

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 19

This chapter contains a law for making a water for purification for sin, the ingredients of which are the ashes of a red heifer burnt, about which many things are observed, (^{<0491>}Numbers 19:1-10); the use of the water made of them, to purify such as were unclean by the touch of a dead body, (^{<0491>}Numbers 19:11-13); some rules are given, by which it might be known who were unclean on account of a dead body, (^{<0491>}Numbers 19:14-16); the manner of purifying such persons, (^{<0491>}Numbers 19:17-19); and the punishment of those that should neglect purification, (^{<0491>}Numbers 19:20-22).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron*, etc.] Not at this time, after the business of the spies, and the affair of Korah, but before the children of Israel departed from Sinai; and so Aben Ezra observes, that this was spoken in the wilderness of Sinai, when the Lord commanded to put unclean persons out of the camp, and when some were defiled with a dead body, and unfit for the passover, (^{<0491>}Numbers 5:2 9:6); and mention is made of the “water of purifying”, (^{<0491>}Numbers 8:7);

saying; as follows.

Ver. 2. *This [is] the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded*, etc.] By which it appears, that this law was not of the moral, but of the ceremonial kind, being called an ordinance, a statute, a decree of God, the King of kings; and which was founded not on any clear plain reason in the thing itself, but in the will of God, who intended it as a type and shadow of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, and of the efficacy of that to cleanse from sin; and it also appears by this, that it was not a new law now made, but which had been made already: “which the Lord hath commanded”: as is plain from what has been observed, (see Gill on ^{<0491>}Numbers 19:1”); and the Jews ^{f251} say, that the red heifer was slain by Eleazar the day after the tabernacle was erected, even on the second day of the first month of Israel’s coming out of Egypt; and it was now repeated both on account of the priests and people, because of the priest to whom it

belonged, as Aben Ezra observes, Aaron being now established in the priesthood; and because of the people, who were afraid they should die if they came near the tabernacle; now hereby they are put in mind of a provision made for the purification of them, when under any uncleanness, which made them unfit for coming to it:

saying, speak unto the children of Israel; whom this law concerned, and for whose purification it was designed; and it was at the expense not of a private person, but of the whole congregation, that the water of purifying was made; and that, as the Jews say ^{f252}, that the priests might have no personal profit from it:

that they bring thee a red heifer; or “young cow”, for so the word properly signifies; one of two years old, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so says the Misnah ^{f253}; though some of the Rabbins say one of three years, or of four years, or even one of five years old, would do. This instance, with others, where females are ordered to be slain, (see ^{
}Leviticus 3:1); confutes the notion of such, who think the laws of Moses were made in conformity to the customs of the Egyptians, this being directly contrary to them; if they were the same in the times of Moses, they were in the times of Herodotus, who expressly says ^{f254}, male oxen the Egyptians sacrifice; but it is not lawful for them to sacrifice females, for they are sacred to Isis. Indeed, according to Plutarch ^{f255} and Diodorus Siculus ^{f256}, the Egyptians in their times sacrificed red bullocks to Typhon, who they supposed was of the same colour, and to whom they had an aversion, accounting him the god of evil; and because red oxen were odious to them, they offered them to him; as red-haired men also were slain by them for the same reason, at the tomb of Osiris, who they say was murdered by the red-haired Typhon; but these were superstitions that obtained among them after the times of Moses, and could not be retorted to by him; a better reason is to be given why this heifer or cow was to be of a red colour:

without spot, wherein [is] no blemish; the first of these, without spot, the Jews understand of colour, that it should have no spots in it of any other colour, black or white, nor indeed so much as an hair, at least not two of another colour; and so the Targum of Jonathan, in which there is no spot or mark of a white hair; and Jarchi more particularly,

“which is perfect in redness; for if there were in it (he says) two black hairs, it was unfit;”

and so Ben Gersom, with which agrees the Misnah ^{f257}; if there were in it two hairs, black or white, in one part, it was rejected; if there was one in the head, and another in the tail, it was rejected; if there were two hairs in it, the root or bottom of which were black, and the head or top red, and so on the contrary; all depended on the sight: and it must be owned, the same exactness was observed in the red oxen sacrificed by the Egyptians, as Plutarch relates ^{f258}; for if the ox had but one hair black or white, they reckoned it was not fit to be sacrificed; in which perhaps they imitated the Jews: it being without blemish was what was common to all sacrifices, such as are described in (~~f222~~ Leviticus 22:22-24);

[and] upon which never came yoke; and so among the Heathens in later times, very probably in imitation of this, they used to offer to their deities oxen that never had bore any yoke; as appears from Homer, Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and Seneca, out of whom instances are produced by Bochart ^{f259}. Now, though this red cow was not properly a sacrifice for sin, yet it was analogous to one, and was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all these characters meet, and are significant. It being a female may denote the infirmities of Christ's human nature, to which it was subject, though sinless ones; he was encompassed with, and took on him, our infirmities; and may have some respect to the woman, by whom the transgression came, which brought impurity on all human nature, which made a purification for sin necessary; and the red colour of it may point at the flesh and blood of Christ he partook of, and the sins of his people, which were laid upon him, and were as crimson and as scarlet, and the bloody sufferings he endured to make satisfaction for them; and its being without spot and blemish may denote the perfection of Christ in his person, obedience, and sufferings, and the purity and holiness of his nature; and having never had any yoke upon it may signify, that though he was made under the law, and had commands enjoined him by his father as man, yet was free from the yoke of human traditions, and from the servitude of sin, and most willingly engaged, and not by force and compulsion, in the business of our redemption and salvation.

Ver. 3. *And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest*, etc.] The son of Aaron; the Sagan of the priests, as the Targum of Jonathan calls him, the second or deputy priest; it was not to be given to Aaron, that he might not be defiled, though but for a small time, that so he might not be hindered in his office at all; but to Eleazar, to inure him to his office, and to confirm him in it:

that he may bring her forth without the camp; without the camp of Israel; Jarchi says, without the three camps, as afterwards without Jerusalem; it used in later times to be burnt on the mount of Olives; it was brought forth as impure, and was a type of Christ, having the sins of his people on him, and who in conformity to this type suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, (see ^{f261}Hebrews 13:11-13);

and [one] shall slay her before his face; the Targum of Jonathan says, another priest; but it was not necessary that it should be slain by a priest, any man might do it. Jarchi says, a stranger slew, and Eleazar looked on; though it was not slain by him, yet it was slain before him, that it might look like a sacrifice, though not offered on the altar; and slaying of it denotes the putting of Christ to death, which was done in the presence, and with the approbation, of the priests and elders of the people.

Ver. 4. *And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger*, etc.] He took the blood in his left hand, and sprinkled it with the finger of his right hand, as Maimonides says ^{f260}; and so the Targum of Jonathan, which says, he did not receive it into a vessel, but into the palm of his hand, and from thence sprinkled it with his finger ^{f261}: which Ainsworth thinks signified the Spirit of Christ, our high priest, called “the finger of God”, (^{f262}Luke 11:20); who takes the blood of Christ, and sprinkles it on the hearts of his people, whereby they are freed from an evil conscience:

and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times; or “towards the tabernacle”, so Noldius ^{f262}; as sprinkling of the blood was the principal action in sacrifices, this was to be done directly before the tabernacle, from whence its purifying virtue was expected, though it was not shed in it, that it might have all the appearance of a sacrifice it could have; and being done seven times, denotes the perfection of it: the priest, when he sprinkled, stood on the east side, with his face to the west. When the temple was built at Jerusalem, this affair was transacted on the mount of Olives, which was east of Jerusalem. Jarchi says, the priest stood in the east of Jerusalem, and placed himself so that he might see the door of the temple at the time of sprinkling the blood. Now it appears, as Maimonides says ^{f263}, that the floor of the temple was higher than the floor of the eastern gate of the mountain of the house twenty two cubits, and the height of the gate of the mountain of the house was twenty cubits; wherefore one that stood over against the eastern gate could not see the door of the temple, therefore they made the wall, which was over

the top of this gate (the battlement of it), low, so that he (the priest), that stood on the mount of Olives, might see the door of the temple, at the time he sprinkled the blood of the cow over against the temple; otherwise he could only have seen the eighth step of the porch of the temple, as the same writer observes ^{f264}, with which agrees the Misnah ^{f265}, that all the walls there (about the mountain of the house) were high, except the eastern wall, that so the priest that burnt the cow might stand on the top of the mount of Olives, and look and behold the door of the temple, when he sprinkled the blood.

Ver. 5. *And [one] shall burn the heifer in his sight*, etc.] Another priest, as the Targum of Jonathan, Eleazar looking on, as that expresses it; the Jews say ^{f266}, that when the priest came to the mount of Olives, accompanied by the elders of Israel, before he burnt the cow, he dipped himself in a dipping place there; and the wood being laid there in order, wood of cedar, ash, fir, and fig trees, made in the form of a tower, with holes opened in it (to put in the fire, and that it might burn the quicker), and its aspect being to the west, he bound the cow, and laid her upon the pile, with her head to the south, and her face to the west; and then having slain it, and sprinkled its blood, as before related, he set fire to it by the help of some small wood: the burning of it may signify the dolorous sufferings of Christ, when the wrath of God was poured forth like fire upon him; the same was signified by roasting the passover lamb:

her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn; which may denote the extent of Christ's sufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, skin, flesh, and blood, and the shame and reproach that attended them, signified by dung; as well as how impure and accursed he was accounted when he was made sin for his people, bore their sins and suffered for them, even not in body only, but in his soul also; for his soul as well as his body were made an offering for sin.

Ver. 6. *And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet*, etc.] Another priest, according to the Targum of Jonathan; but it seems to design Eleazar the priest, and so, in later times, the same priest that burnt the cow took these things; the Jews say ^{f267}, when he took them he said, is this cedar wood? is this hyssop? is this scarlet? so he said three times for everyone of them, and he was answered, yes, three times to each of them: these were the same that were used at the cleansing of the leper, (~~1844~~ Leviticus 14:4);

and cast [it] into the midst of the burning of the heifer; these were rolled or bound up together, as the Jews say ^{f268}, and made one bundle of, that they might the more easily be cast into the fire; the hyssop was wrapped about the cedar wood with the scarlet wool: the true reason of the use of these, Maimonides says ^{f269}, was never clear to him; but the cedar wood, being durable, may denote the continued efficacy of Christ's sufferings; the hyssop, being purgative and of a good smell, the purging nature of Christ's sacrifice, who by himself purged away our sins, and the sweet odour thereof ascended to the Lord; and the scarlet, the sins of his people destroyed thereby.

Ver. 7. *Then the priest shall wash his clothes*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan has it,

“he that slew the cow,”

and Aben Ezra, the priest that burnt it; but it seems to mean Eleazar, the priest that sprinkled the blood, and by touching that was defiled and needed washing; and so the Jews ^{f270} say, all that were employed about it, from the beginning to the end, were defiled in their garments; not only he that slew it, and burnt it, and sprinkled its blood, but he that took and cast in the cedar wood, etc. as we find also he that gathered the ashes of it as well as burnt it: this creature was reckoned so impure, though its ashes were for purifying, that whoever had anything to do with it was unclean, as the scapegoat, which had the sins of all Israel on it; and this as that was typical of Christ, made sin for his people, that he might cleanse them from sin: it may point at the sin of the priests and people of Israel, in putting Christ to death, and yet there was cleansing from that sin, in the precious blood of Christ, as well as from all others:

and he shall bathe his flesh in water; in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan; not his clothes only, but his body was to be dipped in water:

and afterward he shall come into the camp: when his clothes and flesh are washed, but not before:

and the priest shall be unclean until the even; though washed, and therefore, though he is said to go into the camp upon washing, this is to be understood, after the evening is come: so Jarchi directs to interpret the passage, transpose it, says he, and so explain it; and he shall be unclean

until the evening, and after that he may come into the camp, not only the camp of Israel, but the camp of the Shechinah, as the same writer.

Ver. 8. *And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water*, etc.] In forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan: this shows that one different from this is designed in (^{<04907>}Numbers 19:7); and that this is one distinct from him that sprinkled the blood, (^{<04904>}Numbers 19:4,5);

and bathe his flesh in water: in a like quantity, as the above Targum:

and shall be unclean until the even: and, though washed, might not go into the camp until that time: this may signify, as before, that though the crucifixion of Christ was a very great sin, and done by wicked hands, yet was pardonable through the very blood that was shed by them, (^{<4123>}Acts 2:23,36,38,41).

Ver. 9. *And a man [that is] clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer*, etc.] A man, a clean priest, as the Targum of Jonathan; in later times great care was taken that the priest concerned in the burning of the red cow should be pure; he was separated from his own house seven days before the time, and every day he was sprinkled with the blood of all sin offerings then offered, that it might be sure he was free from any pollution by a grave, or a dead body; and for the same reason they made a causeway on double arches from the temple to the mount of Olives, over the valley of Kidron, lest any unseen grave should be in the way; and when he came thither he was obliged to wash or dip himself, as before observed ^{f271}; and so he that gathered up the ashes was to be clean from all ceremonial pollution: the Jews say ^{f272}, that they pounded the ashes; if there were any black coal in them or bone, they did not leave it in them, but sifted them in stone sieves; and not the ashes of the heifer only they took, but the ashes of the cedar wood, etc. mixed with them; and these they put, as the Targum of Jonathan says, into an earthen vessel enclosed in a covering of clay:

and lay [them] up without the camp in a clean place; they were divided into three parts, according to the Targum of Jonathan, one part was put in the Chel (or the enclosure of the court of the tabernacle), another in the mount of Olives, and the third part was divided among all the wards of the Levites, with which the Misnah ^{f273} agrees; Jarchi makes mention of the same division, and of the use of each; that the wards had was without the court, that the citizens might take of it, and all that needed to be purified;

that in the mount of Olives was for the priests, to sanctify other heifers with it; and that in the Chel was for a reserve:

and it shall be kept [for a reserve] for the congregation of Israel; as ashes may be kept a long time, if well taken care of, because they are not subject to any corruption or putrefaction; and so was, as Bishop Patrick observes from Dr. Jackson, a figure of the everlasting efficacy of Christ's blood: and, according to the Jews, these ashes of the first heifer must last more than a thousand years; for they say ^{f274} the second that was burnt was in the time of Ezra, though they reckon seven more afterwards before the destruction of the second temple, in all nine; and the tenth they expect in the days of the Messiah, which are past; he, being come, has put an end to this type by fulfilling it in himself: and the use of them was

for a water of separation; being put into water, and mixed with it, was for the cleansing of such as were separated from others for their uncleanness, and was a purification of them for it, as follows:

it [is] a purification for sin: or "it [is] sin" ^{f275}, not an offering for sin, properly speaking; the heifer, whose ashes they were, not being sacrificed in the tabernacle, nor on the altar, and wanted other rites; yet it answered the purposes of a sin offering, and its ashes in water were typical of the blood of Christ, which purges the conscience from dead works, when this only purified to the sanctifying of the flesh, (^{<3013>}Hebrews 9:13,14); and is the fountain set open for sin and uncleanness, (^{<3811>}Zechariah 13:1); where both the words are used which are here, and in the preceding clause: ashes are known to be of a cleansing nature, and so a fit emblem of spiritual purification by Christ; and the duration of them of the perpetuity of it.

Ver. 10. *And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes,* etc.] Whom the Targum of Jonathan calls a priest, though it does not seem necessary he should be one:

and be unclean until the even; (see Gill on "^{<4017>}Numbers 19:7");

and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever; until the Messiah came, whose sufferings and death are for the expiation of, and purification for the sins of Jews and Gentiles, of all the people of God throughout the world, signified by the burning of this heifer; (see ^{<6112>}1 John 2:2).

Ver. 11. *He that toucheth the dead body of any man*, etc.] A man and not a beast, as Aben Ezra observes; for he that touched the dead body of a beast was unclean only until evening, (^{11:24}Leviticus 11:24); any man, Jew or Gentile, as the same writer notes: this is instanced in, as being the principal pollution, though not the only one, yet so some think, for which the water of purification made of the ashes of the burnt heifer was appointed:

shall be unclean seven days; the reason of which is, because death is the fruit of sin, which is of a defiling nature, and to show that all that are dead in sins are defiled and defiling, and are not to be touched, or to have communion and fellowship held with them but to be abstained from.

Ver. 12. *He shall purify himself with it*, etc.] That is, with the ashes of the water of purification made of them: and this was to be done first

on the third day; from the time of his touching the dead body. Aben Ezra intimates, that there is a secret or mystery in this and the following number seven; it may respect the third day of Christ's resurrection, who, as he shed his blood for the expiation and purification of sinners, so he rose again the third day for the justification of them:

and on the seventh day he shall be clean; which may denote the perfect state, or sabbath of rest, which remains for the people of God, when all Christ's purified and justified ones shall be clear of all sin, and be the spirits of just men made perfect:

but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean; whoever is not cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of them, and is not justified from them by him that rose from the dead the third day, will never be cleansed in the world to come, or in the eternal sabbath; but it will then be said, "let him that is filthy be filthy still", (^{22:11}Revelation 22:11).

Ver. 13. *Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself*, etc.] With the ashes of the heifer, or water of purification, and so neglects the means which God has appointed for his cleansing:

defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; that is, if he goes into it in his uncleanness, which it was not lawful for him to do: from the Jews the Assyrians seem to have borrowed some customs of theirs, as related by

Lucian^{f276}, who upon burying a dead cock reckoned seven days, (see ~~<491>~~ Numbers 19:11); and then went into the temple, for before they might not go in, nor perform holy service; such laws they use, that if anyone sees a dead carcass, he may not go that day into the temple; but he goes in the day following, after he has purified himself:

and that soul shall be cut off from Israel; either be excommunicated from the church, or die by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by the immediate hand of God; that is, if he knew he had touched a dead body, and wilfully neglected the means of his purification, and so sinned presumptuously; otherwise, if all this was done ignorantly, an atonement was made for it, (~~<488>~~ Leviticus 5:3-6)

because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; as all are who are not sprinkled with the blood of Christ:

his uncleanness is yet upon him; and will remain, nothing can remove it; as nothing can remove the stain and blot of sin but the blood of Christ; and where that is not applied it will remain marked before God, and will lie upon the sinner to his utter condemnation and ruin; (see ~~<412>~~ Jeremiah 2:22).

Ver. 14. *This is the law when a man dieth in a tent*, etc.] A tent is only mentioned, because the Israelites now dwelt in tents, as Aben Ezra remarks; otherwise the law holds equally good of an house as of a tent:

all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days; the meaning of which is, that all persons that come into a tent or house where a dead body is are equally unclean as those that were in it when it died; and the same is to be supposed of all vessels brought into it, as well as those that are in it, that is, open ones, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 15. *And every open vessel*, etc.] An earthen one, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Jarchi interprets it; and Maimonides^{f277} observes, that this is only to be understood of an earthen vessel:

which hath no covering bound upon it; a linen or a woollen cloth wrapped and tied about it:

[is] unclean; the air of the house getting into it by its being uncovered.

Ver. 16. *And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields*, etc.] That is killed by another, that dies a violent death, either

by the sword or other means; one that touched such an one was unclean, or that touched the sword with which he was slain, as the Targum of Jonathan adds: “or a dead body”: that dies a natural death, or suddenly, or in any way:

or a bone off a man; dug out of a grave, and lying by itself:

or a grave; the Targum adds, either the covering or side of a grave:

shall be unclean seven days; all which has respect to the defiling nature of sin, which is the cause of death and the grave.

Ver. 17. *And for an unclean person*, etc.] Defiled by any of the above means:

they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin; from the place where they were laid up for this use; (see Gill on “^{408B}Numbers 19:9”) and some have thought that they were laid up in various cities and places in the country, as well as at Jerusalem, that they might be come at easily upon occasion; otherwise they could not be had without great trouble and expense, and in some places not so soon as the law required for their purification, namely, on the third day after their defilement:

and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel; the Targum Jonathan is,

“fountain water in the midst of earthen vessel;”

for no water but fountain, spring, or river water, was made use of; and it should seem by what is said that ashes were first put into the vessel, and then the running water was put to them; and yet the Jewish writers say ^{f278}, that if the ashes were put in first, and then the water, it was not right; and the meaning of what is said here is, that the water and ashes should be mixed together; for it is urged from the words: “running water in a vessel”, that it is plain, that the water is put in the vessel and not to the ashes; and therefore that which is said, “shall be put thereto”, is to caution the person, that after he has put the ashes upon the water, that he mixes them well with his finger, and cause the water below to rise above ^{f279}.

Ver. 18. *And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water*, etc.] Three stalks of hyssop bound together, as the Targum of Jonathan, and this man was to be a clean priest, according to the same; but it does not seem necessary that he should be a priest, but that anyone free from ceremonial pollution might do it:

and sprinkle it upon the tent; where there was a dead body: but this, we are told, is to be understood not of a tent made of wood, or stone, or clay, but made of anything woven, as linen: or of skins ^{f280}:

and upon all the vessels; in such a tent, that is, open ones, as before observed:

and upon the persons that were there: when the man died in it, or came into it since, and while the dead body was in it;

and upon him that touched a bone; of a dead man, or, as the Targum of Jonathan, the bone of a living man that is separated from him:

or one slain, or one dead; slain with a sword, or dead of the pestilence, as the same Targum, or of any other disease, or in any other way:

or a grave; or the covering or side of one, as the same Targum adds.

Ver. 19. *And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean*, etc.] The clean priest shall sprinkle upon the unclean man, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, he shall sprinkle the water of purification upon him that is unclean in any of the above ways:

on the third day, and on the seventh day; (see Gill on “^{<41912>}Numbers 19:12”),

and on the seventh day he shall purify himself; either the unclean person, who shall perfect his purification, as Jarchi interprets it, that is, by doing what follows; or else the clean person, who becomes in some measure unclean, by sprinkling and touching the water of separation, as appears from (^{<41921>}Numbers 19:21) as the priest that sprinkled the blood of the heifer, and the man that burnt it and gathered its ashes, (^{<41907>}Numbers 19:7-9)

and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even; in like manner as the man that let go the goat into the wilderness, (^{<41915>}Leviticus 16:26).

Ver. 20. *But the man that shall be unclean*, etc.] By touching any dead body, bone, or grave:

and shall not purify himself; with the water of purification:

that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation: (see Gill on “^{<0193>}Numbers 19:13”).

because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: by going into it in his uncleanness:

the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean; and will remain so, for nothing else could purify him, (see ^{<0193>}Numbers 19:13).

Ver. 21. *And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them,* etc.] To the children of Israel, throughout their generations, unto the coming of the Messiah, when the ceremonial law, which stood in divers washings and purifications, was abolished:

that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; the priest that sprinkled, according to the Targum of Jonathan, or any other person that did it; so that the same purifying water, which made an unclean person clean, defiled a clean one; for though it was purifying, it had uncleanness in it; having the ashes not only of the cow itself, but of its skin, blood, and dung; and so a lye made of ashes is impure in itself, and yet serves to scour cloth: Ainsworth thinks this signifies the imperfection and insufficiency of legal rites, which, in their greatest virtue, only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, and left the purifier himself in uncleanness he had not before; by consideration of which, the people might be led to Christ, and his Spirit, for cleansing, (^{<3013>}Hebrews 9:13, 14 7:25) but it rather signifies, that the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, and answers to this purifying water, that its cleansing virtue is owing to Christ being made sin for his people; and that some may be instruments of directing souls to the blood of Christ for cleansing, and yet be defiled themselves: it does not appear that this man, thus unclean, was to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but was only to wash his clothes; (see ^{<0174>}Revelation 7:14)

and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even: but was not clean until he had washed, as Aben Ezra observes, though not expressed; for if one that only sprinkled it had need to be washed, much more one that touched it, and which was unavoidable, if, when he mixed the water and ashes together, he stirred them with his finger, (see Gill on “^{<0197>}Numbers 19:17”), though Maimonides ^{f281} understands this of

sprinkling and touching the water when there was no necessity for it, when a person was not employed in doing the duty of this law.

Ver. 22. *And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean,* etc.] Not the person unclean by sprinkling, or touching the water of purification, but the unclean person spoken of throughout the chapter, that was unclean by touching a dead body, bone, or grave; whatever that man touched, any vessel or thing, that was unclean also; or “whomsoever”, any person, man or woman, for it respects both persons and things:

and the soul that toucheth it; that which the unclean person hath touched; or “him”, the unclean person, whether the unclean person touched him, or he the unclean person, or touched anything he had touched, he was unclean; denoting the spreading and infectious nature of sin, and how much sin and sinners are to be avoided; (see ~~CRF30~~ Leviticus 15:4-12,19,20).