

Day 134 - SUNDAY: April 23rd

Leviticus 13

Leviticus 13:1-59 NKJV: 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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."

Daily Deep Dive:

Let's begin with the UCG reading plan for this day: "Modern leprosy, also called Hansen's disease, is, according to *Mosby's Medical, Nursing, & Allied Health Dictionary*, a

"chronic, communicable disease... that may take either of two forms, depending on the immunity of the host.

Tuberculoid leprosy, seen in those with high resistance, presents as thickening of [skin] nerves and [insensitive], saucer-shaped lesions. Lepromatous leprosy, seen in those with little resistance, involves many systems of the body, with widespread [deposits forming hardening] and [small lumps] in the skin, [eye inflammation], [corneal inflammation], destruction of nasal cartilage and bone, testicular atrophy, [swelling of extremities], and involvement of the [immune] system. Blindness may result. Death is rare unless... tuberculosis [or a related illness] occurs concurrently. Contrary to traditional belief, leprosy is not very contagious, and prolonged, intimate contact is required for it to be spread between individuals" (4th ed., "Leprosy").

Still, it is contagious nonetheless. As the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states in its article on the disease: "The prevention of leprosy rests upon the recognition of bacteriologically positive cases so that they may be isolated and treated" (1985, Vol. 7, p. 287). And this is quite biblical. While treatment is not emphasized in Leviticus, the priests, as medical control officers, were to diagnose

individuals and then take action to protect the community from further infection—by isolating those displaying the disease's symptoms.

It may even be that the "leprosy" identified in Leviticus 13–14 was far more communicable than the modern disease of that name. "There is some debate among medical scholars about whether the Hebrew word translated 'leprosy' in the Bible is exactly the same disease as the modern variant. It may have been another deadly infectious disease that differs from modern forms of leprosy" (Grant Jeffrey, *The Signature of God: Astonishing Biblical Discoveries*, 1996, p. 147). Indeed, *The Nelson Study Bible* notes on the word "leprous" in Leviticus 13:2, "Hebrew *saraath*, disfiguring skin diseases, *including* leprosy." So there may have been an immediate concern about a very infectious disease at the time God inspired Moses to write Leviticus.

Of course, it is also possible that the leprosy of the time was the same as today. In that case, God may have simply been instituting a general way of dealing with communicable illness—that is, quarantine. In any case, He was also illustrating the need for removing *spiritual* uncleanness by the lesson of such physical separation—and made this even clearer by certain

ritual or ceremonial ordinances. "Leprosy" on house walls and garments, it should be pointed out, was almost certainly "decomposition by mildew, mold, dry rot, etc." (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 14:34)—spreading fungus. "All of these were harmful growths, whether on human skin, clothing, or the wall of a house."

It is especially interesting to read the requirements of shaving and washing in water. Incredibly, the idea of microscopic germs passing on illness, which Leviticus seems to take for granted, was not even generally believed in until very modern times. Indeed, Ignaz Semmelweis, a Hungarian doctor, was ridiculed by the entire medical establishment in the mid-1800s for instituting handwashing before examining patients—as if there were some invisible infectious agents to be worried about. Thankfully, his notion eventually caught on—but not until many died unnecessarily and until he died as well, following decades of rejection that, sadly, drove him into a mental institution (Jeffrey, pp. 145–146, from S.I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases*).

Yet consider the time during which Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Ancient Egyptian medical knowledge was primitive compared to that of the 1800s. It is obvious from

the Papyrus Ebers manuscript and other ancient sources that there was no sense of sanitation in Egypt whatsoever. For instance, dung, from many different animals, was a primary ointment ingredient for all manner of ailments. The ancient laws of the Israelites, on the other hand, show nothing but concern for sanitation. They would have protected against microscopic pathogens. Yet how could Moses have known of the existence of such germs? The Egyptians certainly did not—nor did any other ancient culture.

In fact, "until this century, all previous societies, except for the Israelites who followed God's medical laws regarding quarantine, kept infected patients in their homes—even after death, exposing family members and others to deadly disease. During the devastating Black Death [or bubonic plague] of the fourteenth century, patients who were sick or dead were kept in the same rooms as the rest of the family. People often wondered why the disease [which killed half of Europe and seemed unstoppable] was affecting so many people at one time. They attributed these epidemics to 'bad air' or 'evil spirits.' However, careful attention to the medical commands of God as revealed in Leviticus would have saved untold millions of lives. Arturo Castiglione wrote

about the overwhelming importance of this biblical medical law, 'The laws against leprosy in Leviticus 13 may be regarded as the first model of a sanitary legislation' (Arturo Castiglione, *A History of Medicine...* 1941, p. 71). Fortunately, the church fathers of Vienna finally took the biblical injunctions to heart and commanded that those infected with the plague... be placed outside the city in special medical quarantine compounds. Care givers fed them until they either died or survived the passage of the disease. Those who died in homes or streets were instantly removed and buried outside the city limits. These biblical sanitary measures quickly brought the dreaded epidemic under control for the first time. Other cities and countries rapidly followed the medical practices of Vienna until the Black Death was finally halted" (Jeffrey, pp. 149–150).

No, Moses simply could *not* have understood the need to institute such laws through the natural means available to him at the time. But the Creator God *did* understand. And in commanding that His instructions for handling such situations be preserved in the Bible, the Eternal has given us one more amazing proof that this wonderful book is truly His inspired Word." [END]

Verse 1 – As we read this chapter, it's important for us to remember the overarching principle of this book is Holiness. God wants us to learn to distinguish between Holy and unholy and clean and unclean. Like the previous chapters, there are deep spiritual principles contained in the various types of skin disease, mold & mildew, and God's instructions for them.

Verse 2 – When the surface of the skin was found to contain some stage of disease, they were to take it to God's appointed representative, the priest. Notice, this is something they could visually see. There was visible evidence of a problem in their life and because of God's law pertaining to this problem, it was going to lead to isolation and separation from others (their neighbors) and from God (would not be able to go anywhere near anything Holy). This is meant to jump out to us as a spiritual parallel to sin in our lives. When something that God's law says is a problem becomes known to us (there is evidence of a problem), we also must understand that sin causes separation (Isaiah 59:2), and must go to the priest for inspection. We aren't to hide it, ignore it, and hope it goes away on its own. We understand that the ultimate Priest is

Jesus Christ. When we identify, or suspect, sin to be in our lives, we must take it first and foremost to God through Jesus Christ. In 1 John 1:8–10, it reads: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

We also understand that God has appointed ministers of Jesus Christ to help in our walk. Ministers are not experts in all things, but we have a lot of tools and resources, as well as God’s Spirit, to help members who desire to overcome sin. We’ll continue to see these principles as we move through this chapter.

Verses 3 – 5: The priest had the responsibility to determine how deep of a problem this was. If by his determination, the skin disease went deeper than the surface, the individual was pronounced unclean. As we continue with our spiritual parallel, we understand that while all sin is a problem, there are sins that might be a slipup or careless sin, or there can be sin that goes deeper than the surface and is more engrained in one’s life. While both require

repentance and attention, the engrained sin is going to be much more involved and long-term, and is more serious if not addressed.

If they thought it to be simply on the surface, the individual was given a period of time to be evaluated and determine if it truly was superficial. Similarly with sin, if something truly was a one-time mistake, then over a period of time, that sin would not pop up again revealing that it truly isn't engrained in one's life.

Notice in verse 5, there is a check-in (check-back) period of time where the two come together again and re-evaluated the situation. Has it gotten worse, is it the same or better? Similar to someone saying, "Okay, let's get together in another week and we'll see again."

Verse 6 - If after all this time and evaluation, the priest determined that the disease of the skin was superficial and not a bigger problem, then they were pronounced clean and told to wash their clothes and be clean. All sin requires repentance and so even a one-time sin needs to be washed by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7, Revelation 1:5).

Verse 7 – We’ve talked in previous week’s studies about how if the same Hebrew word is used twice in a row it magnifies or intensifies the word. For example, “Holy Holy” would be translated Most Holy, or “careful careful” would be “very careful or certainly careful”.

Here in this verse, it says if a scab (or eruption) has “spread spread” in the skin, he should return to the priest again to be re-evaluated. This indicates, that something thought healed (not spreading), has certainly spread or has clearly spread from where it was before.

Verse 8 – If it is found to be spreading by the Priest, the individual is pronounced to be unclean and to have leprosy. Being a leper caused isolation and major problems perhaps for the rest of the individual’s life. Like leprosy, sin that is spreading in our lives (like leaven) is a major problem. Jesus Christ came and performed amazing healing miracles. We find examples of Jesus Christ healing and freeing individuals of this terrible disease of leprosy (see: Mark 1:41 & Luke 17:11–19). When we have sin spreading in our lives, through the power of the Holy Spirit and through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, we can overcome sin.

Verse 10 – We have a case where there is “raw flesh”. This is a raw open sore that is clearly seen rising on the skin. The spiritual parallel may be to an “open spiritual wound” that is clear and easily seen as a problem. When this sort of problem is seen by the priest, there is a quick determination of the gravity of the problem.

Verse 13 – The JFB commentary helps with understanding this verse: “This BRIGHT WHITE leprosy is the most malignant and inveterate of all the varieties the disease exhibits, and it was marked by the following distinctive signs: A glossy white and spreading scale, upon an elevated base, the elevation depressed in the middle, but without a change of color; the black hair on the patches participating in the whiteness, and the scaly patches themselves perpetually enlarging their boundary. Several of these characteristics, taken separately, belong to other blemishes of the skin as well; so that none of them was to be taken alone, and it was only when the whole of them concurred that the Jewish priest, in his capacity of physician, was to pronounce the disease a malignant leprosy. If it spread over the entire frame without producing any ulceration, it lost its

contagious power by degrees; or, in other words, it ran through its course and exhausted itself. In that case, there being no longer any fear of further evil, either to the individual himself or to the community, the patient was declared clean by the priest, while the dry scales were yet upon him, and restored to society. If, on the contrary, the patches ulcerated and quick or fungous flesh sprang up in them, the purulent matter of which, if brought into contact with the skin of other persons, would be taken into the constitution by means of absorbent vessels, the priest was at once to pronounce it an inveterate leprosy. A temporary confinement was then declared to be totally unnecessary, and he was regarded as unclean for life [Dr. Good]. Other skin affections, which had a tendency to terminate in leprosy, though they were not decided symptoms when alone, were: “a boil” (Lev_13:18-23); “a hot burning,” – that is, a fiery inflammation or carbuncle (Lev_13:24-28); and “a dry scall” (Lev_13:29-37), when the leprosy was distinguished by being deeper than the skin and the hair became thin and yellow.” [END]

I will skip a number of verses now because we see a repeated pattern of possible symptoms and the priest's determination of an individual being clean or unclean.

Verse 40 – The JFB commentary states: “The falling off of the hair, when the baldness commences in the back part of the head, is another symptom which creates a suspicion of leprosy. But it was not of itself a decisive sign unless taken in connection with other tokens, such as a “sore of a reddish white color” [Lev_13:43]. The Hebrews as well as other Orientals were accustomed to distinguish between the forehead baldness, which might be natural, and that baldness which might be the consequence of disease.”
[END]

Verse 45 – The JFB commentary states: “The person who was declared affected with the leprosy forthwith exhibited all the tokens of suffering from a heavy calamity. Rending garments and uncovering the head were common signs of mourning. As to “the putting a covering upon the upper lip,” that means either wearing a moustache, as the Hebrews used to shave the upper lip [Calmet], or simply keeping a hand over it. All these external marks of grief

were intended to proclaim, in addition to his own exclamation “Unclean!” that the person was a leper, whose company every one must shun.” [END]

Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “He was also to cry, Unclean, unclean, in order to prevent any person from coming near him, lest the contagion might be thus communicated and diffused through society;” [END]

What terrible suffering and shame this would have been for someone with leprosy. Imagine the moments when Jesus Christ brought individuals life-changing healing from this terrible isolation and disease. I can only imagine how much His heart went out to individuals who were in this terrible state.

Verse 47 – The chapter shifts its focus now to garments. The Bible shows that our actions can be a type of garment. If those actions are evil, they are compared to unclean garments (see Isaiah 59:6) and if those actions are righteous, they are compared to clean garments (see Revelation 19:8).

Verse 48 – The “warp” is said by the BDB dictionary to mean “woven material”, and “woof” appears to be an intermixed,

knitted material. An excerpt from John Gill's commentary states: "to me it seems that the warp and woof, whether of linen or woollen, are here distinguished not only from garments made of them, but from the cloth itself, of which they are made, and even to be considered before they are wrought together in the loom; and, according to the Jews, when upon the spindle". [END]

What is clear is that some sort of disease, mildew, or mold, could be in the material of the garment, whether leather, or fabric, and this too was to be shown to the priest.

Verse 52 – Keep in mind, clothing was expensive to buy. The Israelites did not have large closets full of clothes back then. To have to destroy one of your sets of clothes was not something someone wanted to do. If one's garment was determined by the priest to contain a spreading disease/mold/mildew, that garment was to be brought to its end. It was burned and destroyed. Spiritually, it's similar, any sinful action that is spreading and infecting must be brought to an immediate end. We understand that in the case of a physical mold/mildew/disease, lives were in danger, and spiritually it's the same, these sinful actions puts spiritual lives at risk and must be stopped quickly.

Verse 56 – Similar to how we talked up above about a one-time sin, where after a period of evaluation, the sin wasn't continuing and could be dealt with differently than a sin that has a deep root, here we find a similar idea toward actions. If after the garment was washed and evaluated over a period of time, the spot had faded (but the effects weren't completely gone), showing that it wasn't still active and occurring, but left some impact, then it was torn out. It was removed. If it was found to be still active, then it had to be destroyed.

As a spiritual parallel, a one-time wrong action likely comes with some damaging results (similar to a hole in the garment from being torn out), but can likely be patched and repaired over a period of time. Sinful actions that are part of a repeating pattern are going to do far more damage and require a much more serious response. In our individual lives, Matthew 5:30 instructs us: “**And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.**”

We also have the example in 1 Corinthians 5:5 of removing someone from the church when they are walking in a

lifestyle of sin. This was for the good of the person (who would hopefully be brought to repentance) and for the good of the congregation (“a little leaven leavens the whole lump” 1 Corinthians 5:6).

Verse 58 – If the spot was completely gone after washing, it was washed a second time and was pronounced clean.

Here we see that there is no lasting damage, and no lasting impact, and it appears this was a one-time occurrence, so after the cleansing instructions, the garment was considered clean. In a spiritual sense, this would be a situation where there is no damage to others, no lasting impact, no reason to suspect any concern of repeated sin, and after the cleansing effect of repenting to God, the sin is washed away and the individual is clean.