

Message Ten

**The Major Types and the Prophecy
concerning Christ**

Scripture Reading: Num. 17:8; 19:2, 9; 20:8; 21:4-9; 35:6-7; 24:17

I. We need to see and experience the major types concerning Christ in Numbers:

- A. Aaron's budding rod typifies not a dead Christ but the resurrected Christ, the budding Christ, who not only buds but also blossoms and bears fruit to maturity—17:8:
1. The word in Numbers 16:3 and Moses' word in verses 9 and 10 show that the root of this rebellion among God's people was ambition, the struggle for power and for a higher position; ambition undermines God's plan and damages His people; throughout the centuries many problems among Christians have been caused by ambition—cf. Matt. 20:20-28; 3 John 9-11.
 2. As God's deputy, or delegated, authority, Moses referred the case to God as the highest authority, for His speaking, exposing, and judging; in a struggle for power the only One who can judge and expose the real situation is God Himself—Num. 16:4-5.
 3. Korah and the others went down to Sheol alive and directly (v. 33); they did not need to die first (cf. Rev. 19:20); this was something new that Jehovah brought about (Num. 16:29-30).
 4. God's judgment on the two hundred fifty men who rebelled with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram signifies the judgment of the cross on all of man's service to God that is according to man's opinions, by his flesh, and in rivalry with others.
 5. Since the rebellion of Korah and his company in Numbers 16 was related to the priesthood (vv. 3, 8-10), the budding of Aaron's rod was a vindication indicating that Aaron was the one accepted by God as having authority in the God-given ministry of the priesthood (v. 5).
 6. The principle to every service lies in the budding rod; resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to God; what we can do belongs in the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs in the realm of resurrection—cf. Rom. 1:9; 7:6; 2 Cor. 1:8-9.
- B. The red heifer, the principal component of the water for impurity, signifies the redeeming Christ—Num. 19:2, 9:

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1. The color red signifies the likeness of the flesh of sin, which is for the bearing of man's sin outwardly.
2. The heifer being without defect signifies that although Christ was in the likeness of the flesh of sin, He did not have the sinful nature; that the heifer was without blemish indicates that Christ was perfect.
3. The heifer having never been under a yoke signifies that Christ was never used by anyone, especially by or for God's enemy, Satan.
4. Like the red heifer, Christ was crucified outside the camp, on Calvary, a small mount outside the city of Jerusalem—v. 3; Heb. 13:12-13; Matt. 27:33.
5. "The priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet strands, and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer"—Num. 19:6:
 - a. Cedar wood signifies Christ in His dignified humanity, hyssop signifies Christ in His humbled humanity, and scarlet signifies redemption in its highest significance.
 - b. The high and dignified Christ and the lowly and humbled Christ in His redemption were elements for the composition of the water for impurity—v. 9.
6. Numbers 19:9 says, "A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the assembly of the children of Israel as water for impurity; it is a sin offering":
 - a. Ashes signify Christ reduced to nothing (Mark 9:12); these ashes were kept for the water for impurity; it was a purification of sin, or a sin offering.
 - b. The impurity in Numbers 19 refers to death, which became prevailing among the children of Israel (16:49); thus, there was the need for the water for impurity.
7. "For the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin offering, and running water shall be added to them in a vessel"—19:17:
 - a. Only the working of Christ's redemption, through His dignified and humbled humanity, with His death and the Spirit of His resurrection (v. 17), could heal and cleanse the situation from the uncleanness of death.

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- b. The living (running) water here signifies the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Christ; in the water for impurity, there is the efficacy of Christ's redemption with the washing power of the Spirit of His resurrection.
- C. The rock in Numbers 20:8 typifies the crucified and resurrected Christ, and the water that flowed from the rock typifies the Spirit as the living water that flowed out of the crucified and resurrected Christ—1 Cor. 10:4; John 19:34:
 1. Since Christ has been crucified and the Spirit has been given, there is no need for Christ to be crucified again, that is, no need to strike the rock again, that the living water may flow; in God's economy Christ should be crucified only once—Heb. 7:27; 9:26-28a.
 2. To receive the living water from the crucified Christ, we need only to "take the rod" and "speak to the rock"; to take the rod is to identify with Christ in His death and apply the death of Christ to ourselves and our situation; to speak to the rock is to speak a direct word to Christ as the smitten rock, asking Him to give us the Spirit of life based on the fact that the Spirit has already been given—cf. John 4:10.
 3. In Numbers 20 Moses condemned the people as rebels, but Moses was the one who rebelled against God's word—vv. 10-11, 24; 27:14.
 4. Moses failed to sanctify God, making Him common; in being angry with the people and in wrongly striking the rock twice, Moses failed to sanctify God.
 5. In being angry when God was not angry, Moses did not represent God rightly in His holy nature, and in striking the rock twice, he did not keep God's word in His economy; thus, Moses offended both God's holy nature and His divine economy.
 6. Because of this, even though he was intimate with God and may be considered a companion of God (Exo. 33:11), Moses lost the right to enter the good land.
 7. In all that we say and do concerning God's people, our attitude must be according to God's holy nature, and our actions must be according to His divine economy; otherwise, in our words and deeds we will rebel against Him and offend Him.

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- D. The bronze serpent in Numbers 21:4-9 is a type of the Lord Jesus (John 3:14-15), who was crucified in the likeness of the flesh of sin as our Substitute and Replacement that we might “look at” (believe into) Him and have eternal life:
1. When the children of Israel sinned against God, they were bitten by serpents; God told Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on their behalf for God’s judgment, that by looking upon that bronze serpent all might live.
 2. The Lord Jesus came in “the likeness of the flesh of sin” (Rom. 8:3), which likeness is equal to the form of the bronze serpent; the bronze serpent had the form of the serpent but was without the serpent’s poison.
 3. Christ was made in “the likeness of the flesh of sin,” but He did not participate in any way in the sin of the flesh—2 Cor. 5:21.
 4. When He was lifted up in the flesh on the cross, by His death Satan, the old serpent, was dealt with; this also means that the serpentine nature within fallen man has been dealt with—Heb. 2:14; John 1:29.
 5. Day by day we can enjoy and apply the Lord to our being as the reality of the sin offering; He is the sin-dealing life, the life that deals with our sinful nature.
- E. The cities of refuge typify the all-inclusive Christ as the embodiment of the redeeming God, into whom mistaken sinners can flee for refuge—Num. 35:6-7, 9-34:
1. Christ was delivered by God into the hands of sinners, who mistakenly put Him to death—Acts 2:23; Rom. 4:25; Luke 23:34; 1 Cor. 2:8.
 2. If any sinner repents, God will regard him as a mistaken sinner and will forgive him; such a one may flee into Christ, but if anyone refuses the gospel and does not repent, God will regard him as a willful sinner, one who is destined to perish—Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; Num. 35:16; John 3:16-18.
 3. There were six cities of refuge, three on each side of the Jordan; the number six signifies mistake-making man, who was created by God on the sixth day—Num. 35:14; Gen. 1:26-27, 31.
 4. The number three signifies the Triune God as the refuge

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for the man who makes mistakes; the number two (the two sets of three cities each) signifies a testimony standing in the universe, testifying and declaring to the universe that the Triune God is living on earth among human beings to be their city of refuge.

5. The cities given to the Levites were forty-eight cities (Num. 35:7); the forty-eight cities were to be scattered among Israel to be her marvelously available blessing.
6. That the cities of refuge were to be not only for the children of Israel but also for the strangers and sojourners among them signifies that the Triune God as the refuge for mistake-making man is for all mankind—v. 15.
7. Furthermore, the distribution of the six refuge cities in different places indicates that Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, is near and available; the Triune God has spread among men, to the very place where we are, to be a city of refuge for all those who make mistakes.

II. Strictly speaking, the only portion of Numbers that is a prophecy is the portion in 24:14-25, which Bible expositors call “Balaam’s prophecy”; this prophecy speaks of the things that will happen at the Lord’s second coming, as indicated by the phrase *in the last days* in verse 14:

- A. Both the Star out of Jacob coming forth and a Scepter rising out of Israel refer to Christ—v. 17:
 1. The Lord was manifested as a bright star at His birth (Matt. 2:2) and will be manifested as a bright star at His second coming (Rev. 2:28; 22:16), but in this age, between His two appearances, He also rises as the morning star in the hearts of those who belong to Him (2 Pet. 1:19).
 2. The Scepter refers to Christ’s ruling; the One who has the scepter is the One who is on the throne and has all-inclusive power and authority—Psa. 2:9; 45:6; Gen. 49:10; Rev. 2:26-27.
- B. The history of Israel in the book of Numbers signifies the history of the church (1 Cor. 10:5-6; cf. Num. 24:9b); at the end of these histories, Christ will appear as the Star and the Scepter to shine on all the peoples and to rule the whole earth; at that time everything on earth that harasses God’s people will be removed, and God’s people will no longer suffer.