

# Numbers 19:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

## Analysis

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**And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there**—The purification required a ceremonially clean person as mediator, prefiguring Christ's sinless mediation. Hyssop (ezov, ἤζον), a small bushy plant, served as the aspergillum (sprinkling device). Hyssop's use connects to Passover blood-application (Exodus 12:22) and David's plea "purge me with hyssop" (Psalm 51:7), consistently symbolizing cleansing.

The water mixed with red heifer ashes (called "water of separation," v. 9) was sprinkled on tent, vessels, and persons—comprehensive purification of place, possessions, and people. "Sprinkle" (nazah, נִזָּה) means to scatter droplets in ritual purification. This anticipates Christ's blood being "sprinkled" on believers (Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 1:2). The clean person mediating purification for the unclean models Christ, the sinless one who cleanses sinners without becoming contaminated Himself.

## Historical Context

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Hyssop was likely the Syrian marjoram (*Origanum syriacum*), a common plant in the Middle East with small branches ideal for sprinkling. Its humble nature may

symbolize that God uses simple means for profound spiritual realities. The practice of ritual sprinkling with hyssop was common in Israel's purification rites (Leviticus 14:4-7, 49-52). The requirement that a clean person perform the sprinkling created a purification hierarchy—those already pure could restore others, illustrating spiritual restoration through those walking in fellowship with God.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does the requirement for a clean mediator prefigure Christ's sinless mediation?
2. What does hyssop's humble nature teach about God's choice of means for spiritual cleansing?
3. In what ways should spiritually clean believers serve as agents of restoration for the defiled?

## Interlinear Text

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וְהִזְבַּח הַמְּלֵאָה אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁלַח וְיַעֲשֶׂה  
shall take hyssop and dip it in the water person And a clean and sprinkle

H3947 H231 H2881 H4325 H376 H2889 H5137

וְעַל יְמִינֵךְ וְעַל יְמִינֵי הַכְלִים וְעַל  
it upon the tent and upon all the vessels

H5921 H168 H5921 H3605 H3627 H5921

וְעַל שְׂפָתֶךָ וְעַל שְׂפָתֵי אֲשֶׁר  
and upon the persons

H5315 H834 H1961 H8033 H5921

וְעַל שְׂפָתֶךָ וְעַל שְׂפָתֵי אֲשֶׁר  
that were there and upon him that touched

H5060 H176 H6106 H176 H2491 H176

וְעַל שְׂפָתֶךָ וְעַל שְׂפָתֵי אֲשֶׁר  
or one dead H176 or a grave

H4191 H6913

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 9:14** (Parallel theme): How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

**Numbers 19:9** (Parallel theme): And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.