

The Cleansing of the Leper

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Leviticus 14

- I. All this chapter is not dealing with the healing of the leper, but the cleansing of the leper.
 - A. There was no cure for leprosy outside of God's divine intervention.
 - B. Neither the priest, or any other person, had any power to cure the disease.
 - C. Only the priest had the authority to declare the leper free of the disease.
 - 1. Not the leper himself.
 - 2. Not public opinion about him.
 - 3. Not his loved ones or family.
 - D. The priest had instructions from the Word of God about how to know if the leprosy had ceased in the leper.
 - 1. All the indicators that the leprosy had been cured were visible in his flesh.
 - 2. The priest examined his body and what was visible in his flesh told the tale about whether he was cured or not.
 - 3. The priest did not question the leper about how he felt in his heart, or what he believed, or did not believe.
 - 4. There were no questions about what good works he had done, or how faithful to church he had been, or if had been reading his Bible.
 - 5. These things do not cure leprosy.
 - 6. People can do all these things and still be a leper.
 - E. So if a leper is cured from his leprosy it will be visible in his body, as well as the words that come out of his mouth.
 - F. No one believes a leper is cured unless he is clean.

- II. Once the priest had pronounced the leper clean the cleansing of the leper began.
 - A. In order to live among the people of God in this sinful world there must be more than a profession, a confession, or a pronouncement by some religious leader or other person.
 - B. There must be proof that this person is not a leper anymore – it is not acceptable to just take another person's word for it.
 - C. If he is truly cured of leprosy everyone must see the proof of it.
 - D. This is sanctification and it takes time.
 - E. Even though the priest has pronounced the leper clean he cannot immediately go back to the camp and his home.
 - F. There is a definite process that he must go through to be brought back into fellowship and allowed back in his home in the camp.
 - G. This process is not about his cure, but about his cleansing; being clean in the eyes of others.

- III. The cleansing of the leper is accomplished by two elements: blood and water.
 - A. First, it was the two birds, and this was done outside the camp.

Leviticus 14:4-7 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: And the priest shall

command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

1. The leper has already been healed (v. 3), so this is not in any way about bringing about his healing, but it is about his cleansing.
2. The elements are the two birds, cedar wood, hyssop, an earthen vessel, running water, and blood.

1 John 5:6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

1 John 5:8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Hebrews 9:19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

3. This represented a public profession of his faith in the atoning blood of Christ.
 4. By submitting himself to this humbling and somewhat humiliating public display he is giving the credit for his healing to God and acknowledging his mercy and grace upon his leprous self.
 5. Think of that leper, after all he has been through, standing there with the blood and water running down his face and all over his clothes and his body, as he watches the living bird fly away.
- B. Before he can come back into the camp he must wash his clothes and his body with water, and shave off all his hair.

Leviticus 14:8 And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days.

1. He cannot come back into the camp all smelly and dirty and haired over.
2. The hair being removed lets everyone see what he looks like underneath it.
3. His clothes will be clean and fresh and so he will not be offensive to the sight and senses of other people.
4. But even though he is healed, cured, clean, shaven, and in the camp, he cannot go in his own tent for another 7 days – he has to stay out in the open where everyone can see him.
5. This is what they call “transparency” now; it is proof that he is not hiding anything, and that he is not trying to fool anyone.

Leviticus 14:9 But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.

6. One more time he shaves off all his hair, even his eyebrows, so that everyone had have full confidence that he is not hiding any blemishes, or sores, and that he is really cured of his leprosy.

7. Remember, they are looking at his body, they are not trying to figure out what is in his heart, because that is impossible for men to do.
8. Men look on the outward appearance – only God can look on the heart.
9. Men are only convinced of a pure heart when they see a clean life and someone who is not trying to hide secret faults and sins.

C. The next day he can go to the Tabernacle and make his sacrifices there.

Leviticus 14:10-11 And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

1. The former leper is now in the Tabernacle of God and makes all his offerings and vows and is accepted into the beloved because he is not a leper anymore and he is clean.

Leviticus 14:20 And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

2. He has proven he is not a rebel against the law of God.
3. He has proven that he is not a hypocrite trying to come in like a thief and a robber to kill and destroy.
4. Once he was blind, unclean, outcast, and without hope.
5. But now he is healed in body and soul, cleansed in body and soul, and a dear part of the family of God.
6. The Scripture speaks to the soul of every Gentile leper who has been healed when he reads:

Ephesians 2:12-13 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

7. The leper who has been cured and cleansed can certainly understand the plea of Peter as he sums it all up:

1 Peter 2:9-12 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.