

Handout 1: Numbers Lesson 9

The major events in Chapters 19:1-22:1 are not recorded in chronological order. The sequence of major events should be in this order:

1. The ritual of purification with the ashes of a red heifer.
2. Miriam dies at Kadesh and the miracle of the water from the rock.
3. The Edomite king refuses to give the Israelites right of way through Edom.
4. Aaron dies at Mt. Hor and the Canaanites attack the Israelites.
5. The Israelites turn south toward the Gulf of Aqaba to avoid Edom.
6. The incident of the fiery serpents and the healing serpent standard.
7. The Israelites travel by stages to Transjordan.
8. The Israelites defeat the Amorites.
9. The Israelites defeat King Og of Bashan at the Battle of Edrei.
10. The Israelites encamp on the Plains of Moab opposite Jericho.

The pattern linking events in the Exodus to the book of Numbers:

| Moses challenged and vindicated | | Wilderness journey narratives | Moses challenged and vindicated | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Snakes Exodus 4:3 | Leprosy Exodus 4:6 | | Leprosy Numbers 12:10 | Snakes Numbers 21:6 |
| adapted from J. Sailhamer, <i>The Pentateuch as Narrative</i> , page 387 | | | | |

The repeated pattern in Chapters 14 and 20-21:

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| The people complain Num 14:1-4 | Israel's lack of faith Num 14:11 | Israel denied entrance into Canaan Num 14:40- 45 | The people complain Num 20:2-5 | Moses' lack of faith Num 20:12 | Israel denied entrance into Edom Num 20:14- 21 |
| Adapted from a chart in <i>The Pentateuch as Narrative</i> , page 400 | | | | | |

The sin purification of the dust red heifer and living water in Num 19:1-22: *The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkled on those who have incurred defilement, may restore their bodily purity. How much more will the blood of Christ, who offered himself, blameless as he was, to God through the eternal Spirit, purify our conscience from dead actions so that we can worship the living God (Heb 9:13-14).*

The “rock” in Ex 17 and Num 20: *I want you to be quite certain, brothers that our ancestors all had the cloud over them and all passed through the sea. In the cloud and in the sea they were all baptized into Moses; all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, since they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ (1 Cor 10:1-4).*

The raised sign in Num 21:4-9: *No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man: as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him (Jn 3:14-15). When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am He [he is not in the Greek text] and that I do nothing of my own accord (Jn 8:28).*

Handout 2: Numbers Lesson 9

What is the threefold separation of death?

1. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body
2. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God
3. Everlasting death is the separation of the soul and body from God for eternity.

Summary of the selection of the red heifer and the sacrificial ritual:

- The red color of the heifer suggests the color of blood and the sin of a fallen humanity.
- The scarlet material and the red cedar wood suggest the use of the sacrifice to remove sin (Is 1:18).
- The unblemished animal indicates the perfection needed for sacrifice.
- That the animal has never borne a yoke symbolized it has not been the servant of any man but is only a creature of God.
- The hyssop suggests purity.
- The sprinkling of the blood toward the Sanctuary is part of the ritual of expiation.
- The sacrifice taking place outside the camp put a special stress on separation from uncleanness and the unique nature of this sacrifice.
- The unclean ashes mixed with pure water symbolically removed the pollution of death.

| The Typology of Jesus Christ and the Red Heifer | |
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| The red heifer was sacrificed outside the camp. | Jesus was sacrificed on the altar of the Cross outside the walls of Jerusalem. |
| The animal had to be unblemished & never under the command of man (never yoked). | Jesus was without sin and His authority came from God. |
| The animal's red color suggests blood. | Jesus was covered with blood from His scourging. |
| Wood and hyssop were part of the sacrifice. | Jesus was sacrificed on a wooden Cross and a Roman soldier used hyssop to give Jesus a last drink of wine. |
| The animal was to be totally consumed in the sacrifice. | Jesus' life was totally consumed on the altar of the Cross. |
| The remains of the animal were to be kept outside the camp. | Jesus was buried outside the walls of Jerusalem, the camp of God. |
| The sin sacrifice was meant to remove the defilement of death. | Jesus' sacrifice freed mankind from the defilement of sin and death. |
| The sacrificial remains of the red heifer mixed with living water purified the individual, freed him/her from the contamination of death that caused separation from God and restored him/her to the community family. | Jesus' sacrificial death and the water of Christian baptism purify the believer, freed him/her from sin and its consequence of spiritual death that separated him/her from God and restored him/her to life in the family of God. |
| The three day and seven day purification ritual was a two step process before the individual was fully restored. | The Christian will experience a double resurrection: the first in dying with Christ and being raised to new life in the Sacrament of baptism, and the second is the bodily resurrection at the end of time when the complete person, body and soul, will be fully restored to God. |
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Handout 3: Numbers Lesson 9

The miracle recorded in Chapter 20 is linked to the events in Exodus Chapter 17.

| Wilderness journey | | | Theophany & Covenant formation at Sinai Ex 19-40 | Wilderness journey | | |
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| Journey to Mt Sinai = Manna & quail Ex 16:4-34 | 40 years Ex 16:35 | Water from the rock Ex 17:1-7 | | Journey away from Mt Sinai = Manna & quail Num 11:4-34 | 40 years Num 14:21-22 | Water from the rock Num 20:1-12 |

Inspired by a chart from *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, page 277

Compare and contrast the two miracles of water from the rock:

| Exodus 17:1-7 | Numbers 20:2-11 |
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| The miracle took place at Horeb/Mt. Sinai (vs. 6a). | The miracle took place at Kadesh in the desert of Zin (vs. 1). |
| At Rephidim the people complained that there was no water (vs. 1-2). | At Kadesh the people complained that there was no water (vs. 2). |
| They blamed Moses (vs. 2b-3). | They blamed Moses (vs. 3-5). |
| Moses appealed to God (vs. 4). | Moses and Aaron appealed to God (vs. 6) |
| God told Moses to take some elders and to go on ahead to Horeb/Mt. Sinai, taking the staff he used to part the waters of the Yom Suf (vs. 5). | God told Moses to take his staff and to call the community together with Aaron (vs. 7-8a). |
| With the elders looking on, God told Moses to take his staff and to strike the rock for water to come out for the people to drink (vs. 6a). | In view of the community, God told Moses to take the staff and to call upon the rock to release its water for the people to drink (vs. 8b). |
| Moses did as God told him; water came out (vs. 6b) | Moses took his staff and he struck the rock twice; water came gushing out (vs. 10-11) |
| | Moses and Aaron were rebuked by God for their disbelief (vs. 12) |
| Moses named the place Messah [trial] and Meribah [contention] (vs. 7) | The site came to be known as the Waters of Meribah [contention] (vs. 13) |

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| The Typology of Jesus and Water from the Rock <i>... they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ</i> 1 Cor 10:4 | | | |
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| The first command: the rock is to be struck to yield its gift of water Ex 17:6 | The second command: the rock is to be called and it will yield its gift of water Num 20:8 | Jesus is struck down as a sacrifice for sin on the Cross—blood and water flowed from His side Jn 19:34 1 Jn 5:6-8 | The priest calls to Christ in the words of consecration—Christ's life flows from the gift of the Eucharist 1 Cor 11:23-27 |

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