

Red Heifers Unveiled: Your Biggest Questions Answered

Throughout the last few years of writing, teaching and conducting interviews about the red heifers, I have received many good questions and think it would be helpful to bring them together in one location.

1. Do you think the red heifer ceremony has already been performed in secret?

I have often considered the possibility of a secret red heifer ceremony and wondered whether it was possible. For two specific reasons, I don't think the ceremony has taken place in secret.

The first relates to comments made in a Daily Wire article. Notice this quote:

Conducting a red heifer ceremony is controversial in rabbinic circles, and there is far from a consensus over whether it can even be done, according to the Temple Institute, which provides rabbinical supervision for the cows.

"There is no plan right now for using a kosher red heifer, killing it and turning it into ashes," Yitzchak Reuven, the director of international development for the Temple Institute told The Daily Wire. "Anyone saying this is making it up. We will only do this when the time is right, because there is no point in doing it if the Jewish and rabbinic world won't accept it."

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I find these quotes a little strange because the Temple Institute—along with the Boneh Israel organization—spent

considerable time and resources searching for a qualified red heifer. Rabbis from the Temple Institute visited Texas to give a preliminary inspection and then spent \$700,000 to purchase and fly the five cows over to Israel.

Why would they do this if they were not prepared to officiate the ceremony?

The second reason why I believe the ceremony could not be done in secret relates to the geography of the precise locations on the Mount of Olives.

If you look at that map, you will see that these two locations are within the boundaries of eastern Jerusalem and hardly in a remote location. We must remember that the red heifer ritual ceremony essentially involves a large bonfire that could not be hidden in such a populated area. A fire of this size would produce major amounts of smoke and attract the attention of the fire department and police. In addition, ever since Hamas brought attention to the red cows in January 2024, the Arab people are also aware of these developments.

2. Some people suggest that the red heifers currently in Shiloh are just decoys. Is this true?

Back in the fall of 2023 I had the opportunity to interview Byron Stinson. He was preparing various logistics for the red heifer ceremony, which was potentially planned for April or June of 2024. Obviously when this window passed, they did not suggest another time frame.

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During that interview, I asked Byron about the security situation. These are expensive cows, and I assumed they would be kept in a secure environment that cannot be accessed by the public. Why? Well, remember that any small action can disqualify the cows. They do not have to be killed to be disqualified; they just need to be blemished by a small cut or a brand. Even throwing an object like a blanket or a yoke over a cow could disqualify it.

I am skeptical that the real qualified cows from Texas are accessible to the public at Shiloh. I do not know for sure and this is just my guess, but looking at the situation logically, it makes sense.

3. How many red heifers are still qualified?

Based on the latest news from December 2024, only two red heifers of the original five flown to Israel in September 2022 remain preliminarily qualified. Remember that any cow that is preliminarily qualified must be examined and requalified immediately prior to the ceremony.

4. Is there an upper limit on the age of the red heifer?

According to the Temple Institute website, there is no maximum age limit for the red heifer.

5. Does the red heifer need to be born in Israel?

It does not.

6. Can the red heifer be genetically modified?

Opinions among the rabbis vary on this issue, but efforts have been made in the past to import Red Angus cow embryos for the sake of the Israel red heifer breeding program. It also depends on how someone might define “genetically modified” with its various nuances.

7. What will be done with the disqualified red heifers?

While the five red heifers flown to Israel in 2022 were quite costly, we can be assured that any cow that becomes disqualified will not simply become an expensive steak. Those that are disqualified will be used in the Israeli breeding program, as they still maintain superb genetics to pass on to the next generation.

To read more from Mondo Gonzales' new book, "The Mystery of the Red Heifer," click here to purchase your copy.

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Mondo Gonzales has been studying and teaching Bible prophecy as a pastor for more than 25 years. He has a bachelor's degree in biblical studies, with a concentration in Jewish studies, along with a graduate degree in biblical archaeology, giving him the necessary expertise to explain the mystery of the red heifer ritual. Mondo is the co-host of the "Prophecy Watchers" television program, podcast and radio program. His newest book, "The Mystery of the Red Heifer," is available at this link.