

Numbers 17-19

Good evening and thank you again for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to Numbers 17 please?

Last week if you recall, we saw the Korah rebellion, and how God then opened the earth and it swallowed the rebel leaders whole. If you remember God then sent a plague, and Moses and Aaron interceded one again for the nation.

In our section of scripture tonight, we're going to study chapters 17-19, which comes on the heels of the Korah rebellion.

The title of tonight's message is POINTING TO JESUS

Before we begin let's ask for the Lord's blessing.

Now in chapter 17 God reaffirms his choosing of Aaron as high priest.

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses—twelve rods.

Write each man's name on his rod. A rod in those days was a symbol of authority, because shepherds would use a rod to guide and correct the sheep.

3 And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of each father's house. God is going to declare which tribe possessed priestly authority by choosing one of the rods.

4-9

4 Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. 5 And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself

of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you.”

6 So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. 7 And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. 9 Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

What a dramatic scene. Each man from the different tribe took his rod, and clearly saw that his had not budded or borne fruit, and that Aaron's had.

This was to put to rest the question of who the priests were. If God could make a dead rod miraculously bear fruit, He could also be the decision maker of the priestly line.

10 And the LORD said to Moses, “Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die.” 11 Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

Aaron's rod was to be kept in the ark of the covenant, as another example of Israel's failure and rebellion.

Think about what was inside the ark. All reminders of Israel's sin: The tablets of law they broke, the manna, which they complained about, and Aaron's rod as a result of their rebellion.

And if you remember from Exodus, the covering blood of sacrifice was applied to the lid of the ark that covered these reminders of Israel's sin, clearly foreshadowing Jesus.

So how do the people respond after seeing the budded rod of Aaron?

12 So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! 13 Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

Remember all that took place last week- God destroyed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, along with their 250 followers among the leading men of Israel; Then the retrieval and hammering out of the censers for a covering on the altar; the plague destroying 14,700 of those who sympathized with Korah and his followers. Now they see the miraculous confirmation of Aaron's priesthood – and the people fear they are next to be judged.

Yet this kind of hysterical fear doesn't necessarily mean their hearts were changed. Sadly, this will not be the last account of a complaining Israel.

But we see here in the budding of Aarons rod how it's pointing to Jesus. A rod or staff was a former branch, or tree limb. It was once alive, but now dead.

What God did to Aaron's rod was to bring it back to life - almonds budded. God resurrected Aaron's rod to prove Aaron was the chosen intercessor.

And this is a picture of Jesus... Our High Priest died, and was brought back to life – and His resurrection is proof that He's God's chosen intercessor for mankind.

Chapter 18

1 Then the LORD said to Aaron: “You and your sons and your father’s house with you shall bear the iniquity related to the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity associated with your priesthood.” So after Korah’s challenge of Moses and Aaron’s authority, it was necessary to reorder the relationship between the priesthood and the Levites... This is what God does in chapter 18

2-7

2 Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons are with you before the tabernacle of witness.

3 They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die—they and you also.

4 They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, for all the work of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you. 5 And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, that there may be no more wrath on the children of Israel. 6 Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; they are a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 7 Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.” The Levites were not allowed to do what the priests did. And we see a similar thing in 1 Corinthians 12, where the bible describes us all as different "parts" of the body of Christ, each with particular gifts and callings.

Notice the priest was to view his serving the Lord as a gift. Whenever our service for God is viewed as a duty - or a right - or

a job, we have the wrong attitude. We must always remember the opportunity to serve the Lord is a gift from the Lord.

Verses 8-20 deal with offerings for support of the priests

8 And the LORD spoke to Aaron: “Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. 9 This shall be yours of the most holy things reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, shall be most holy for you and your sons. 10 In a most holy place you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

11 “This also is yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. everyone who is clean in your house may eat it. This was God’s way to feed the priests. They got part of the sacrifices to feed themselves and their families.

In the church this is also how the pastors and their families are fed-from the tithes you drop in the offering box each week.

12-19

12 “All the best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, their firstfruits which they offer to the LORD, I have given them to you. 13 Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

14 “Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

15 “Everything that first opens the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the LORD, whether man or beast, shall be yours;

nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. 16 And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old, according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. 17 But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat as an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 18 And their flesh shall be yours, just as the wave breast and the right thigh are yours.

19 “All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you.” In ancient times salt was used as a preservative – so a covenant of salt spoke of longevity. A covenant of salt was a promise forever.

Roman soldiers used to be paid in salt. This is why there’s the saying-‘a man not worth their salt’.

20 Then the LORD said to Aaron: “You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. We just read that the priests will receive much-a slice of all of those offerings and sacrifices. Yet, even though they received those the priests weren’t given an inheritance of their land, because God was their portion.

21-24

21 “Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the

work of the tabernacle of meeting. 22 Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. 23 But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a statute forever, throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24 For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.'

Now is a good time for us to discuss what the Bible says about tithing.

Tithing is not a principal dependent on the Mosaic law; **Hebrews 7:1-2** 1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"

Tithing was practiced and honored by God before the law of with Abraham and Melchizedek.

Now tithing is not mandated in the New Testament. What the New Testament does speak with great clarity on is the principle of giving; that giving should be generous, freely given, and cheerful.

Giving and financial management are a spiritual issue, not just a financial one **Luke 16:11** "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

Story?

Verses 25-32 speak of the priest's obligation themselves to give offerings.

25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26 "Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe. 27 And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress. 28 Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the LORD from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the LORD's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest. 29 Of all your gifts you shall offer up every heave offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the consecrated part of them.' 30 Therefore you shall say to them: 'When you have lifted up the best of it, then the rest shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress. 31 You may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward for your work in the tabernacle of meeting. 32 And you shall bear no sin because of it, when you have lifted up the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy gifts of the children of Israel, lest you die.' " Notice the principle... The Levites are paid from the tithes of the people - then they're expected to turn around and tithe from the tithes they receive.

It's my conviction that the same should be true of a pastor. I personally tithe 10% back to the church, while also supporting other people and organizations.

Chapter 19 discusses the ritual of the ashes of the red heifer.

You'll notice the many differences in this sacrifice verses all the other sacrifices we studied in Exodus when Moses was at the top of Mount Sinai. Here's just a few differences for you to ponder

This sacrifice of the red heifer was offered outside the camp rather than on the altar.

The Priest watched this sacrifice rather than slaughter it like the others.

This was the only sacrifice that made the priest unclean.

And the most significant difference is this sacrifice was a heifer – a female. All the other sacrifices were males, but the red heifer was a female sacrifice.

1-2

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 “This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. And as we go through these verses you’ll see all the similarities between this sacrifice and Jesus

3 You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him;” The red heifer was slaughtered - not by the High Priest, as was the other sacrifices – but before the High Priest. Likewise, Jesus was crucified not by the High Priest, but before the High Priest.

The High Priest Caiaphas sentenced Jesus to death - then pressured Pilate to put in in action. The chief priests were even in attendance at Calvary – mocking and ridiculing Jesus.

The priests observed the sacrifice of Jesus.

And notice too in verse 3 they were outside the camp. This is another peculiarity with the sacrifice of the red heifer. The animal was killed outside the camp - rather than on the bronze altar in the Tabernacle.

Jesus was also taken outside the camp and crucified along the road to Damascus, north of Jerusalem, outside the walls.

4 and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting.⁵ Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned.
6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. Three items were burned with the heifer... a stick of cedar wood, a branch of hyssop, a strip of scarlet thread.

Jesus was also sacrificed on a piece of wood - a wooden cross.

A branch of hyssop – with its spongy, absorbent leaves – was used to hold the wine that moistened Jesus' crucified lips, and allowed Him to utter his final words. **John 19:29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.**

And a strip of scarlet thread clearly symbolizes the scarlet blood of Jesus that atoned for our sin.

7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. The red heifer was the only sacrifice that left the High Priest unclean. I believe this foreshadowed the high priests role and guilt at the crucifixion.

Jesus died for the sins of the Jews, but the same Jews accepted responsibility for the crime His sentence represented. I'm certain the High Priest was one of those people who answered Pilate, **Matthew 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of**

this just Person.[fn] You see to it.”²⁵ And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

8-10

8 And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. 9 Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification;[fn] it is for purifying from sin. 10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them. The residue from the burning of the carcass, the cedar, the hyssop, and the scarlet fabric together would produce a lot of ash, and the ash was then gathered and sprinkled in water bit by bit to make the water fit for purification.

And this water would be used several ways-look at verses 11-12

11 ‘He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; 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.

13 Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him. We talked about this on Sunday in our study of Jesus washing the apostles feet. We have to allow the cleansing of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, or we have no part with Him.

14-19

14 'This is the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who are in the tent shall be unclean seven days; 15 and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, is unclean. 16 Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

17 'And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. 18 A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. 19 The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean. This is how the sacrifice of the red heifer was applied. When a person was deemed unclean, the ashes that had been gathered and stored were mixed with running water. Then a branch of hyssop was dipped into the solution and the ashes sprinkled on the unclean person.

Now we already talked about touching dead bodies back in Leviticus-why is it brought up again here? Well remember what just happened-the plague that struck down over 14,000 people. There would be dead bodies everywhere, and God is instructing them on how to proceed.

20-22

20 'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean. 21 It shall be a

perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. 22 Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.’ ”Notice the ritual of the red heifer is called “a perpetual statute”. This was a major distinction for the red heifer - its permanence. All the other sacrifices were repeated continually, but the ashes of a single red heifer lasted for decades.

The Mishnah, a source of Jewish tradition, says there were actually nine red heifers sacrificed in the history of the Jews. It says the 10th one will be burned at the time of the Messiah. In fact no pure red heifer has been born in 2,000 years.

And this chapter is important to know as we look at Bible prophecy.

The Bible speaks of a rebuilt Temple in the last days. When the Jews rebuild it, both the Temple and priests, will need to be purified with this mixture of ashes and running water. So the hunt is on for a red heifer.

Over the years there’ve been published reports of red heifers being bred in Sweden, Switzerland, Texas, Mississippi, and in Israel. One cow was the result of artificial insemination!

Jewish tradition says that in the past when a red heifer was needed it would just appear in the herd. Perhaps mankind is trying to manipulate through the flesh what God will do supernaturally when the time is right.

[rabbi chaim richman red heifer - Google Search](#)

Here’s a picture from 2001 of Israeli Rabbi Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute in Jerusalem inspecting a red heifer born in

Israel. According to Jewish tradition, a heifer does not qualify if just two of its hairs are not red, so inspections are required.

A red cow identified in 1999 was disqualified for being male. Another, born in 2002, was disqualified after developing a small patch of white fur.

A couple years ago a red heifer was born-and here's the update.
[Red Heifer Update March 1 2021 - YouTube](#)

SHOW VIDEO

This is one of the reasons why we pay such close attention to the events taking place in Israel