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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Provision for ceremonial cleansing for those unclean through contact with the dead. 19:1-22
 - The Red Heifer 19:1-10
 - Without defect
 - Never used for work
 - A priest other than the high priest oversaw the preparation. Here it was Eleazar the son of Aaron.
 - The animal was killed outside the camp and a small amount of blood was sprinkled seven times toward the tend of meeting.

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Provision for ceremonial cleansing for those unclean through contact with the dead. 19:1-22
 - The Red Heifer 19:1-10 (cont.)
 - The entire animal was completely consumed and reduced to ashes along with cedarwood, hyssop and scarlet yarn.
 - The priest who oversaw the ritual had to wash his clothes and bathe his body before returning to the camp but was unclean until evening.

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Provision for ceremonial cleansing for those unclean through contact with the dead. 19:1-22
 - The Red Heifer 19:1-10 (cont.)
 - The one who burned the heifer had to wash his clothes, bathe his body and was unclean until evening.
 - One who was ceremonially clean gathered the ashes and deposited them outside the camp in a clean place. He had to wash his clothes and was unclean until evening.
 - The ashes were to be used in the “water of impurity”.
 - A perpetual statute.

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Provision for ceremonial cleansing for those unclean through contact with the dead. 19:1-22
 - The ashes were mixed with fresh water, hyssop was dipped into the mixture and sprinkled on a person or object that had become unclean due to contact or proximity to a dead human body.
 - The application could be made by any clean person.
 - The application was made on the third and seventh day. If this procedure had been followed, the person would be clean at evening on the seventh day.

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Provision for ceremonial cleansing for those unclean through contact with the dead. 19:1-22
 - The person who sprinkled the water was unclean until evening and anything they came into contact with was unclean.
 - The penalty for not undergoing this procedure for cleansing was to be “cut off from the midst of the assembly”. This is probably indicating exile. The offense was that they had defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh.

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Some modern treatments of the Red Heifer

- Jewish tradition has it that there have been nine red heifers used for this purpose since the command in Numbers. There is an expectation that the tenth one will usher in the Messianic Age.
 - The modern standard of “without defect or blemish” is quite high. One example is that it cannot have more than two hairs that are not red.
 - The belief is that when an acceptable red heifer is found it will allow for the rebuilding of the temple and reinstatement of the sacrificial system.
 - An organization called The Temple Institute has an active program called Raise a Red Heifer in which they are actively trying produce an animal which will fit the biblical requirement.

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Some modern treatments of the Red Heifer

- Jewish tradition has it that there have been nine red heifers used for this purpose since the command in Numbers. There is an expectation that the tenth one will usher in the Messianic Age.
 - A calf was born in September 2018 and at least one more has been born since initially meeting the criteria. These animals must meet all the criteria when they mature. Some have established this maturity at 3 to 4 years old.
 - Some end-time views hold that the temple must be rebuilt before the return of Christ and therefore they are also looking for the red heifer as a precursor to these events.

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New Testament fulfillment

- ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
Hebrews 9:13-14 (ESV)

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Death of Miriam 20:1
 - This seems to be toward the end of the 40 years and may very well be the first month of the 40th year of the wilderness wandering. Their movement is now taking them to the borders of the Promised Land again.

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Death of Miriam 20:1
 - Older sister of Moses who watched over Moses when he was placed in the basket in the Nile as a baby.
 - Called a prophetess in Exodus 15:20
 - Led the women in song at the defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea
 - Joined with Aaron to appose Moses in Numbers 12 and was stricken with leprosy and then healed.
 - The fact that her death is noted shows she was a significant figure in the Exodus

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Lack of water reveals a lack of faith 20:2-13
 - A significant amount of water would be needed for the people and the animals.
 - Other than air, a lack of water is the next most crucial need for people and animals.
 - These people now expressed that they wished they had perished quickly, probably like those in the rebellion, than to languish for lack of water.
 - Again Moses and Aaron are blamed for them not coming into the Promised Land.
 - God's clear instructions are for Moses to take his staff and he and Aaron are to speak to the rock in the presence of the people and it will provide abundant water for all.

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The Journey from Sinai to Moab 10:10-21:35

- Lack of water reveals a lack of faith 20:2-13
 - Moses disobeyed God by:
 - Addressing the people rather than the rock
 - Taking the credit for producing the water
 - Striking the rock rather than speaking to it.
 - God rebuked Moses for his lack of faith and therefore dishonoring God in the eyes of the people.
 - God pronounces the judgement that Moses will not lead the people into the Promised Land. (Note that this fits with God's pronouncement about who would go into the land in Numbers 14:30)

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Lessons

- Attention to God's holiness benefits us in practical ways.
- Situations we face that seem overwhelming to us are opportunities to express our faith and hope in God rather than leveling accusations against Him.
- Hearing from God carries with it the responsibility of acting on His revealed will.
- We should never forget the gravity of rebellion against God.
- Never depend on past experience to address your present situation.
- Never let your guard down so that you act out of raw emotion.
- Joining God in His work lets people see God at work and brings glory to His name.

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