

Numbers 19

Verses 1 – 10

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²“This is the statute of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which there is no defect *and* on which a yoke has never been mounted. ³ And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence. ⁴ And Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. ⁵ Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide, its flesh, and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned. ⁶ And the priest shall take cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet *material*, and throw it into the midst of the burning heifer. ⁷ The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp; but the priest will be unclean until evening. ⁸ The one who burns the heifer shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and will be unclean until evening. ⁹ Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and put them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep them for water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin. ¹⁰ And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening; and it shall be a permanent statute for the sons of Israel and for the stranger who resides among them.

During the next 38 years of wandering in the wilderness everyone over the age of 20 will die in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb. With a population of 2.5 million this means about 100 people a day will die.

A large number of people would become unclean from coming in contact with a deceased family member and this chapter deals with that issue.

Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which there is no defect *and* on which a yoke has never been mounted

A heifer is a young cow and the red heifer was the most common.

As in any species, the color varied from red to brownish-red

See pics 1905



Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide, its flesh, and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned.

The removal of sin, derived from contact with the dead, was achieved by sprinkling water with the ashes of a red heifer on the person.

Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and put them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep them for water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin.

The ashes of this heifer could be used by many people over a period of time.

This was important because if this sin required a sacrifice at the tabernacle it could have taken a long period of time to be made clean. The tabernacle was not always available because it was taken down and was not reassembled until the people reached their new destination. Also, this ritual did not require a priest or the tabernacle (except for the initial ceremony when the heifer was sacrificed and burned).

Verses 11 - 13

¹¹ ‘The one who touches the dead body of any person will also be unclean for seven days. ¹² That one shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, *and 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 Anyone who touches a dead body, the body of a person who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Since the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he will be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.

The one who touches the dead body of any person will be unclean for seven days

Being unclean from touching the carcass of an unclean animal only lasted until the end of the day (sunset).

See Lev. 11:24

But the uncleanness from touching a corpse of a human being lasted 7 days

That one shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, *and then* he will be clean

This was meant primarily for the layman.

The priests could not suffer contamination except for their closest family members.

The High Priest could not suffer it for any one.

Aaron was not even allowed to touch the bodies of Nadab and Abihu.

Anyone who touches a dead body, the body of a person who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from Israel.

Neglecting to follow this law meant being cut off from Israel.

Most of the time this phrase meant being put to death but not all the time.

See Leviticus 7:19-21

.Verses 14 – 21

14 ‘This is the law when a person dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent will be unclean for seven days. ¹⁵ And every open container, which has no cover tied down on it, will be unclean. ¹⁶ Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been killed with a sword or one who has died *naturally*, or *touches* a human bone or a grave, will be unclean for seven days. ¹⁷ Then for the unclean *person* they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin and running water shall be added to them in a container. ¹⁸ And a clean person shall take hyssop and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* on the tent, on all the furnishings, on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one who was killed or the one who died *naturally*, or the grave. ¹⁹ Then the clean *person* shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe *himself* in water and will be clean by evening.

This is the law when a person dies in a tent or anyone in the open field who touches a human bone or a grave will be unclean for seven days

That pretty much covers anyone who touches or comes near a dead body

Even open containers in the tent became unclean

In the 1st century graves were whitewashed so everyone would know that it was a grave

This was done to prevent anyone from accidentally becoming unclean.

And a clean person shall take hyssop and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* on the tent, on all the furnishings, on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one who was killed or the one who died *naturally*, or the grave.

A clean person would sprinkle those who were unclean on the 3rd and 7th day

This made the clean person unclean so they had to wash their clothes and bathe in water and they were unclean until evening.

Verses 20 - 22

²⁰ ‘But the person who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, so he is unclean. ²¹ So it shall be a permanent statute for them. And the one who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and the one who touches the water for impurity will be unclean until evening. ²² Furthermore, anything that the unclean *person* touches will be unclean; and the person who touches *it* will be unclean until evening.’”

If the water he is sprinkling purifies the unclean person why would it make the one who is sprinkling the water unclean?

Below is a chart that supplies the timeline of chapters 15 thru 19

See pic 1910

Places Israel camped at in the wilderness

Campsite #	Place	Chapters	Event	Years 3 - 39
15	Rithmah	15 - 19	See	1444 - 1408
16	Rimmon-perez	15 - 19	comment	1444 - 1408
17	Libnah	15 - 19	below	1444 - 1408
18	Rissa	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
19	Khelathah	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
20	Mount Shepher	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
21	Haradah	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
22	Makheloth	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
23	Tahath	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
24	Terah	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
25	Mithkah	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
26	Hashmonah	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
27	Moseroth	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
28	Bene-jaakan	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
29	Hor-haggidgad	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
30	Jotbathah	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
31	Abronah	15 - 19		1444 - 1408
32	Ezion-geber	15 - 19		1444 - 1408

Chp 15 The Sabbath breaker
Chp 16 The Korah rebellion
Chp 17 The Budding of Aaron's staff
Chp 18 & 19 Some laws

These events took place during the years 3 thru 39 in the wilderness but we don't know when or where they took place. These are the only events that were recorded during that time period.