

Numbers 19:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

Analysis

The preservation of the red heifer's ashes for 'water of separation' (Hebrew 'mei niddah') established a permanent purification system for Israel. This represents God's provision for ongoing cleansing from defilement. The phrase 'it is a purification for sin' (Hebrew 'chattat hi') uses the same word for sin offering, connecting ceremonial uncleanness with moral guilt. The ashes' preservation anticipates the eternal efficacy of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice (Heb 10:10-14) - His blood remains perpetually available for our cleansing (1 John 1:7).

Historical Context

The ashes were stored outside the camp in a ceremonially clean place, accessible yet separate from daily camp life. This ensured availability while maintaining the sacred nature of the purification ritual. Rabbinic tradition indicates only nine red heifers were prepared from Moses to the Temple's destruction in 70 AD, underscoring the rarity and preciousness of this provision.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the preserved efficacy of the red heifer's ashes strengthen your confidence in Christ's eternal sacrifice?
2. What areas of spiritual contamination in your life need the cleansing water of God's Word applied?

Interlinear Text

הַפְּרָאֵת הַיְלֵדָה וְאֶת טָהָר אֶת וְאֶת פָּר
shall gather And a man in a clean up the ashes of the heifer

H622

H376

H2889

H853

H665

H6510

! פִּתְמָה טָהָר בָּמָקָם וְלֹמַתְמָן הַמִּחְיָה וְלֹמַתְמָן יְמִינָה
and lay them up without the camp place in a clean

H3240

H2351

H4264

H4725

H2889

H1961

לְמִשְׁמָן כָּת שְׁבָא ל בְּנֵי תְּעִדָּת
for the congregation of the children of Israel and it shall be kept for a water

H5712

H1121

H3478

H4931

H4325

הָוֹא מְפַטֵּת אֶת נְקָדָת הַנִּזְבָּד
it is a purification for sin

H5079

H2403

H1931

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 9:13 (Parallel theme): 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:

Numbers 19:13 (References Israel): Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that 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 upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

