

I. Introduction

- A. Children’s Sermon: Forsaken
- B. Some Bird’s Eye Observations (Lev. 11-15)
 - 1. Defiled by what you eat
 - 2. Defiled giving birth
 - 3. Defiled in your own body
 - 4. Cloths & shelter could become defiled
 - 5. Sexual discharges (normal, abnormal)
- C. Today’s Questions:
 - 1. What is Leprosy?
 - 2. What did it teach Israel?
 - 3. What is God trying to teach us?

II. Walking Dead Men/Women

- A. Defining “Leprous Disease”

Leviticus 14:54–57

⁵⁴ This is the law for any case of *leprous disease*: for an itch,⁵⁵ for *leprous disease* in a garment or in a house,⁵⁶ and for a swelling or an eruption or a spot,⁵⁷ to show when it is unclean and when it is clean. This is the law for leprous disease.

“The Hebrew word that applies to all three conditions is *šāra’at*. It used to be translated ‘leprosy’, but it is now questioned whether the symptoms described correspond to leprosy proper (Hansen’s disease), and, in any case, that term can hardly be used of fabrics or buildings. It seems that it covers a range of conditions where swelling, discoloration, scaliness, flakiness or mouldiness are present.”¹

¹ *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition*. 1994 (D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer & G. J. Wenham, Ed.) (4th ed.) (Le 13:1–14:57). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

B. How was Leprosy Understood by Israel?

“These ‘leprous’ conditions in the skin, in clothes and in the walls of houses were evidences of unwholesomeness. A chronic skin condition that caused the skin to rot, flake, peel and weep with blood was a clear sign of decay and corruption.”²

Numbers 12:10–12

¹⁰ When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous.¹¹ And Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned.¹² ***Let her not be as one dead***, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother’s womb.”

C. What was God Teaching Israel?

1. The Destructive Effects of Sin

“In a general sense, disease, along with other natural misfortunes, could be part of the effects of God’s judgment on the nation for covenant unfaithfulness (cf. Lv. 26:16), and there were exceptional cases where physical illness was a sign of God’s punishment of an individual (e.g. Nu. 12:10–15; 2 Ch. 26:16–23). However, the persons suffering from the skin diseases described in this chapter were isolated from the community because of the visible, infectious nature of their uncleanness, not because they were regarded as sinners simply by being sick.”³

a. All Disease is a sign of God’s curse

Deuteronomy 28:21–22

²¹ The Lord will make the pestilence stick to you until he has consumed you off the land that you are entering to take possession of it.²² The Lord will strike you with ***wasting disease*** and with ***fever***,

² Eveson, P. H. (2007). *The Beauty of Holiness: The Book of Leviticus Simply Explained*. Welwyn Commentary Series (171–172). Darlington, England: Evangelical Press.

³ *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition*. 1994 (D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer & G. J. Wenham, Ed.) (4th ed.) (Le 13:1–59). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

inflammation and fiery heat, and with drought and with *blight* and with *mildew*. They shall pursue you until you perish.

- b. Sometimes God judges a specific person with illness (e.g. Miriam, Uzziah)
- c. God chose **Leprosy** to illustrate the destructive effects of sin to Israel

Leviticus 13:45–46 (Cf. Numbers 5:2–3)

⁴⁵ “The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ ⁴⁶ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. **He shall live alone.** His dwelling shall be **outside the camp.**

2. Only God Can Save Them from Death

Leviticus 14:1–3

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “This shall be the law of the leprous person for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, ³ and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall look. Then, *if the case of leprous disease is healed* in the leprous person...

2 Kings 5:7

⁷ And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “*Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy?...*”

III. What is God Trying to Teach Us?

A. Jesus Came Healing Lepers

Luke 4:27

And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

Matthew 8:1–4 (Cf. Mark 1:40–45)

¹ When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. ² And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” ³ And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴ And Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

B. Jesus Came to Give New Life to Walking Dead Men!

Ephesians 2:5

⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

Key Idea

In the laws concerning Lepers God has given us a strikingly appropriate picture of the devastating effects of sin. With this forsaken picture of eternal death as a backdrop, the glorious wonder of our cleansing in Christ shines all the more brightly.