

The Red Heifer Numbers 19

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and dealing with sin, and the need for remedies to restore communion with God.

Scripture: Numbers 19:1

Topics: "Communion with God", "Sin and Defilement"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the Lord's intense jealousy regarding sin and defilement in Numbers 19, illustrating that while believers are clean, they still require cleansing to maintain communion with God. He explains that the blood of the red heifer symbolizes Christ's purity and the necessity of recognizing the seriousness of sin, which hinders our relationship with God. The process of purification, including the sprinkling of blood and the remembrance of Christ's suffering, highlights the importance of discerning our hearts and the need for restoration to communion. Darby notes that while grace addresses our sin, it is essential to maintain a holy judgment of sin in the presence of that grace. Ultimately, this leads to a deeper understanding of God's holiness and love, reminding us that carelessness can lead us away from His presence.

Transcript

In Numbers 19 we learn the excessive jealousy of the Lord about sin, not in the sense of guilt but defilement. This He measures by His sanctuary. We have to do with it, and nothing unclean can be allowed. We are clean every whit, but the feet-washing is needed. We belong to the sanctuary and yet are in the world, though not of it; we need to have a just estimate of both. If we but touch evil, a remedy is required. Still it is not the question of justification, but of communion. Sin hinders that - hinders my coming boldly into the holiest. How was this met? The blood of the unblemished heifer, representing Christ who knew no sin and could not be brought under its power, was sprinkled before the tabernacle seven times, that is, before the place of communion, not of atonement. The sin-offering was burnt without the camp. But the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times where we meet God in intercourse. This marks the full efficacy of Christ's blood when I meet God. The body was reduced to ashes, as Christ was judged and condemned for what I am apt to be careless about; but God is not careless, and would make me sensible of sin. Christ had to suffer for it, and it is gone; but the sight of His suffering shews me the dreadfulness of it,

God has an eye that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart; He would have us discern them too, and without this there can be no communion. But we do not get back into communion as quickly as we get out of it. Seven days elapsed in the type before there was full restoration. The Spirit takes and applies the ashes (that is, the remembrance of Christ's agony, and what occasioned it), and makes us feel practical horror of sin.

When I look at my sin with horror, even in the sense of the grace which has met it, it is a right feeling, but not communion: it is a holy judgment of sin in the presence of grace. Hence, there was a second sprinkling - not on the third day, but the seventh, and then there is communion with God. We see that perfect grace alone maintains the sense of perfect holiness. The result, in the end, is that we increase in the knowledge of God, both as to holiness and love. We must have been out of communion before we sinned, or we should not have yielded. How came I to fall? Because of the carelessness which left me out of God's presence, and exposed me to the evil without and within.

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