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Leprosy, Man And Sin Leviticus, Chapters 13 and 14

Throughout the bible there are various symbols and types that are intended by God to teach us spiritual truth beyond their primary meaning.

- gold often represents deity
- silver often represents redemption
- brass often represents judgment
- leaven often represents sin
- blue often represents heaven

Leprosy also is used by God to teach His people spiritual truth beyond it's primary meaning of a contagious disease.

We want to look at the section of Leviticus regarding the laws of leprosy and observe these things [Lev.13-14](#).

- I.** The initial teaching regarding leprosy.
- II.** The intended type regarding leprosy.
- III.** The incredible provision regarding leprosy.

I. The initial teaching regarding leprosy.

A. The disease of leprosy.

- 1.** The word in the Hebrew is "sara'at" meaning "stroke", the term is derived from a root that contains the idea of being struck, therefore a person who was afflicted was called sarûa' (struck by God), or among the Arabs, "fought against by God".
- 2.** The Greek translators of the LXX rendered it as lepra, a term carried over in the Latin

Vulgate by Jerom and therefore the English translation is leprosy.

3. There are three kinds of leprosy

* Elephantaïsis (a & b)

- a.** There is **nodular** or **tubercular** leprosy. It begins with an unaccountable lethargy and pains in the joints. Then there appear on the body, especially on the back, symmetrical discolored patches. On them little nodules form, at first pink, then turning brown. The skin is thickened. The nodules gather specially in the folds of the cheek in the folds of the cheek, the nose, the lips and the forehead. The whole appearance of the face is changed till the man loses his human appearance and looks, as the ancients said, like a lion or a satyr. The nodules grow larger and larger; they ulcerate and from them comes a foul discharge. The eyebrows fall out; the eyes become staring; the voice becomes hoarse and the breath wheezes because of the ulceration of the vocal chords. The hands and the feet also ulcerate. Slowly the sufferer becomes a mass of ulcerated ends in mental decay, coma and ultimately death. The sufferer becomes utterly repulsive both to himself and to others.
- b.** There is **anaesthetic** leprosy. The initial stages are the same; but the nerve trunks also are affected. The infected area loses all sensation. This may happen without the sufferer knowing that it has happened; and he may not realize that it has happened until he suffers some burning or scalding and finds that there is no feeling whatsoever where pain ought to be. As the disease develops the injury

to the nerves causes discolored patches and blisters. The muscles waste away; the tendons contract until the hands become like claws. There is ulceration of the feet and of the hands and then the progressive loss of fingers and of toes, until in the end a whole hand or a whole foot may drop off. The duration of the disease is anything from twenty to thirty years. It is a kind of terrible progressive death of the body.

- c. The third kind of leprosy is a type — the commonest of all — where nodular and anaesthetic leprosy are mixed.

That is leprosy proper, and there is no doubt that there were many lepers like that in Palestine in the time of Jesus. From the description in *Leviticus* 13 it is quite clear that in New Testament times the term *leprosy* was also used to cover other skin diseases.

(Barclay:Mark:pp. 43-44)

* Today it is arrested but it still is not curable!

* Today known as Hansen's disease, who discovered the microbe fungus, *Mycobacterium leprae*. (Hansen's Bacillera) 1871.

B. The different cases of leprosy

1. New leprosy 13:1-3.
2. Old leprosy 13:9-11.
3. Non contagious 13:12-13.
4. Boils 13:18.
5. Sores on head and beard 13:29.
6. Garments 13:47-48.
7. House 14:33-34.

C. The dreadfulness of leprosy

1. The man would be isolated for examination 7 to 14 days before being pronounced clean or unclean 13:4-5.
2. The man would have to tear his clothes as a sign of mourning and cover his upper lip as he cried out unclean, unclean, to warn all 13:45.
3. The man would have to live outside the camp of Israel 13:46.
 - He was considered as a dead man while living, ceremonial and socially unclean. (Miriam Num.12:12)
 - The family would have a funeral.
 - Most lived in the dump of the city in New Testament times.
 - According to the Talmud, he had to keep six feet from people and if the wind was down-wind, 150 feet.

D. The designated official for leprosy.

1. The priest was the only one who could declare one a leper 13:3, 5, 10, 16, 21, 25 etc.
2. The various procedures and rights were through the priest whether for the man, garments or house. Deut. 24:8-9.

II. The intended type regarding leprosy.

A. Leprosy is a type of sin nature in it's characteristics.

1. Undetectable and painless at first.
2. Gradually progressive in nature as it develops.
3. Contagious through exposure and personal contact.
4. Consequences are severe to person and others.

5. Repulsive to others in its progressive stages.
6. Incurable by human means.
7. Leads to death ultimately.
 - * The Scripture presents man as a hopeless sinner by nature! Job 25:4, Ps.51:5, Jer.13:23, Rom.3:9-18, Eph.2:1-3.

- B.** Leprosy is a type of death resulting from sin bringing separation from God and man.
- * God is the one to strike with leprosy 14:34.
 - 1. God struck Miriam with leprosy, white as snow, for speaking against Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian woman in pride Num.12:1-16.
 - * Moses said to God, "Please don't let her be as one dead." vs.12a.
 - 2. God struck Gehazi with Naaman's leprosy because of his greed, lying and hypocrisy to Elisha 2 King 5:20-27.
 - 3. God struck King Uzziah with leprosy because he offered incense in the Holy Place as a priest, leprosy broke out on his forehead. 2 Chron.26:16-21.
 - * He became proudful of the victories God gave him and when he became strong, his heart was lifted up.

III. The incredible provision regarding leprosy.

- A.** The priest alone could declare him a leper 13:3.
- * Christ our high priest alone can reveal to us that we are sinners, every one else will tell us we are good and normal Jn.8:23-24.
- B.** The leper could not be healed but God by His divine grace cleansed him 14:1.

- * Christ knowing man can not be healed of sin nature, cleansed us of all our sins by His grace 2 Cor.5:21, Eph.2:8-9.
- C.** The priest alone could pronounce him clean 14:2.
- * Christ told His disciples, "You are cleansed by the words I have spoken unto you" Jn.15:3.
 - * Jesus told Peter never to call common or unclean what He had cleansed Act.10:15.
- D.** The sacrifice was symbolic of the death and resurrection of Jesus 14:3-7.
- * Jesus died and rose for our sins Rom.6:4-7.
- E.** The sacrifices were for sin, trespass and rededication to the service of God 14:12-20.
- * Jesus expects the same from us. Rom.12:1-2.
- F.** The restored fellowship was symbolized by water, oil and blood 14:8, 10, 12, 14-18.
- * Jesus has redeemed us by His precious blood, washed us by His word and sealed us by His Holy Spirit 1 Pet.1:19, Eph.5:26, 1:13.
 - * From Jesus side came forth water and blood and He sent the Holy Spirit Jn.19:34.

ILLUSTRATION

Naaman was cleansed because he heard there was one who could cleanse him of his leprosy but it was to be God's way! 2 King 5:9-14.

- Jesus cleansed many lepers, He ate with Simon the leper at Bethany Matt.8:1-4, Mk.1:40, 14:3, Lk.5:12.
- Jesus cleansed ten lepers at Samaria but only one came back and gave glory to God Lk.17:11-19.

CONCLUSION

Man is a leper, contagious with sin nature and infectious with various sins but the grace of God can cleanse him. If You will cry out as the leper, "Lord if you are willing, You can make me clean".

* You will hear, "I am willing; be cleansed" Matt.8:2-3.