

# Numbers 19:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

## Analysis

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**He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean**—The purification ritual required sprinkling with water mixed with ashes of the red heifer (described in vv. 1-10) on both the third and seventh days. The verb "purify" (chata, חָטָא) is the same word meaning "to sin" but in its Piel form means "to purify from sin" or "to de-sin." This demonstrates that ritual defilement symbolized sin's contaminating power.

The specific timing—third and seventh days—points to completeness (seven) and resurrection symbolism (third day). Hebrews 9:13-14 explicitly connects this ritual to Christ's blood purifying our consciences from dead works. Christ rose on the third day and offers complete purification (seventh day perfection). The warning "if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean" shows that neglecting prescribed means forfeits cleansing—there's no alternative path. This anticipates the exclusivity of Christ's atonement for cleansing from sin.

## Historical Context

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The red heifer ritual was unique in Israel's sacrificial system—the heifer was burned completely outside the camp (v. 3), and its ashes were mixed with water for purification. This provision addressed the constant reality of death in a community of 2-3 million people. Without this ritual, corpse contamination would have rendered most Israelites perpetually unfit for worship. The ashes of one heifer

## Related Passages

## Study Questions

## Interlinear Text

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 31:19** (Parallel theme): And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

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