

Numbers 19:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Analysis

The red heifer ceremony provided purification from corpse contamination—the ultimate ritual uncleanness. This elaborate procedure involving a flawless animal, specific burning materials, and careful application of ashes demonstrates that removing death's defilement requires extraordinary measures. The writer of Hebrews (9:13-14) explicitly connects this to Christ's superior purification from sin.

Historical Context

Corpse contamination was unavoidable yet made one ceremonially unclean (verses 11-16), creating a dilemma: death is inescapable, yet God is holy. The red heifer rite provided ongoing purification for Israel's entire wilderness period when death was ever-present. One heifer's ashes served for extended time, suggesting Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does death's pervasive contamination illustrate sin's universal pollution?

2. What aspects of the red heifer ceremony point specifically to Christ's cleansing work?

Interlinear Text

לֹאמֶר: אָמַר | יְהִי־רְמַשְׁתָּךְ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהִי־רְמַשְׁתָּךְ | אָמַר
spake And the LORD unto Moses and unto Aaron saying
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