

Leviticus 13 - Thursday, November 12th, 2009

- Leviticus 13 is a very long chapter that deals with detailed instructions for the priests in diagnosing the skin disease of leprosy.
- Actually, Leviticus 14 deals with this as well, and there's a reason why leprosy was dealt with so seriously; because it was so horrible.
- Now, the question is this; "why do we need to study this?" Because, leprosy is a graphic picture of sin and what it can do to a person.

13:1 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:2 "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body like a leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests.3 The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean.

- Leprosy starts small with symptoms of swelling, a scab or a bright spot, thus, they were to be brought to the priest for an examination.
- So too is this often true with sin, it starts as just a small thing, but then it begins the swelling, and even the hardening in our lives.

- It's interesting that leprosy would first appear as a "bright spot," because sin first appears the same way. It's pleasurable for a season.
- Notice that they would have to be brought to the High priest to be examined. We too are brought to our High Priest Jesus Christ.

4 But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the sore seven days.5 And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore appears to be as it was, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days.6 Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed if the sore has faded, and the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean.7 But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again.8 And if the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy.

- The spot may or may not appear to be more than skin deep. If one was infected, they were put in isolation for observation seven days.
- During this time of observation, the High Priest would diagnose the infection to see if it had either spread or was fading away.

- This is how it is with sin. It may or may not appear to just be a skin deep. In other words, if we're in deep sin, we are then isolated.
- Also, if our sin is not washed away, it spreads and further isolates us from God. "Sin keeps us from God, God keeps us from sin."

9 "When the leprous sore is on a person, then he shall be brought to the priest.10 And the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the swelling on the skin is white, and it has turned the hair white, and there is a spot of raw flesh in the swelling,11 it is an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he is unclean.

- It's interesting to note that leprous sores would appear in the raw flesh, and would start in the extremities where it's not as warm.
- This is true for us as it relates to sin because it's when we have become lukewarm or even cooled towards the things of the Lord.
- Also, notice that isolation became unnecessary when the leprosy was chronic. In other words, their fate had already been sealed.

12 "And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the one who has the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks,13 then the priest shall consider; and indeed if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. It has all turned white. He is clean.14 But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean.15 And the priest shall examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean; for the raw flesh is unclean. It is leprosy.16 Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest.17 And the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. He is clean.

- The disease would have the propensity to cover one from head to toe. Whenever raw flesh would appear they would become unclean.
- If the raw flesh changed and turned white they were to go to the priest and if he pronounced them clean then they would be clean.

- We can get so deep into sin that we are covered from head to toe. Our lives become raw and we are in the flesh corrupted by our sin.
- If we want to change and become clean we need to turn. If our sins are as scarlet He "turns" them white as snow.
- Again, whom our High Priest, Jesus Christ pronounces clean, is clean indeed. Whom the Son sets free we will be free indeed.

18 "If the body develops a boil in the skin, and it is healed,19 and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest;20 and if, when the priest sees it, it indeed appears deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore which has broken out of the boil.21 But if the priest examines it, and indeed there are no white hairs in it, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days;22 and if it should at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore.23 But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread, it is the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

- The infection was contagious and spread, scarring the body.
- Sin is contagious and can spread in the body of Christ leaving scars.

24 "Or if the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white,²⁵ then the priest shall examine it; and indeed if the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it is leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore.²⁶ But if the priest examines it, and indeed there are no white hairs in the bright spot, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days.²⁷ And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore.²⁸ But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar from the burn.

- Leprosy can spread where someone had been burned. It occurred in the flesh of the burn.
- Sin can spread and cause us to be burned. This happens in the flesh.

29 "If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard,³⁰ then the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears deeper than the skin, and there is in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a scaly leprosy of the head or beard.³¹ But if the priest examines the scaly sore, and indeed it does not appear deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale seven days.³² And on the seventh day the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if the scale has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear deeper than the skin,³³ he shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale another seven days.³⁴ On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed if the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean.³⁵ But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing,³⁶ then the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He is unclean.³⁷ But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.³⁸ "If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, specifically white bright spots,³⁹ then the priest shall look; and indeed if the bright spots on the skin of the body are dull white, it is a white spot that grows on the skin. He is clean.

- Men and women would get sores on their heads. The priest would see if it was deep under the skin. If so, that person was unclean.
- If the spots were dull white it was just a harmless rash. This is how they were able to discern between leprosy and eczema.

- I believe that this speaks to how we need to be discerning, "in our heads," if you will, as it related to if it is harmful, or harmless.
- This reminds me of a story I heard a long time ago about discernment, and the harm that just a little sin can have on a person's life.

A father of some teenage children had the family rule that they could not attend PG-13 or R rated movies. His three teens wanted to see a particular popular movie that was playing at local theaters. It was rated PG-13. The teens interviewed friends and even some members of their family's church to find out what was offensive in the movie. The teens made a list of pros and cons about the movie to use to convince their dad that they should be allowed to see it. The con's were: It contained ONLY 3 swear words The ONLY violence was a building exploding (and you see that on TV all the time they said), You actually did not "see" the couple in the movie having sex, it was just implied sex, off camera. The pros were: It was a popular movie, (a blockbuster). Everyone was seeing it. If the teens saw the movie then they would not feel left out when their friends discussed it. The movie contained a good story and plot. It had some great adventure and suspense in it. There were some fantastic special effects in this movie. The movie's stars were some of the most talented actors in Hollywood. It probably would be nominated for several awards. Many of the members of their Christian church had even seen the movie and said it was "harmless". They then said that, since there were more pros than cons the teens said they were asking their father to reconsider his position on just this ONE movie and let them have permission to go see it. The father looked at the list and thought for a few minutes. He said he could tell his children had spent some time and thought on this request. He asked if he could have a day to think about it before making his decision. The teens were thrilled thinking, "Now we've got him! Our argument is too good! Dad can't turn us down!" So, they happily agreed to let him have a day to think about their request. The next evening the father called his three teenagers, who were smiling smugly, into the living room. There on the coffee table he had a plate of brownies. The teens were puzzled. The father told his children he had thought about their request and had decided that if they would eat one of these brownies, then he would let them go to the movie. But, he explained, just like the movie, the brownies had pros and cons. The pros were: They were made with the finest chocolate and other good ingredients. They had the added special effect of yummy walnuts in them. The brownies were moist and fresh with wonderful chocolate frosting on top. He had made these fantastic brownies using an award-winning recipe. And best of all, the brownies had been made lovingly by the hand of their own father. The brownies only had one con: He had included a little bit of a special ingredient. The brownies also contained just a little bit of dog poop. But he had mixed the dough well and they probably would not even be able to taste the dog poop and he had baked it at 350 degrees so any bacteria or germs from the dog poop had probably been destroyed. Therefore, if any of his children could stand to eat the brownies which included just a "little bit of poop" and not be effected by it, then he knew they would also be able to see the movie with "just a little bit of smut" and not have it be harmful. Of course, none of the teens would eat the brownies and the smug smiles had left their faces. Only Dad was smiling smugly as they left the room. Now when his teenagers ask permission to do something he believes would be harmful, all he has to say is; "Would you like me to whip up a batch of my special brownies?"

40 "As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he is bald, but he is clean.41 He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he is bald on the forehead, but he is clean.42 And if there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white sore, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead.43 Then the priest shall examine it; and indeed if the swelling of the sore is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, as the appearance of leprosy on the skin of the body,44 he is a leprous man. He is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his sore is on his head.45 "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.

- If a man lost his hair and was bald he didn't have leprosy unless there were sores on his head or forehead. Problem is, he was still bald.
- He was to wear torn clothes, not keep his hair, what little was left, and cover the lower part of his face and cry out "unclean, unclean."
- I see this with sin as well. Here's what I'm thinking; sin will affect our outward appearance, so much so that we will cover it in shame.

47 "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 or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, 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, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather or in anything made of leather, the plague is an active leprosy. It is unclean.52 He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, 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, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather,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, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather.57 But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a spreading plague; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague.58 And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, 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."

- If clothing is contaminated it was burned. Leather materials that were contaminated were burned because mold was so destructive.
- I think this speaks to the sin of materialism and how that it can contaminate and corrupt us. Ultimately, it's all going to be burned.
- Before we end chapter 13, I would like to look at a number of parallels between leprosy and sin, some of which we've already seen.

LEPROSY	SIN
It has a mysterious origin and transmission.	We have our origin in sin by how we entered the world. <i>By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin so that death is passed on to all men for all sinned. Romans 5:12</i>
It starts out small.	We think we can get away with it because it's so little. <i>...whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. Luke 16:10-11</i>
It appears to be white.	We think it's black and white and it appears to be all right. <i>There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. Proverbs 14:12</i>
It appears to be shiny.	We see the light so we think because of how it appears. <i>And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:14</i>
It progressively spreads over the entire body.	We can cause others in the body of Christ to sin. <i>"Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! ...but woe to the man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. Matthew 18:7-8</i>
It numbs the senses so there's no feeling.	We become numb to the guilt of sin on our conscience. <i>Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 1 Timothy 4:2</i>
It causes parts of the body to rot away.	We become so rotten we fall away. <i>...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 1 Timothy 4:1</i>
It created so much shame in a person.	We become ashamed and can't trust anyone to tell them. <i>As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Romans 10:11</i>
It isolated and separated the person from others.	We become isolated and separated from God. <i>But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you... Isaiah 59:2</i>
It has a bad stigma and is called Hansen's disease not Leprosy.	We become politically correct and won't confess it as sin. <i>Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Psalm 32:5</i>
It was incurable and brought forth death.	We are incurable because sins wage is death. <i>...When sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. James 1:15</i>
It was dealt with by being cleansed not cured.	God deals with my sin by forgiving and cleansing. <i>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9</i>

This entire chapter dealt with the priests diagnosing leprosy, but not medicating or curing it. Although there was no cure for it, God did make provision for the miraculous healing of it. This is how it is for us as well. We can be brought out of the isolation and shame from sin. Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, will forgive us and cleanse us and bring us back into fellowship with Him because of His infinite love for us.