

HWMR - CRYSTALLIZATION STUDY OF LEVITICUS, Book 3, Week 5

The Cleansing of Leprosy

Scripture Reading: Lev. 13—14

- Leviticus 13: 2 When a man has a swelling or an eruption or a bright spot on the skin of his body, and it becomes an infection of **leprosy** on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests.
- Leviticus 13: 3 And the priest shall look at the infection in the skin of the body; and if the hair in the infection has turned white and the appearance of the infection is deeper than the skin of his body, it is the infection of **leprosy**. When the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him **unclean**.
- Leviticus 14: 4 Then the priest shall command that **two living clean birds** and **cedar wood** and **scarlet strands** and **hyssop** be taken for the one who is to be cleansed.
- Leviticus 14: 5 And the priest shall command that **one of the birds** be **slaughtered** in an **earthen vessel** over **running water**.
- Leviticus 14: 6 As for the living bird, he shall take it and the cedar wood and the scarlet strands and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the running water.
- Leviticus 14: 7 And he shall sprinkle it on the one who is to be **cleansed** from the leprosy seven times and shall pronounce him **clean**. Then he shall **let the living bird go** into the open field.
- Hebrews 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- 1 John 1: 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to **forgive** us our sins and **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness.
- Leviticus 14: 8 And the one who is to be **cleansed** shall **wash his clothes** and **shave off all his hair** and **bathe in water**, and he shall be **clean**. And after that he may come into the camp, but he shall dwell outside his tent seven days.
- Leviticus 14: 9 And on the seventh day he **shall shave off all his hair**; he shall shave his **head** and his **beard** and his **eyebrows**, even all his hair. Then he shall **wash** his clothes and **bathe** his flesh in water, and he shall **be clean**.

It is difficult to analyze **leprosy**. We may say that leprosy **originates from** outside a person, that it is caused by the **entering into a person** of the germs of leprosy. We may also say that leprosy **comes from within**, since a person cannot develop leprosy unless the element of leprosy enters into his being to give rise to this disease. Leprosy, therefore, comprises both an outside factor and an inward effect. The **cause is from the outside**, but the **effect is inward**. (Life-Study of Leviticus, Chapter 39, Section 1)

I. Leprosy signifies the serious sin issuing **from within** man, such as willful sin, presumptuous sin, and opposing God with determination—Lev. 13:

- A. As seen in the cases of Miriam (Num. 12:1-10), Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-27), and Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16-21), **leprosy issues from rebellion** against God's authority, against God's deputy authority, against God's regulation, and against God's economy.
- B. In the biblical sense, **sin is rebellion; thus, leprosy signifies sin**—1 John 3:4.
- C. The first case of sin in the Bible was Satan's rebellion against God; hence, sin as rebellion was invented, inaugurated, by the rebellious archangel Lucifer—Ezek. 28:13-18; Isa. 14:12-15.
- D. Eventually, this sin, this leprosy, entered into mankind through Adam, and having entered into man, **it issues from within man** as many kinds of sins, that is, many manifestations of rebellion—Rom. 5:12, 19a; 7:20.
- E. Hence, **a leper represents the fallen descendants of Adam**, all of whom are lepers; as signs of leprosy, a swelling, eruption, or a bright spot on the skin of one's flesh signifies man's outward expressions in unruliness, in friction with others, and in pride and self-exaltation—Lev. 13:2.
- F. The condition in Leviticus 13:24-25 signifies that a saved person's acting by the flesh, that is, his losing his temper, his justifying himself, and his not being willing to forgive others, is a sign of spiritual leprosy.

LEPROSY

Human uncleanness issues from birth and is intensified by sin, which is signified by leprosy.

A. The Origin of Leprosy

According to the Old Testament, **leprosy** is the outcome of man's **rebellion** against God's authority, God's deputy authority, God's regulation, and God's economy. This is confirmed by several cases in the Bible, such as Miriam's rebellion against Moses, who was God's deputy authority (Num. 12:1-10); the rebellion of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, against Elisha's practices (2 Kings 5:20-27); and King Uzziah's rebellion against God's regulation concerning the priesthood (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

B. The Nature of Leprosy

Although **leprosy originates** from outside a person's body with some kind of germs or bacteria, it is caused by these germs or bacteria **entering** into a person's body and being **mingled** with his constitution, thus **becoming a disease** that comes from within his body, as illustrated by the cases of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah. Miriam became leprous after she rebelled against Moses because he married a Cushite woman. Gehazi went behind Elisha's back and received gifts from Naaman, a Gentile who was healed of leprosy; afterward, Naaman's leprosy was transferred to him. Uzziah, as king, could not participate in the priesthood. When he rebelled against this regulation, he became leprous. In these three cases, leprosy first entered into the rebellious ones and then came forth from them.

C. The Result of Leprosy

Leprosy is a disease that is not easily cured and often results in **death** because it is mingled with man's constitution.

D. Leprosy Signifying the Sin That Dwells in Man

Leprosy signifies **the sin that dwells and does evil in man**. The denotation of sin in the biblical sense is rebellion. **Rebellion** was invented, inaugurated, by Satan. Through the fall of Adam the very leprosy invented by Satan entered into us. *"Through one man sin entered into the world"* (Rom. 5:12a). This leprosy still remains in us. This is the reason Paul says, *"If what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me"* (7:20). Having entered into us, this sin, this leprosy, comes forth from within us as sins, offenses, and transgressions. Although sin comes from Satan, who is **outside** of man, it **entered** into man's flesh and became **mingled** with man's fallen nature. Hence, it is not easy to be cleared away; rather, it kills man. (Truth Lessons, Level 3, Vol. 2, Chapter 5, Section 3)

II. The cleansing of the leper in Leviticus 14 portrays the **rich, complete, and extensive salvation** God has prepared and accomplished for us in Christ; in this salvation Christ is the all-inclusive One who has passed through a number of processes and is everything we need for our **cleansing**:

- A. *"The priest shall command that two **living clean birds** and cedar wood and scarlet strands and hyssop be taken for the one who is to be cleansed. And the priest shall command that **one of the birds be slaughtered** in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it and the cedar wood and the scarlet strands and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it on the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times and shall pronounce him clean. Then he shall let **the living bird go into the open field**" — vv. 4-7:*
1. The **two living clean birds** are types of Christ, who is clean, without any defilement, and full of the life that is **able to fly above the earth**; the birds here signify that Christ **came from the heavens and that He belongs to the heavens and transcends the earth**.
 2. The bird that was **killed** signifies the **crucified Christ**, who died for us that our filthiness might be taken away—1 Pet. 2:24.
 3. The second bird, which was **let go** into the open field, signifies the **resurrected Christ**, who rose from the dead for us that we might be delivered from our weakness by the power, strength, and energy of His resurrection life—the divine, eternal, uncreated life of God—Rom. 8:2.
 4. **Cedar wood** (cf. 1 Kings 4:33) signifies the honorable and uplifted humanity of Jesus, which enables Him to be our Savior; **hyssop**, being one of the smallest plants, signifies that the Lord Jesus was willing to **become lowly** in His "becoming in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7) that He might be near to man and become man's Savior (cf. Matt. 8:2-3); **scarlet**, a dark red color, signifies the **shedding of blood** and also implies **kingship** (27:28-29).
 5. All of this signifies that in order to cleanse us from our leprosy, **the Lord lowered Himself** to become a man of **high standard but of low status** that He might do the will of God and shed His blood on the cross for our redemption, thereby being glorified in His resurrection and becoming the honorable and high King—Phil. 2:5-11.
 6. The one who had been **healed** from leprosy (Lev. 14:3) still needed to seek to be **cleansed** before God, signifying that the one who is sick of the sin of leprosy, although he has been healed by the divine life within, still needs to have his shortcomings and defilement dealt with before God that he might be cleansed; our seeking to be cleansed is our cooperation with God's grace and love.
 7. The **earthen vessel** signifies the **humanity** of Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7), and the **living water** signifies the living and **eternal Spirit of God** (John 7:37-39; Rev. 22:1); the bird being killed in an earthen vessel over living water signifies that through His death in His humanity the Lord Jesus offered Himself to God through the eternal and living Spirit who was within Him (Heb. 9:14).
 8. The things recorded in Leviticus 14:6-7 signify that the Lord's **perfect redemption** not only causes man to be cleansed objectively in his position but also causes man to experience subjectively, in the Holy Spirit, the Lord's suffering in the shedding of His blood in His honorable, uplifted, and yet lowly humanity and to experience His death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification (Eph. 2:5-6; Phil. 3:10, 21; Col. 3:1-4); these things are all implied in the significances of the two birds, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet strands.
 9. The **sprinkling** of the blood of the slain bird on the leper who was to be cleansed signifies that the **blood shed** by Christ was sprinkled on us, the sinners (1 Pet. 1:2), and this sprinkling connects us to Christ, the Redeemer; the sprinkling of the blood seven times signifies the completeness of the cleansing of the Lord's blood (1 John 1:7, 9).
 10. Christ's **ascension** is signified by the **living bird soaring in the air**; letting the living bird go into the open field signifies that **the living Christ** causes the cleansed sinner to experience not only Christ's death and resurrection but also His ascension—2 Cor. 5:14-15; Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1-4.

The **cleansing of the leper** typifies that a person invaded by sin is cleansed entirely through the **redemption accomplished** through Christ's death and the **salvation carried** out by His resurrection. The cleansing of the leper also typifies a person's thorough dealing with what he does and what he is according to the redemption through Christ's death and the salvation by His resurrection.

Leprosy in a **garment** signifies the sins expressed in one's **outward living and conduct**. To deal with the sins signified by leprosy, we daily need to repent, confess, and deal with any sinful thing in us that is becoming worse and worse, eliminating it by **applying the cross of Christ**. Furthermore, we should deal with the suspected weaknesses in our living and conduct by the cleansing Spirit of God and eliminate these weaknesses from our conduct.

Leprosy in a **house** typifies the sins that **invade the church life** as the main part of our spiritual life. In order for a church to be cleansed, the church needs to experience the suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and entering into glory with Christ, that is, to experience the processes through which the Lord Jesus passed. Therefore, when an infected church is healed, the church enjoys Christ's resurrection and ascension, being above the earth and enjoying freedom in the heavens. When the church is fully clean, she becomes the mutual dwelling of God and man.

This lesson shows a threefold dealing with sin, not only **sin in our being** and **in our conduct** but also **sin in our dwelling**. Hence, we need to be cleansed from sin in a threefold way. We were born in **uncleanness**, and our very **being is unclean**. Therefore, **day by day we need to repent of our failures, confess our sins, and deal with and eliminate our failures and sins by the cross of Christ. Then we can live a holy life.** (Truth Lessons, Level 3, Vol. 2, Chapter 6, Section 5)

B. The **shaving of the hair of the leper** for his cleansing signifies **dealing with the difficulties of the self**, which is the enemy of the Body; the razor signifies the cross—Lev. 14:9:

1. The **hair of the head** signifies the **glory of man**; everyone has his boasts in certain areas; some boast of their ancestry, some of their education, some of their virtues, some of their zeal in their love for the Lord; almost everyone can find an area in which to boast, to glorify himself, and to make a display before man.
2. The **beard** signifies the **honor of man**; people esteem themselves honorable with regard to their position, their family background, or even their spirituality; they always have a superior feeling that they are above others.
3. The **eyebrows** signify the **beauty of man**; we have naturally good and strong points, which did not issue from the experience of God's salvation but from natural birth.
4. The **hair of the whole body** signifies the **natural strength of man**; we are full of natural strength, natural methods and opinions, thinking that we can do this or that for the Lord and that we are capable of doing all things.
5. When all the aspects of the self are dealt with through the "razor" of the **cross**, and when we have nothing and are nothing, we shall be clean—cf. Phil. 3:7-11.
6. **We should utterly reject the self by doing everything through the cross and by the Spirit to dispense Christ into one another for the sake of the Body of Christ.**

C. The leper's **shaving** of his entire body, **washing** his clothes, and **bathing** his flesh a second time after waiting and watching seven days (Lev. 14:9) signifies that **a sinner who is to be cleansed needs to bear the responsibility** for dealing with every part of his natural life and daily walk; this shows that if we deal with our sin and our sinful self seriously, in a definite, thorough, and absolute way, **we shall be clean**.

III. In Leviticus 14:33-57, the house typifies the church as our real home, and the leprosy in the house signifies the sins and evils in the church; the priest signifies the Lord or His deputy authority, and the examining of the house is not for condemnation but is a grace for healing—1 Cor. 1:11:

- A. The **removing** of the **infected stones** after seven days (Lev. 14:40) signifies that after the observation of a complete period of time, if the problem of the church is still spreading, the believer or **believers involved** in the problem should **be removed** from the fellowship of the church and be considered unclean, like the outsiders; this is done to stop the spread of the disease and to eliminate the disease (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10).
- B. **Putting** other stones in the place of the **removed stones** (Lev. 14:42a) signifies using other believers (1 Pet. 2:5) to fill in the gap; the replastering of the house with other plaster (Lev. 14:42b) signifies the **renewing of the church** with new experiences of the Lord's gracious works; this is needed for **a new start in the church life**.
- C. The **breaking down of the house** after the infection of leprosy returns (v. 45) signifies that if the situation of the church reaches the point where it cannot be cured, healed, that church should be terminated (cf. Rev. 2:5).
- D. If no sin is spreading after the renewing of the church with the new experiences of the Lord's gracious works, the church is clean and has no problem; **the whole church needs to be cleansed with the eternally efficacious blood of Christ and His eternal and living Spirit so that the church is fully clean to be the mutual dwelling of God and man**—Lev. 14:48-53; Heb. 9:14; 10:22; 1 John 1:9; Titus 3:5; John 14:2, 23.

THE LEPROSY IN A HOUSE SIGNIFYING SINS AND EVILS IN A CHURCH

Everything in the book of Leviticus is a type. This includes the house in chapter fourteen. Based upon the principle that Leviticus is written in the form of types, we may interpret the house in 14:33-53 as a type of the church. As New Testament believers, **we recognize that our real house is not our physical house but the church.** Without the proper church life, we are homeless. Only when we are in the church and live the proper church life are we truly at home. Many have testified **upon entering into the church life that they are now at home.** The house in Leviticus 14, therefore, typifies the church as our house, our home, and the **leprosy in a house signifies sins and evils in the church** (vv. 33-48).

God Putting a Leprous Disease in a House of the Land of Israel's Possession

Leviticus 14:34 speaks of God's putting a leprous disease in a house of the land of Israel's possession. This signifies that when the condition of a church becomes abnormal, God causes the **leprous sin to appear in the church, reminding and warning the believers that they no longer have a house to live in and are no longer able to enjoy all the blessings God promised in His salvation.**

During the more than fifty years I have been in the Lord's recovery, I have passed through many turmoils. Sometimes the turmoil reached the point that there was leprosy in the house. When the church becomes leprous, sick because of sins and evils, we have the sense that we have lost our home, that we have become homeless. Furthermore, when the **church is sick of leprosy, we lose the enjoyment of Christ.** Since there is no longer a proper church, we are no longer able to enjoy all the blessings God has promised in His salvation.

The Owner of the House Coming and Telling the Priest That Something Like a Leprous Disease Has Appeared in His House

"When you enter into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put a leprous disease in a house of the land of your possession, then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, Something like a leprous disease has appeared in my house" (vv. 34-35). The owner's coming and telling this to the priest signifies that the leading brothers or those who are concerned for the church approach the Lord or the apostle, the Lord's deputy, and **tell the Lord** or His deputy. This is **what we need to do when the church is sick.**

To Empty the House So That All That Is in the House Should Not Become Unclean

"The priest shall then order that they empty the house before he goes in to examine the disease, so that all that is in the house shall not become unclean" (v. 36a). This signifies to do one's best to prevent and eliminate the contagion.

In order to stop the contagion, we should **be careful about our talking**, for gossiping will spread the disease. From experience we know that **gossip** spreads the contagious disease in the church. If we listen to gossip, we shall be contaminated. By being **careful about gossip, we shall help to stop the spread of the contagious disease.** (Life-Study of Leviticus, Chapter 44, Section 1)