

March 3

### Leviticus 13-14

In today's accelerator we will deal with Leviticus chapters 13-14 which deal primarily with Sin and Salvation. True, the laws we read about today concern themselves with the diagnoses and dealing of sickness in people, clothing and houses. However, it important to note throughout the scriptures sickness is often an illustration or image of Sin. Consider verses like (Ps. 147:3; Isa. 1:5-6; Jer. 8:2; 30:12; Mark 2:17). "Thus as we study these chapters, we can learn what sin is like and how God wants us to deal with it."<sup>1</sup>

Now, a few points of fact that I found interesting before we dig a litter deeper in to today's text:

- 1) The Hebrew word translated as "skin disease", "infectious disease" "leprosy" and "mildew" in our reading today are all the same word. (13:47ff; 14:33ff). We simply do not have a modern equivalent for it today.
- 2) The Jews had no cure for leprosy. To be diagnosed with leprosy was devastating. You would be removed from your home, your family, your community. It meant isolation. I want that to sink in for us. In our world of 24/7 connectivity via e-mail/FB/cell phones/texting, etc. we don't have any clue what it means to be isolated as these poor people were.

Now, to our study:

These 2 chapters tell us 3 things about Sin and 2 things about Salvation:

#### Sin

- 1) First we see that Sin is always deeper than the skin (13:3). In Jeremiah 17:9 the prophet says that the "heart is desperately *sick*, who can know it." The heart is about as deep as it goes. In Romans 7:18 Paul laments the fact that in his "flesh" there is nothing good that dwells. Jesus himself that Sin is more than skin deep when he says in Matthew 15:19-20 that it "out of the heart comes evil thoughts, etc...these are the things that defile a man." This shatters two myths that our culture tells us today.
  - a. That we are all basically good. If this were so, why are so "sick" with sin? The reality is that we are all, as Jeremiah says "desperately sick."
  - b. That we can muster up the wherewithal to simply "believe in yourself" you can conquer anything, including bad habits, and destructive sin in your life. Consider, again that the Jews had no cure for leprosy. It would have to be an act of God for a cure to take place. This is the same for us and our sickness of Sin.
- 2) Secondly we see that Sin Spreads (13:5-8). The Jews had observed the fact that disease spreads and thus were concerned to observe whether or not disease had spread. Today, what we would call leprosy, Hansen's Disease, has two symptoms

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Holy* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 53.

that spread throughout the body. Nodules, or lumps appear and begin to spread through the body. Ulcers are another symptom that begin to appear on the body. These spread throughout the body and affect the limbs of the victim until he/she is contorted into a mangled mess of flesh. It is and was disgusting. Sin too spreads. Consider the first 6 chapters of Genesis. Between Adam and Eve and Noah, the earth had become so wicked that God determined to destroy everything with a mighty Flood. Sin spreads and takes root and is a virus that must be isolated and destroyed.

- 3) Lastly, Sin Defiles (13:44-46). To be defiled means to be made unclean. The word "unclean" is used 54 times from chapters 13-15 of Leviticus. The sickness described in these pages made a person "unfit" for social life and worship of God, just like Sin makes us unfit for genuine, authentic relationship with others and unhindered worship to God. We, like the lepers are also unclean because of Sin. It taints everything we do and are. Isaiah says in 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags" to God. Did you catch what it said? All our "righteousness are as filthy rags", not our corruption. Our righteousness. Sin makes us unclean.

## Salvation

As I've mentioned twice before, the Jews had no cure for Leprosy. So, if a victim of leprosy was cured it was seen as a miracle. An act of God on behalf of the stricken leper. In Luke 4:27 we read that in Elisha's time there were many lepers and most, save for two, were not cured. They knew all too well that for the leper, "salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9). But we learn two things about salvation in this text. (I realize that it is not in today's reading in the chronological Bible, yet it is important to put it in context.)

- 1) The Priest Goes to the Leper (14:1-3). Notice how the leper is unable to come into the city to even visit the priest, yet the priest goes out to him. Jesus said that he came to "seek and save that which was lost" in Luke 19:10. In Hebrews we read that Jesus is the great high priest who intercedes for us. Sin makes it impossible for us to relate and engage God. Yet, he is merciful and sends a priest, the Great High Priest to seek and save that which was lost.
- 2) The Shedding of Blood is required (14:18-19). In addition to the mention of the sacrifices that are required of the leper once he has been cleansed, we read that the priest's actions are considered to be an act of "atonement" on behalf of the leper. In Hebrews 9:22 we read that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of Sin. Also, earlier in that same chapter we read that the blood of Jesus (shed on the cross for our sin) is more precious than that of animals and his actually does relieve us of our sickness of sin, not symbolically, but actually.

Well, that's all the time I have for now. Today you should consider the cost of your sin. Perhaps you can make a date on the calendar when you will spend some time in silence and solitude and reflect on the gravity of the depth, width and consequences of sin in your life. Then you can spend time considering the depth, width and length of the love of God (1 John 4:9; Eph 3:18-19). Until next time, God Bless.