

Adult Bible Class

The Book of Leviticus - Lesson #7

In our last lesson we introduced two chapters in Leviticus that go together - chapters 13 and 14 - which speak of leprosy in the flesh, the garment, and the house. In the Bible, leprosy is a picture of sin. In our day, leprosy (Hansen's Disease) has been virtually eradicated in our western culture, but in the days of the Bible, leprosy was well known and feared.

In chapter 13, God gave the Israelites specific instructions on how to deal with leprosy and how to tell the difference between leprosy and other skin problems. If someone suspected that he might have leprosy, he was to go to the priest to be examined.

Leviticus 13:45 (NKJV) "Now the leper on whom the sore *is*, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' **46** He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He *is* unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling *shall be* outside the camp.

The leper had to 1) tear his clothes, 2) bare his head, and 3) cover his upper lip. In Scripture, these are all signs of mourning (see Lev. 10:6 and Ezekiel 24:17). Leprosy was a living death. The leper regarded himself as virtually a dead man. He was his own mourner. He cried out, "*Unclean, unclean!*" The leper had to live "*outside the camp*" of the Israelites.

The ancient Jewish laws stated that a leper wasn't allowed to come within six feet of another person, including his own family. He wasn't allowed to come within 150 feet of anyone when the wind was blowing. Lepers quarantined in colonies with other lepers until they died.

The disease of leprosy began with a small spot but then progressed over time. The leprous sores would go deep into the body. Fingers, toes, and facial features would die and drop off. Finally, in its last stages, leprosy would attack vital organs and the person would die.

In the Bible, leprosy is a picture of sin. Sin begins in a small way, usually in the heart and mind of a person. It grows - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly - until it finally kills and destroys. At first, a person with leprosy loses feeling - but in the final stages of the disease he experiences horrible pain.

Sin separates man from God and man from other people. Sin is repulsive and horrible, especially in its last stages. The only hope for a sinner is salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our last lesson we studied sins of the flesh as represented in Leviticus by leprosy in the flesh. Galatians 5:16-21 enumerates many of these sins.

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,
20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions,
heresies, **21** envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

When we say “sins of the flesh” we mean sins that originate in the heart and mind of a person. The inner man is the birthplace of sin, then when sin is allowed to live in that person, it will become action.

Now let’s continue from where we left off in chapter 13.

Leprosy in the Garment

Leviticus 13:47 (NKJV) “Also, if a garment has a leprous plague in it, whether it is a woolen garment or a linen garment, **48** whether *it is* in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, **49** and if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment...*it is* a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest. **50** The priest shall examine the plague and isolate *that which has* the plague seven days. **51** And he shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment...the plague *is* an active leprosy. It *is* unclean. **52** He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague...for it *is* an active leprosy; the garment shall be burned in the fire.

53 “But if the priest examines *it*, and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment... **54** then the priest shall command that they wash *the thing* in which *is* the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days. **55** Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed *if* the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it *is* unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, whether the damage is outside or inside. **56** If the priest examines *it*, and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment... **57** But if it appears again in the garment... it is a spreading plague; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague. **58** And if you wash the garment...if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean.

59 “This *is* the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean.”

Modern versions do not use the word “leprosy” regarding clothing, but rather “mold” or “mildew.”

Leviticus 13:47 (NLT) “Now suppose mildew contaminates some woolen or linen clothing...

Leviticus 13:47 (NIV) “As for any fabric that is spoiled with a defiling mold—any woolen or linen clothing...

Leviticus chapter 13 continues by discussing leprosy in the clothing. Just as the flesh was to be inspected for leprosy (sin), the clothing that had spots was to be inspected for “leprosy,” which in the case of clothing was mold or mildew. This type of “leprosy” would eat away at the garment until it was ruined. The remedy was to wash it, or if nothing could be done - to burn it.

Since the original sin and rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the human body and clothing are linked together by divine decree. God clothes us to cover our sin; Satan, the deceiver, wants to unclothe us and expose us to sin and death. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, came to cover our sin and rescue us from death by shedding his own blood.

Adam and Eve attempted to cover their nakedness with aprons of leaves, but God deemed their clothing insufficient and He covered them with clothes He made.

Genesis 3:7 (NLT) At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Genesis 3:21 (Amp.) For Adam also and for his wife the Lord God made long coats (tunics) of skins and clothed them.

This Scripture gives us spiritual meaning as well as practical teaching. The spiritual meaning is that in order for the shame of their sin to be covered, a blood sacrifice had to be made - in this case, animals were killed to provide the covering (animal skins) for Adam and Eve's nakedness. The sacrifice was provided by God Himself. The practical meaning here is that Adam and Eve had to cover their nakedness to cover the shame of sin. In this case, God made coats (or tunics) to cover them well. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for *atonement* is "covering." The practical speaks of the spiritual.

Our nakedness, our exposure by sin, is greater than we know. Only God knows the true nature of sin, and only God is qualified to properly cover sin and clothe us. So, we must look to Him and His Word for what is acceptable clothing - an acceptable covering. Our hearts, our own tastes, our own opinions in such matters must be held up for scrutiny alongside the Word of God.

Jeremiah 17:9 (NKJV) "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
And desperately wicked; Who can know it?
10 I, the Lord, search the heart, *I* test the mind...

The only thing we can really trust is the revelation of God's Word. Adam and Eve had an opinion, and had they followed it, they would have been lost. Adam and Eve were now sinners, and their opinions - their thoughts, their ideas and reasoning - would only produce more sin.

As we have learned from our Leviticus study, leprosy is a type or picture of sin. The Scriptures present us with leprosy (or sin) in the flesh, leprosy in the garment, and leprosy in the house. If sin infects our flesh, it will then begin to affect our clothing. Our clothing (which is in close contact with our bodies all day long) cannot help but reflect what is going on inside us. This leprosy (or sin) which has infected the garment continues to move outward and infect the house (our environment). What our family sees continually in our state of dress has influence on their lives. Is our attire projecting modesty and godliness and influencing our family for good? What is our attire teaching our family?

Nakedness Is A Picture of the Shame of Sin

We wear clothing to cover our nakedness. Nakedness is a picture of the shame of sin.

Revelation 3:18 (NKJV) I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed . . .

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they were innocent and unaware of their nakedness. After they sinned, they immediately felt shame from having sinned

against God. They knew they could not approach God in nakedness. They tried to cover themselves, but only God was able to cover their sin and shame correctly.

Since Jesus has paid our sin debt, we should humble ourselves and be covered in an acceptable manner before Him. When we dress in an acceptable manner, we give glory to God for redeeming us from our sins. No one would want to have mold or mildew growing in his clothing. It would rot the garment, smell, be unattractive, and draw attention away from the true beauty of the garment. The spiritual application is that our clothing should be modest, clean, and acceptable before the Lord - covering adequately.

God's Standard of Modesty

Clothing is one of the basic necessities of life.

1 Timothy 6:7 (NKJV) For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. **8** And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the people not to worry because God knows we need clothing, and he will always provide our needs (Matthew 6:28-33).

Throughout history, clothing styles and colors have been indicators of a person's status, wealth, position, and gender. There are several examples in Scripture of clothing used to communicate different things. Kings and queens wore royal robes (2 Chronicles 18:9, Esther 6:8). Sackcloth (a coarse fabric like burlap) was worn during times of grief or mourning to symbolize inner pain or repentance (Joel 1:8, Jonah 3:5). Prostitutes had a certain manner of dress and could be recognized by their clothing (Proverbs 7:10). The law of Moses commanded that men and women wear only gender appropriate clothing (Deuteronomy 22:5) because wearing the clothing of the opposite sex conveys rebellion against God's design.

In the Bible, white clothing symbolizes purity. At the transfiguration, Jesus' garment became white as light (Matthew 17:2). In Revelation, the saints are clothed in white which pictures the righteousness given to them by God (Revelation 3:18, 4:4, 6:11, 7:9). In prophecy, Jesus is seen wearing white (Daniel 7:9) and angels are often described as wearing white (Matthew 28:2-3).

The biblical standard for women's clothing is modesty (1 Timothy 2:9-10). Modesty of dress combined with good works will draw attention to Jesus Christ, not to the flesh.

Women, especially, must guard their modesty. They are a type and picture of the Church, and because of this they are attacked by satan:

Revelation 19:7 (NLT) Let us be glad and rejoice,
and let us give honor to him.

For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb,
and his bride has prepared herself.

8 She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear."

For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God's holy people.

Compare this to Paul's admonition:

1 Timothy 2:9 (NKJV) In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation; not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but with good works.

The church has the responsibility to teach modesty and holy living. However, the world fights against this and attempts to usurp the authority and power of the church to maintain godliness. The church should always be kind and reasonable, yet at the same time not shirk its responsibility to teach on the subject.

If you were to ask an Apostolic woman why she is so concerned about dressing modestly, most of her reasons would be spiritual ("I want to please God, I don't want to expose my body to make men lust," etc.). Someone who does not serve God might give selfish reasons for the way they dress ("It's my body, and I can do what I want . . . what difference does it make, anyway?"). The foundation for the way we dress makes all the difference.

Jude 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction; **23** but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NKJV) Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Leviticus Chapter 14 - Laws for Cleansing Lepers

In Chapter 14, we are given the ritual that was to be performed when a person was healed from leprosy.

Cleansing from Leprosy

Leviticus 14:1 (NKJV) Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. ³ And the priest shall go out of the camp,

When someone was cleansed of his leprosy, the leper was not supposed to go to the tabernacle, but the priest was to go outside the camp to him.

and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, *if* the leprosy is healed in the leper, ⁴ then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop.

Cedar wood is known for being resistant to rot and disease. The scarlet was probably scarlet yarn (like what was used for making the curtains and veil in the tabernacle). Hyssop is a plant that we previously read about when it was used during the Passover in Egypt - it was used to paint the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the Israelite home (Exodus 12:22).

⁵ And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

The running water is water from a spring or running stream. The literal translation is “living water.” The blood from the bird that was killed went into the clay pot that had the water in it.

Leviticus 14:6 As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird *that was killed* over the running water. ⁷ And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.

The living bird, the cedar wood, and the hyssop was bound together with the scarlet yarn. It was dipped in the blood (and water) of the bird that was killed. Then the blood was sprinkled on the former leper and he was officially pronounced to be clean. The living bird was then let loose.

We can see a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary as we read of the first bird that was “killed in an earthen vessel” and also the second bird:

1) Jesus was God in human flesh (a “bird” or one who is “of the heavens” in an earthen vessel). *...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself...* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

2) Jesus died “outside the camp.” *Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach* (Hebrews 13:13). *And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull* (Mark 15:22).

3) Water and blood came from Jesus’ side at the cross. *But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out* (John 19:34).

4) A scarlet robe was put on Jesus. *And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him* (John 27:28). The scarlet also speaks of the blood of Jesus.

5) Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross. *And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center* (John 19:17-18).

6) Hyssop was present at the scene at Calvary. *Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!”* (John 19:29-30).

In Leviticus, the first bird was killed over running water - we are reminded of the blood of Jesus applied to us in baptism. It is Jesus blood that cleanses us from all sin. *“Without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin]”* (Hebrews 9:22).

7) The second bird, dipped in blood, is a picture of our Lord’s resurrection and His work as our High Priest. Jesus is our sacrifice, our High Priest, and our great God and Savior (Jesus is everything)! He entered the heavenly tabernacle with His own blood. *Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption* (Hebrews 9:12). This second bird was let “*loose in the open field*,” and the leper saw the bird disappear out of sight. *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight* (Acts 1:9).

Now, back to Leviticus 14:

Leviticus 14:8 He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. ⁹ But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.

Because of the ritual that was performed by the priest, the former leper could now return to the camp. He had to live outside his tent for seven days. Bit by bit, the leper was being restored. All of his hair was shaved off and he and his clothes were washed thoroughly. After seven days, he was to shave again - even his beard and eyebrows. He washed his clothes and body again, and he was completely clean and completely “new.”

No longer was the former leper to live the life of the “living dead.” Paul said that Jesus “*was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification*” (Romans 4:25). *Justification* means “declared righteous, accepted back.” The leper is not only forgiven but he is restored back into the company and fellowship of the camp of Israel.

¹⁰ “And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil. ¹¹ Then the priest who makes *him* clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ¹² And the priest shall take one male lamb and offer it as a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them *as a wave offering* before the Lord. ¹³ Then he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering and the burnt offering, in a holy place; for as the sin offering *is* the priest’s, so *is* the trespass offering. It *is* most holy. ¹⁴ The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

Now we see the rest of the ritual taking place *at the tabernacle*. Not only was the former leper to be admitted back to the camp of Israel, but he was to have access to the tabernacle worship of God.

The trespass offering is the next part of the ceremony. Here, the man who was cleansed of leprosy has the blood of the sacrifice put on his right ear lobe, his right-hand thumb, and his right big toe (this was also done in the ceremony of anointing Aaron to be high priest). Here we see a picture of the blood cleansing what we hear, what we do, and where we go. The leper had experienced restoration, and now it was his responsibility to live for God.

Who heals the leper? Who heals leprosy? Does the priest or the prophet? Does any *person* heal leprosy? In the Old Testament we never read of this ceremony being employed by an Israelite (although we do read of Miriam being restored from leprosy). However, we do read about it being employed in the New Testament. Jesus healed the leper and told him to go to the priest and offer these things according to the law of Moses.

Matthew 8:1 (NKJV) When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

² And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

³ Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

⁴ And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Only God can heal and cleanse. Look at the story of Jehoram, king of Israel. He cried aloud when the king of Syria sent word to the king of Israel saying, "*I have sent now here with Naaman to thee, that thou cure him of his leprosy,*" that the king of Israel cried, saying, "*Am I God? Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man should send him unto me to be cleansed of his leprosy?*" (2 Kings 5:7, KJV).

No one could heal leprosy but God. Throughout the ages, no one can take away sin but God. In Leviticus 13, the leper had to tear his clothes, bare his head, and cover his upper lip, crying, "*Unclean,*" and dwell alone outside the camp (verses 45-46); but then in Leviticus chapter 14, after God healed the leper, the priest went out to the leper and began the cleansing work of restoring him to the camp and the tabernacle. Jesus is our God and Savior and our High Priest. He saves us from sin, and He brings us into the fellowship of believers. Jesus is everything.

Leviticus 14:15 And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil... ¹⁶ Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord. ¹⁷ And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put *some* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering. ¹⁸ The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord.

Oil in the Bible is a symbol of the Holy Spirit of God. Not only was the blood applied to the person's ear, thumb, and toe, but oil was also applied to the same. Not only was the leper cleansed by the blood, but he was anointed by the Spirit of God - what he heard, what he did, and the paths of his life. The rest of the oil was poured on his head - something like what was done to anoint a king or priest!

¹⁹ "Then the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. ²⁰ And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

The sin offering would put the former leper in good standing with God. The burnt offering and the grain offering were a picture of his devotion to God and his renewed service to God and man.

²¹ "But if he *is* poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take one male lamb *as* a trespass offering...

²² and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering...³² This *is* the law *for one* who had a leprous sore, who cannot afford the usual cleansing."

The rest of this passage in chapter 14 continues the same rituals if the leper is poor and cannot afford the three lambs. Two birds may be substituted for two of the lambs.