please the Father by being Christ-centered or Christ-like because they have not yet seen the difference between life and death.

The Touch of Death

As we saw earlier in Numbers 19, the Law defined different ways of becoming defiled that prohibited people in Israel from entering the tabernacle and being accepted as part of the congregation. One way to become defiled was to touch a dead person (death), which would make a person unclean for seven days. In reality, we are defiled forever, but under the Law, God had provided a remedy that could free a person in seven days.

Death is not the same as sin. The problem of death is not that of going out and sinning and becoming unfit; it is that you are touching that which has died and been put away and is now corrupting. A corpse may be well prepared and beautifully presented, but it is dead. If there was no life in it, then it is dead and we are not to touch it. Under the law it is a good act to bury the dead, and yet those who buried their dead were defiled. So we see that even in good there is defilement. The question is not whether the action is good, but whether it involves contact with that which is dead. We are regularly fooled by appearances. Under the Law, a person would become unclean if he walked over a grave. Even touching a bone was death. If a person touched the dead but told no one, he might yet be able to go up and worship among the congregation, but he was defiled. If our approach to God is wrong and not through His living way, then we are no longer fit in the congregation. The issue is not about committing sin but that someone's view and touch has become defiled through touching death. *Watch who you have company with.*

We are defiled even in the best of intentions if we have not become conscious and deeply aware of what God considers dead. Life and death are the real issues with Him, which means that our morality is not enough. The situation may look good, but are we touching life? Our eyes need to be trained to discern what is death and what is Christ. All Israel had been cleansed on the Day of Atonement, but dealing with a defiled person involved more than sins, for this dealt with the defiling contact with the dead. Whoever became defiled by coming into contact with the dead defiled everything they touched, for it was as if they were dead and one

with the dead. Christ is the life with which we are to maintain constant contact so that we do not touch or become involved with that which has been slated for removal.

Death is all around, for there is so little life. Because this is so, defilement seems almost inevitable. This is why the waters of separation become so important in our walk. A constant cleansing through His Word is necessary to stay clean from the defilement of walking by the old. What if someone touched death and did not know it? Usually we are unaware of our contact with death, but others may notice the smell of death upon us.

Infecting Others Because of Defilement

If an Israelite sinned, he would not be put out of the congregation, so why was God so strict over touching death? Death is like a disease that will infect those around us if it is not dealt with properly. One example that can illustrate this point is when there is an infected person on an airplane that needs immediate medical attention. You cannot land the plane just anywhere, but the longer you stay up, the greater the chance of all being infected. Another example is a suitcase that is packed with just enough for what you need. But when you start adding much more, the suitcase is too bulky and starts to smash and wrinkle everything. In the same way when death enters, it affects all that shares its space.

Dead Works

There are different kinds of works mentioned in the Bible. One kind is the works of the Law, which is operating on a desire to gain personal stature before the Lord based on how well they perform. Obviously, there are many who are involved with the works of the flesh. However, many are doing dead works and not just Law works or sin works. A person involved in dead works is worse off than someone bound under the Law. If you are considered dead and defiled, then no amount of good works will change that condition. This kind of defilement is worse than just being a person who has messed up. When you have left the Life, then you are considered dead. You are in danger of being cut out of the land of the living. One who has been overtaken by death is in a most dire condition. When you are defiled, you cannot pray or share acceptably, for all that you do has the touch of death on it. You are spreading death, which is contrary to what flows out of the sanctuary, which is His Body — waters of healing to those in need.

Chapter Three: Ashes

What being defiled by death really is may grow more clear if we seek further to understand how easy it can be to touch death and become defiled. For someone who was in contact with death, there was no offering he could bring that would make a difference because

the person was unclean and considered dead. In other words, the problem was well beyond the acts and deeds of the individual.

The Answer Is Ashes

The answer that God provided for those in this situation was the offering of the red heifer. However, that offering was not offered at the moment of failure. Before anyone had been defiled, the whole congregation brought a red heifer to be slain. This sacrifice was not offered for one needy person but for all BEFORE the need arose. It was one of the few sacrifices that gave remedy even before there was sin. At the very moment of sacrifice, no benefit came to anyone. This sacrifice had appeal when an individual became aware of his own personal defilement and came for ashes. This act made the sacrifice of long ago now personal in the present.

The red heifer was taken outside the camp in its own rejection and slain. It was wholly burned — all of it. It was not treated as a blessed sacrifice, but as a polluted, rejected thing and the total burning brought an end to it. It was destroyed and reduced to ashes. The red heifer was treated as something that was worthy of death and as something that was to be thoroughly eliminated and put away. No trace of it was left in its present form. The old form was consumed, and a new form appeared which was ashes. The form of the red heifer represented what was rejected of God, but the new form of ashes represented the spirit that brings forth life to others. After the heifer was burned, the ashes were put in a place that was accessible to all. **Whoever became defiled knew there was help at the ash heap.**

A Clean Person

“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 who were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave. 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 evening.”
Numbers 19:18-19

The actions mentioned above took place after the person recognized he had touched death. He needed A CLEAN PERSON from the congregation to help him through the process. Notice that it does not say that a priest is needed, but it says a person who is clean. This represents someone in whom the Word of God is flowing and not stagnant, someone who is full of life and is not defiled by death. This was not an issue of needing someone in leadership as much as needing someone full of the flowing waters of Life. The clean person knew the dilemma that touching death causes but also knew God’s available remedy. That clean person got some ashes and sprinkled them in running water, which represents the living Word. He then sprinkled the defiled man, his dwelling place, and every vessel that he might have come in contact with. After seven days of dwelling under these conditions, he was clean.

The ashes represent the sacrifice of Jesus AND the spirit of sacrifice in which He gives Himself for the ungodly and unworthy. The waters represent the Word of God by which Jesus cleanses His Bride, and the fact that they are running waters speaks of not living on old stagnant waters that can become infested. The sacrifice of the ashes of the red heifer combines the Cross and the Word and applies it to our life right at the moment we become ready to escape from the hold that death has on us. We remain in that state of cleansing for seven days (a period of time until completion) until we are cleansed from our death outlook. Remember, it is this “death outlook” that is so defiling to the congregation and why a person must either become cleansed by the spirit of the ashes or be put out from among the congregation.

Beauty for Ashes

A person caught up in the knowledge of good and evil usually has a high opinion of their perception of things. As long as they are coming from such a place, they will see no virtue in the ashes that are available. Ashes come from a lowly position. They do not take a high place. They help us. All that could be offered as admirable was burned up. In like manner, the Lamb of God became ashes. He became the least in order for others to be free. Ashes cannot be burned or reduced anymore. Any virtue was consumed away, and all that was left was ashes, which hold only the spirit of the thing. If we are able to recognize the value of the ashes as God sees it, then we get beauty for ashes. Ashes ever live to make intercession for us; their purpose is that we might receive life out from our deadly and defiling ways.

One of the qualifications for the red heifer was that it was to have never borne a yoke. This speaks concerning bondage. It also speaks of the spirit of that which is to be sprinkled upon us and what we are to be brought into. Though the red heifer had never been in bondage, it put itself under the bondage of bearing the punishment, shame, and rejection due others. The red heifer bears the spirit of God’s heart back to the person who is offended over the failure of others. All that was without spot because of a godly stand or a life of separation now gives it all up and is reduced to ashes. It does this for only one purpose: so that those who have not been so faithful and diligent might be brought in also. This was the spirit of Christ when the judgment that was due to us was borne by Him.

While considering such a spirit may seem beautiful to us, that is not the case for the one who chooses to be joined to it in nature. The red heifer was not just looked upon as a beautiful spirit of sacrifice, but as polluted. It took on OUR pollution so we could be free from a spirit of strife, division, and death with the result that we would not be put out of the tabernacle of the congregation by God Himself. He was numbered with the transgressors so we could walk again in newness of life.

We need, as represented by the ashes, the death of One who was reduced to nothing. This, spiritually, was the position we should have taken over the issues from the very beginning before we became defiled. But since we did not, now only someone who has died according to that spirit of the red heifer and someone who now lives according to that spirit — a clean person — can help us. We need to receive, be sprinkled with, and be changed to this One.

His mind, spirit, and view are the only things that can truly wash us. He shows us what spirit we are of in that **He was utterly consumed so that defiled people might be made free.** The red heifer did not know what he was doing, but Jesus offered himself by the Eternal Spirit of self-giving for us. Jesus did not just give himself to God, but did it though THIS Spirit. There is an eternal spirit of this thing that is not just supposed to cleanse us, but to which we are to agree in one. We are brought into more than just redemption BY this spirit but, more importantly, into union WITH this spirit. That is true and complete purification.

You were touched by death, but now you need to be touched by another kind of death: ashes mingled with running water. You were defiled by entrance into death, and in so doing, you have found fault with everything and everyone's failure. But with the second death, this spirit takes upon itself every fault and everyone's failure. You become touched by THAT death. You do not just bear with it, but by reason of coming into contact with it by means of a clean person, you are now the vehicle of this fresh cleansing to Christ's Body. You are touched deeply by the Lord, the Lamb, and the ashes of a red heifer. As that touch and washing sinks in, you become cleansed from your defilement, but more importantly, you become cleansed from the spirit of death. The sprinkling of the ashes is not a magic healing potion but a means of lining us back up with God in His spirit, view, and way of dealing with issues.

The purpose for the red heifer is so we might again tread the courts of the Lord and be counted among His people and after His kind. We are purged from dead works and dead attitudes to serve the LIVING God. All is of life again. God's provision for those who have come into this state of death is the ashes of the red heifer, but requires an intimate understanding of what they represent and the spirit in which they are administered. So we see that God does not just accomplish a healing in our lives but makes us one again with the nature and spirit of sacrifice. Therefore we will be found giving ourselves to the cursed and rejected instead of punishing them with what they deserve and condemning them.

The Remedy of Ashes for the Knowledge of Good and Evil

The ashes speak volumes, but only to those who have an ear to hear. Part of the reason it is so difficult to comprehend their meaning is because good is such a powerful persuader. It is easier to confess to a blemished act than to acknowledge a blemished state. However, thank God that there are those who can be moved past right ideals concerning God into the intimacy of being after His kind. Blood covered over the sins committed, but water was also applied with ashes to wash and cleanse that which has become defiled in its deadly condition (Num. 19:13). Those who appealed to the red heifer had come to the place of acknowledging themselves as defiled with the conviction that their spirit was wrong, not just their actions. Because they had touched death, they had become carriers and transmitters of death. It was not their actions alone that was defiling the congregation, but rather just their presence in the congregation that was bringing disease to the whole. They brought leprous influence to the congregation though all the while ignorant that they were in contact with what God wanted put away.

Remember, provision had been made for such a condition before anyone had even become defiled. God understood that this would happen, and in His mercy gave Himself to the complete end of ashes. The motivation of Christ as the fulfillment of the red heifer sacrifice was to bring us back into Life through His own complete destruction. This is simply the spirit of the Lamb. It should become clear that God's heart is not to accuse and condemn those who are perishing, but to make the way for them to return to life. If those who are functioning by death reject God's mercy through self-deception, considering themselves to be righteous when in reality they are defiled, then they have forsaken God's provision for them. *"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy" (Jonah 2:8).*

Chapter Four: Sons of God and the Offering of the Red Heifer

We could assume that the knowledge of good and evil has no place in the thinking process of a son of God in whom Christ has been revealed. However, this is not the case. It seems that even though areas pertaining to the life of Christ have been opened unto us and we now walk in them, there are other areas in which we have little or no light. Consequently, the mind of Christ may be able to motivate us in specific areas while an influence of the knowledge of good and evil can simultaneously taint another area or even influence the big picture.

The Conflict in Our Hearts

This fact can be seen in relation to the prophet Jonah. He was not a rebellious backslider as some suppose, who cared nothing for the things of God. Quite the contrary, he was a prophet of God who served as God's mouthpiece to His people. He was the only man of God chosen to take His message to Nineveh. Jonah, like some today, had great God-given insight into the heart of the Lord. He also had great revelations from the Word of God that much of Israel did not have.

With all of these things being true, then why was Jonah having a difficult time doing what God wanted accomplished at Nineveh? The answer lies in how there can be a conflict in our own hearts between the spirit of the Lamb nature and the knowledge of good and evil. The man who needed the benefit of the ashes of the red heifer was probably in a similar situation. He may have seen the heart of God. He may have known what it was that God hoped to obtain in His people. All of that compassion and understanding for the things of God had only come through intimate communing with the Lord. These precious insights may be laid hold of by only a few who have dearly sought the Lord.

The conflict comes when that same person sees the people of God or their ministry in violation, not just of God's order, but of the very spirit and desire of the Lord. For one who has been brought into the intimacy of the King's chamber (Song of Songs

1:4), the contrary actions of man can be very disturbing. But it is at this point that the one who is so in tune with the heart of the Lord Jesus is in danger of touching death.

As we showed earlier, it is possible to be enveloped in life but then touch death and be found needing to be put out of the congregation. The problem comes when we start standing up for what is right and dear to the heart of God and yet do so in a wrong spirit. That wrong attitude is usually directed towards others who are insensitive to what is in the heart of Jesus. However, the person who stands up for the Lord now moves to a place of insensitivity to the heart of the Lord concerning those who the Lord is in the process of bringing in.

In Touch with God's Heart for the Undeserving

The whole spirit behind the ashes is that the red heifer gave up its "cow" form and was reduced to ashes with the express purpose of bringing the hard-hearted and rebellious into what God desires. The one needing the ashes of the red heifer is not a sinner per se. The fault that they are charged with is that they have touched death. The reason they take a hard, brittle stance is because the tenderness that they feel for the desire and needs of the Lord is not being appreciated; however, they too are missing God. Their stance means that they have not yet experienced the tender mercies of the Lord themselves in His heart toward the undeserving. In this area, they are devoid of life and therefore have touched and identified with death. This was the case with Jonah, who was a son of God.

Jonah knew well that God's purposes in the earth were going to be fulfilled in Israel. This is similar to the fact that sons of God today know that nothing outside of Christ has any eternal value, for all that is now honored of God is found in Christ. That is what the New Creation is all about. Jonah was intimately aware of God's heart concerning Israel. To him, it must have seemed foolish and a waste of time to spend energy to bless and bring revival to Nineveh, whom he knew would later turn back to idols and become the enemy of God. Why bless that???

Jonah probably thought that if God insisted on blessing them, that was God's business, but he did not want to be any part of it. There were plenty of other men of God who were not so near to God's heart who could be used for this task. The issues of real importance rested with the ones who intimately sought out the heart of God, and all else was probably seen by Jonah as fruitless waste. Then does it not seem strange that later, Jesus said that Jonah represented a sign of the Cross (cf. Matt. 12:40), which symbolizes willingness to suffer and even be shamed if it will reach the ungodly and undeserving?

The Universal Remedy

Jonah ended up being angry with God and sitting outside of the joyous movements of the Lord, grumbling about the fact that he knew God was going to be merciful. This is a picture of one who has touched death. One who was so close to the heart of the Lord has now become the one God must take the time to deal with in order to bring him back to a place of peace and oneness.

While the answer to the dilemma is not given to us in Jonah, we do find the answer in the application of the red heifer's ashes. This remedy is a universal remedy given by God, not just for Jonah but for all. In other words, God does not give a specific "Jonah Book answer" because the remedy is not personal but universal. From this we might gather that many are looking to God to come down and give them a specific, personal answer that fits their individual situation. But the Cross of Christ is the universal remedy. God should not have to spell it out to Jonah or to each of us every time. Instead, we should be able to turn to the Word of God and find the answer that was supplied long ago. As each person who has touched death awakens to their condition, they are able to avail themselves of the ashes instead of expecting God to show up in their particular circumstances.

Chapter Five: The True Spirit of Life Is Found Outside the Camp

“And ye shall give it unto Eleazar, the priest, that he may bring it forth outside the camp, and one shall slay it before his face. And Eleazar, the priest, shall take of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle of its blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times.”
Numbers 19:3-4

“Let us go forth, therefore, unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach.”
Hebrews 13:13

In the above verses we go back to the events that took place at the offering of the red heifer. Notice that this offering was only done “outside the camp”. This speaks of rejection and not being found among the congregation, as seen from the Hebrews passage above. Remember that Jesus was crucified on Golgotha, which was also outside the camp. Similarly, though God had already anointed David as king and head of Israel, he, too, was rejected and placed outside the camp. But it was there that he grew, became strong, and learned to trust not in riches, power, or position, but in God. It is for this reason that God encourages us in the Book of Hebrews to “go forth unto Him outside the camp”. The real point of emphasis is not that we go outside the camp but that we go unto Him. A person can be rejected and considered not to be “in” yet still have more of the spirit of the thing than a person who is actually physically located in the camp.

Our physical location or social status should not be nearly so important as our present spiritual state before and with the Lord. This can be seen in the fact that the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times toward the holy place, but it was never taken there. It was there in spirit though banished from the camp. It may have been more pure of a sacrifice than a lot of sacrifices that actually happened in the holy place. The proof of this is the fact that Jesus' sacrifice on Golgotha had more of the spirit of what God had in mind than all the sacrifices that took place that Passover day within the camp. When outside the camp, do not let the feeling of rejection get to you. You may be “outside” the camp of those who

worship together, but are you “in” Christ where there is no condemnation? Never forget that there is a difference between persecution (being an outcast) and condemnation.

The great truth of the offering of the red heifer is that it chooses its place outside the camp. It is not just thrown out. Those who join in the spirit of the red heifer are not just going outside the camp but are going “unto Him” who first initiated this spirit. Those who have the spirit of this sacrifice do so not because they are defiled but because they are willing to be looked upon as a reject in order to reach others who truly will be rejected if something does not happen. They know that they are not rejected of God and therefore are safe in their relationship with Him. But they are concerned for others who are not so steady.

The Red Heifer – We Are His Body

We have written much about the spirit released through the loss incurred by the red heifer and how the ashes, though completely reduced, have mighty power in them. They are similar to the old decaying bones of Elisha that, when touched by a dead man, caused life to flood into him again. But all these things do not just apply to Jesus who was the fulfillment of all offerings, including that of the red heifer. They are meant to have meaning for us today also. When Jesus walked the earth, He carried Himself toward others as an example of the way we should be after the resurrection. Before the Cross, the only body Jesus had available to work through was His own physical body. That is why we see Jesus moving through the congregation of Israel ministering life everywhere He went and to everyone who came into contact with him.

Nevertheless, our view of him in the gospels tends to place us outside of Christ, even to this day, in that we still tend to view the present situation as if we are the congregation and Jesus still comes and touches. To us, the only difference between then and now is that now He is in spiritual form. While this has a certain degree of truth, we have allowed this to overrule greater truths since the resurrection. Now, we are not just the congregation of God but the very Body of Christ. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He still wants to minister to people, but He no longer touches through His physical body. He now moves through His risen Body, which we are. We are now supposed to operate as Jesus’ hands that touch others and are supposed to be His feet that carry Him to others.

Again, we are quick to put ourselves outside His Body, wanting to be those He is coming to touch. Like Israel, we have tried to make ourselves the object of His blessings instead of the channel as we function as the vehicle and Body of Christ’s life. Like Elisha’s decaying body, though we may be reduced down to nothing except bones, they are still life-giving, we are declared to be “bone of His bone” (cf. Eph. 5:30). As those who are one with Jesus, we are to be functioning by releasing life into the congregation rather than death.

The Red Heifer – Touched by Life in the Spirit

“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?"

Hebrews 9:13-14

In this New Testament passage we begin to bring all the pieces together. We find the contrast of the two main elements described in the words “purge ... from dead works to serve the living...” We also find that what the ashes of the heifer were meant to communicate was the Eternal Spirit behind the sacrifice and not just the facts of the offering itself and the freedom it brings to us. Right now those who belong to Jesus Christ ought to be functioning by this Eternal Spirit and not by the knowledge of good and evil. When we are filled with life, no obstacle is too great, and things that usually bother us no longer pull us down. When our eyes have seen past the problem and into the nature of God, the answer far outweighs the issue. The only requirement then is that we are willing to follow the Lamb outside the camp and into His death so that those who have become defiled by death might now receive of His life. The power behind the ashes is the death of Christ that brought them forth. The value of the ashes is the Eternal Spirit offering Himself to God for others. This same Spirit works in those who bear the dying of the Lord Jesus in their mortal flesh. It is the very nature and way of God’s Life, and yet it is hidden to those who only see issues of good and evil.

When we see how Jesus walked this earth, we see Him heal the sick, raise the dead, and feed the hungry. We can easily reduce those events down to the subjects of power and healing, but I think the issues are greater than these. Jesus was responding to the death, lack, and injustice all around Him with a mind and nature that has never touched death by partaking of the knowledge of good and evil. He responds by life and is ever giving to that which does not deserve it. He is not pulled down into the darkness of death all around Him, but is ever influencing it with a gracious outpouring of life.

We have seen how having the knowledge of good and evil and operating by it only brings death to the congregation. We have also seen the beauty of the ashes giving life through death to that which was dead and deserves death. As we come to know the Lord in ways pertaining to who He really is by nature, we will tend to function more according to the ways of His life. As His Body, we are called to release life and be the vehicle of life to others. There is very little recognition and honor given by men to something so insignificant as ashes. Even to this day that which appears base and foolish confounds those who are mighty and wise.

What Is the Dying of the Lord Jesus?

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.”

II Corinthians 4:10-12

The person who needed the ashes of the red heifer was supposed to be bearing about in their body Jesus’ dying. What does that mean? First we must understand that the act of Jesus giving Himself on the Cross over two thousand years ago is what saved us. Then we must realize that Christ’s death on the Cross crucified the Old Man whereby I can now live by the

life of Jesus Christ (cf. Gal. 2:20). But Christ living in us brings up a whole other aspect of the Cross that many have yet to perceive. The realization of the aspect I am referring to comes as we discover that Jesus is a Lamb. That is His nature.

According to His nature, Jesus lays down His life for others — particularly for the needy, defiled, and ungodly (cf. Rom. 5:6, 8). Most seem to know and believe it is true how the Lord gives His life for the benefit of even the worst of mankind, but we fail to acknowledge that this same Jesus is in us, and if allowed to live in us, will operate the same way. This is what the verse is referring to when it talks about believers bearing the dying of the Lord Jesus in their mortal bodies. This Lamb, who is now the life of the believer, lays down His own rights and life to bring other in to God's fullness.

In the case of the man needing the ashes of the red heifer, he did so because he had gone back to living by the life and viewpoint of fallen man. This is what touching death is all about. We touch and identify with a mind and life that was dead to God and was put to death with Christ on Calvary. We leave the life of the Lamb and His heart concerning the ungodly.

We will never give ourselves for the undeserving and compromising masses. We will judge them. Only by us bearing about in our body His dying, self-giving nature will we have the spirit in which the red heifer gave himself. Only by the ashes of that sacrifice and through releasing that spirit will there come a true reconciling and eventual change for those who deserve rebuke and rejection. The princes of this world do not understand this spirit, for had they, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (cf. I Cor. 2:8). If they had comprehended that His giving of Himself in this spirit would be the true answer that led to the release of all rebels, ungodly and uncaring men, they would have approached all this in a different way. Through Christ we allow death to work in us in order to bring about life in others (II Cor. 4:12). This spirit, released by ashes, is the spirit of the Life that we have received. It is in the releasing of this spirit that we comprehend why God crucified us and put the life of His Son in us as earthen vessels. This is the Life you are called unto. ***