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Messiah's Sacrifice Has Cleansed Us

13: 10-19

Believer's behavior in relation to God DIG: What rituals, mores, and other forms of legalism tempt believers of any age? Why? What is the point of the argument in verses 10-12? Based upon his argument, what types of sacrifices is God concerned with in verses 15-16? How does, how we regard our leaders, reflect our regard for Messiah and His sovereignty in our lives? How has the writer to the Hebrews used the red heifer to point us to Messiah?

REFLECT: How does God bring us into spiritual maturity? What stands in the way of offering God a sacrifice of praise? Considering all you've learned about Yeshua in this book, write out a sacrifice of praise to Him now reflecting on all He has done for you. What sacrifice of doing good and sharing can you offer this week? What has been the most significant thing you've learned from studying Hebrews? How has Messiah cleansed you?

The writer of the book of **Hebrews** took **the Red Heifer**, who had to be **without fault or defect** (see the commentary on **Numbers**, to see link [click Da](#) - **The Red Heifer**) and applies it to **Yeshua** and takes this, and applies it to us.

There are four things that God wants in our behavior and are directly related to Him.

Separation: The writer of **Hebrews** now makes it clear that those Jews who persist in adhering to the Temple sacrifices can have no part in the blessings of the New Covenant. The two covenants are mutually exclusive. They are separate. He uses the phraseology of the Temple sacrificial ritual and the figure of eating a sacrificial meal.³⁹⁹

We believers **have an altar**. This **altar** is in heaven; on the heavenly altar **Yeshua Messiah** made the once-for-all **sacrifice** of **Himself (8:2-5, 9:23-24, 10:1-14)**.

But **the altar** is also **outside the camp (13:11)**, so that although **those who minister at the Tabernacle**, the Levitical priesthood, representing the Dispensation of Torah (nonbelievers in **Yeshua**), **have no right to eat the sin offering**, because **the bodies** of those animals **are burned outside the camp (13:10)**. Since **Jesus** was a **sin offering**, nonbelievers **have no right** to participate in the *se ‘udat-ha’Adon* (the Lord’s Supper), in which the bread and the cup represent the body and blood of **the Messiah**, unless and until they put their trust in **Him**.

After having stated that the non-Messianic Jews are excluded from the privileges of the B’rit Chadashah. The author proves this statement to be true by using an illustration drawn from the ceremonies of the Great Day of Atonement. Neither the people nor the priests were allowed to eat of sacrifices of that day. **For the high priest** (Hebrew: *cohen hagadol*) **bring the blood of [animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are “burned outside the camp” (Hebrews 13:11 CJB quoting Leviticus 16:27 and Numbers 19:9)**.



And so Jesus also suffered outside the City gate to make the people holy through His own blood (13:12). In general, as the camp in the wilderness had really consisted of three parts – camp of Isra’el, that of the Levites, and that of **God** – so they reckoned three corresponding divisions of **the Holy City**. From the gates to the Temple Mount was regarded as the camp of Isra’el; though to the Court of the Women to the Nicanor gate represented the camp of Levi; while the rest of the Temple was “the camp of **God**.” It is in allusion to this that the writer **Hebrews** compares **Messiah’s** suffering **outside the gate of Jerusalem**, to the burning of **the Red Heifer outside the camp of Isra’el in the wilderness**.

Golgotha, the place of the skull, was not in the ceremonially ordained territory within **Jerusalem**, but upon a garbage dump whose very name had become a loose synonym for Sh’ol (Gehinnom). It was there, on a foul and wretched hill, that **Yeshua** died to set apart, to make holy, those who would believe in **Him. Jesus** identified with the needs of an unholy world by offering **Himself** in the midst of it, showing that no one need be excluded from **His** saving love, thus extending the love of **God’s** covenant love to all **the nations (Isaiah 42:6)**.

All this took place far away from Isra’el’s traditional ceremonies and away from the Temple. The application to the **Hebrews** receiving this letter was clear. They could not be content to remain in their traditional Levitical system with its outdated, useless formulas. But their fear of leaving was understandable. To this day, Kaddish, the mourner’s prayer, is often said by the Jewish community for people who receive **Yeshua** as their **Messiah**. In such a stressful situation believers would need their hearts to be strengthened by grace by **fixing** their **eyes upon Jesus**, and remembering what **He** said: **Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you (Hebrews 13:5b)**. They needed to **consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that** they would **not grow weary and lose heart (12:3)**.

Yeshua was not calling them to a life of ease; **He** had made it known that **in this world you will have trouble**. However, in the same breath **He** also said: **But take heart! I overcome the world (John 16:33)** and **He** promised sustaining grace to all who **go to Him outside the camp**. They could not expect to know the extent of **His** grace until they turned their backs on the Temple and the Levitical system associated with it, **bearing the disgrace He bore (13:13)**.⁴⁰⁰ What was formerly sacred was now unholy, because **Jesus** had been expelled from it; and what was formerly unholy was now sacred, because **Jesus** was there.⁴⁰¹

God has given us glimpses of eternity in **His** Word. We know that right now **He** is preparing an eternal home for us. In heaven we will be united with loved ones who are believers, released from all pain and suffering, and rewarded for our faithfulness on earth. We will have unbroken fellowship with **ADONAI** for all eternity. One day **Jesus** will say: **Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world (Matthew 25:34)**.

C S Lewis captured the concept of eternity on the last page of the Chronicles of Narnia, his seven-book children’s fiction series: “For us this is the end of all the

stories . . . But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world . . . had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read, which goes on forever and in which every chapter is better than the one before.⁴⁰²

Just as the nine months you spent in your mother’s womb were not an end in themselves but preparation for life, so this life is preparation for the next. If you have a relationship with **Jesus**, you don’t need to fear death. It is the door to eternity. Rather than being the end of your life, it will be the birthday into eternal life. The writer to the **Hebrews** says: **For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come (13:14 NLT)**. Measured against eternity, our time on earth is just a blink of an eye, but the consequences of it will last forever.⁴⁰³

Sacrifice: The believer-priests of the New Covenant are not to offer animal sacrifices as did the Levitical priests, but **sacrifices of praise**. **The rabbis teach that in the future all sacrifices will cease; but praises to ADONAI will not cease. Through Him, therefore, “let us continually offer God a sacrifice of praise,” for this is the fruit of the lips that acknowledge His name (Hebrews 13:15 quoting Leviticus 7:12, 22:29; Psalm 50:14-15, 23; 107:22, 116:17; Second Chronicles 29:31)**. The believer’s **sacrifice** of praise is to be offered **continually**. It is not to be a fair-weather offering, but an offering in every **circumstance**. **Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus (First Thessalonians 5:18)**.

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for God is well pleased with such “sacrifices” (13:16). Yochanan warns us that **the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (First John 4:20)**. In other words, if our praise of **ADONAI** in word is not accompanied by **doing good and sharing with others**, it is not acceptable to **Him**. **Praise of God in word and deed are inseparable. Religion that God our Father accepts are pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted with the world (James 1:27)**.

Submission: Having encouraged the **Hebrews to remember their leaders who spoken the word of God to them (13:7)**, and not **be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings (13:9)**, the writer now encourages them, probably because of a separatist spirit **(10:25)**, **to submit to their present leaders**,

trusting in **their** teaching.⁴⁰⁴ **ADONAI** had provided for **their** spiritual protection by giving **them** godly **leaders**. It was **their** responsibility to guard, protect, defend and care for the spiritual welfare of the flock. The Adversary loves detached believers, unplugged from the life of the Body, isolated from **God’s** family, and unaccountable to spiritual leaders, because he knows they are defenseless and powerless against his tactics. Therefore, **obey your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you (13:17).**⁴⁰⁵

Supplication: Pray for me. The writer of **Hebrews** was apparently a leader in the Messianic community to whom **he** was writing, and here **he** asks for prayer support of among those to whom **he** was ministering. Every servant of **Christ** needs the **prayers** of believers to minister effectively – but even more so the leadership. The old serpent will attack leadership continually. Consequently, **leaders** need and deserve the **prayers** of **God’s** people, without which they cannot be the most effective in **His** work (**James 3:1**).

The writer asks for **prayer** because **he was sure that he had a clear conscience and had a desire to live honorably in every way.** **He** was not being egotistical or arrogant, but simply saying that, to the best of **his** own knowledge, **he** had ministered to the people faithfully – not perfectly – but faithfully. **He** not only needed their **prayers**; **he** had earned their **prayers.** **He** had the right before **God** to expect them to **pray for him.** And evidently, **he** really needed it. **I particularly urge you all the more to pray so that I may be restored to you soon (13:18-19).** Whatever the reason had been for **his** leaving them, **he** was anxious to return. **God** is sovereign, but **prayer** makes things possible that otherwise would not be possible (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ih - The Parable of the Persistent Widow**).⁴⁰⁶



Moses was given the unusual mitzvah of **the Red Heifer (Numbers 19:1-13)** whose ashes purify those contaminated by contact with death. **This ritual is considered a mystery to the Jews because it makes no sense to them. In fact, the Talmud states that of all the 613 commandments in the Torah, this is the only one that King Solomon could not understand, since this sacrifice is the most unusual of all the sacrifices found in the Torah.** However, **Hebrews** has the answer! **The Red Heifer was a clear foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Yeshua Messiah to deliver us from death.**

The sacrifice of **the Red Heifer** was unique for the following reasons:

1. Unlike all other sacrifices that were offered at the Bronze Altar, **the Red Heifer** was taken **outside the camp** to be slaughtered.
2. Unlike all other sacrifices **the Red Heifer** was to be **burned** in its entirety: its hide, flesh, and even dung were to be **burned**.
3. Unlike all other sacrifices, all **the blood** of the sacrifice was to be **burned** in the fire as well.
4. Unlike all other sacrifices, it (paradoxically) contaminated the priest who offered it, but made the one who was sprinkled by it clean.
5. Unlike all other sacrifices, the ashes were preserved and used for cleansing (all other sacrifices required the ash to be disposed of outside the camp).

According to Jewish tradition, this sacrifice was to atone for the sin of the Golden Calf, though the Torah itself does not make this association. **Yeshua Messiah** is the perfect fulfillment of **the Red Heifer**, since **He** is completely **without fault or defect (Second Corinthians 5:21; John 8:46); He** was **sacrificed outside the camp (Hebrews 13:13); He** made **Himself sin** for us **(Second Corinthians 5:21); the sprinkling of His blood cleanses us (First Peter 1:2; Hebrews 12:24; Revelation 1:5); and the water of purification, the Ruach Ha’Kodesh** that **His** sacrifice created is the means by which we are **made clean** from the impurity of **sin** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Gp - On the Last and Greatest Day of the Feast**).⁴⁰⁷