

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

LEVITICUS 10-13

When I was a child my mom told me to never play with matches. “Play with fire and you’re bound to get burned.” Of course, she was concerned with burns on my skin. But since then, I’ve discovered there are lots of ways to get burned.

Here are a few ways it can happen...

Take your retirement fund and invest it in lottery tickets.
You’ll get burned.

Back talk your new mother-in-law at the wedding rehearsal.
You’ll get burned.

Bet the house on the Hawks winning the NBA finals. You’ll get burned.

Live a sexually promiscuous lifestyle. And you’ll get burned.

Marry an unbeliever. And you’ll get burned.

Give your kids everything, but your time. You’ll get burned.

Ignore your Bible. You’ll get burned.

Trust in people rather than trusting in God. You’ll get burned.

These are a few ways you can get burned, and it doesn’t even take matches.

In fact, Leviticus 10 recounts the story of two priests, Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu. They were two brothers who got burned – both figuratively and literally.

Their story begins in verse 1, “Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the

LORD.” Instantly the boys became *crispy critters*. They came to the barbeque and ended up getting grilled.

Priest on the barbie... This is why sometimes priests are also called *friars*.

Verse 1 explains that Nadab and Abihu offered “**profane fire**” or “*strange fire*” on the altar. Exactly what that was we’re not sure. There are different theories...

Some Bible scholars believe the brothers entered beyond the outer court into the Holy of Holies - which was off limits to everyone but the High Priest.

Others believe their fire was from a source other than the bronze altar.

It could’ve been a matter of timing - the right act done at the wrong time.

It could’ve been the right act done from a selfish motive.

Since 10:9 prohibits the priests from drinking wine while offering the sacrifices some believe they were drunk when they entered into the presence of the Lord.

But here’s what we know happened... At the end of chapter 9, Uncle Moses and father Aaron, entered the tabernacle - then came out to bless the people.

That’s when the glory of God appeared, and fire fell from heaven.

The burnt offering and the fat on the altar were incinerated. The Hebrews shouted - then hit the deck in awe of God. It was a holy moment. It was a powerful and impressive display. And the brothers walked away thinking, “**That was cool!**”

And it didn't take long for them to decide they wanted to duplicate the deed.

Perhaps the boys thought, "If we cause fire to fall from heaven nobody at school will ever pick on us again. Think of the chicks we'll get. Hey, when we get good at it we can charge admission. People will pay to see heavenly fireworks."

Maybe I'm being too hard on them... Perhaps they weren't selfish at all - just excited. The fire got them fired up for God... And they rushed in to worship in an unbiblical manner - *emotion outweighed revelation*. Today, folks can get whipped up in a frenzy of excitement and their worship end up unbiblical and confusing.

Either way, Moses and Aaron acted at *God's prompting* - Nadab and Abihu followed their *own plotting*. The older generation was led by the Holy Spirit. They were all about God. The young bucks were in the flesh. It was all about them.

Motivationally there was a huge difference between what happened at the end of chapter 9, and the beginning of chapter 10, but externally it looked as if Nadab and Abihu were doing exactly what Moses and Aaron had done. They were just following a priestly example - being obedient sons. *Why the harsh treatment?*

The grieving father, Aaron, needed an explanation for God's retaliation.

Verse 3, "And Moses said to Aaron, 'This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be

glorified.” So Aaron held his peace.” Aaron obviously understood.

Apparently the difference was motive... Priests, and pastors, and SS teachers, and worship leaders, and anyone who approaches God on behalf of people needs to do so reverently, and soberly, and biblically – not flippantly and selfishly.

Guys, it’s an awesome privilege to enter God’s presence – *and we can come to His throne daily...* But never take that access for granted. Henrietta Mears always taught her students to “**Learn to walk softly in the Divine Presence.**”

God’s honor and glory should be our agenda. *Fear God or you can get burned!*

Verse 4, “**And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, “Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.”** Moses selects three pallbearers.

“**So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said. And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons,** Aaron had four sons in all. Eleazar and Ithamar are his family’s two survivors.

And I guarantee you they are listening to what’s about to be said...

“**Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people.**” In other words, as priests their primary job was to represent God’s justice and character. Nadab and Abihu got what they deserved. Aaron’s remaining family should refrain from showing any public

remorse. Everyone needed to know they agreed with God, and weren't siding with the victims.

“But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD has kindled. You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.” I'm sure they grieved privately, but not publicly.

They left it to the nation to grieve the loss of Aaron's oldest sons.

“Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die." It's possible this how Nadab and Abihu got burned. The boys were drunk in God's house - under the influence of *distilled spirits* not *the Holy Spirit*.

God makes sure that from now on sober priests are a given in God's house.

“It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses." A priest shouldn't be drunk because he has to make decisions that effect people's spiritual lives. He has to be able to discern between holy from unholy – what pleases God from what doesn't please Him.

This is also why a pastor or elder is forbidden from alcohol. In 1 Timothy 3 the deacons are not to drink much wine, whereas the elder shouldn't drink wine at all.

Imagine calling me one night for spiritual advice... I'm slurring my words on the other end of the line, and passing out. Alcohol is the enemy of sound judgment.

Verse 12, "Then Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left: "Take the grain offering that remains of the offerings made by fire to the LORD, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy.

You shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due, of the sacrifices made by fire to the LORD; for so I have been commanded.

The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering you shall eat in a clean place, you, your sons, and your daughters with you; for they are your due and your sons' due, which are given from the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel." A priestly portion was a two-piece dinner - breast and thigh - a piece of white meat and a piece of dark meat. *I don't know about potato salad?*

It's interesting, in 1 Corinthians 9:13 Paul uses this principle of the priestly portion as justification for paying the pastor. If the priest gets a portion of the sacrifice – then it's okay if the pastor gets a portion of the offerings.

Verse 15, "The thigh of the heave offering and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to offer as a wave offering before the LORD. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a statute

forever, as the LORD has commanded." The wave offering was the breast. The heave offering was the thigh. Maybe Nabad and Abihu didn't eat the portion designated for the priest. Maybe they ended up eating a leg.

"Then Moses made careful inquiry about the goat of the sin offering, and there it was - burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron who were left, saying, "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it is most holy, and God has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?"

See! Its blood was not brought inside the holy place; indeed you should have eaten it in a holy place, as I commanded." And Aaron said to Moses, "Look, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and such things have befallen me!" In other words, "Give me a break, Moses!"

"Try losing two of your sons – have to keep a stiff upper lip about it - then be asked to eat a holy meal. I just don't feel like eating. I'd do it with a bad attitude."

Aaron says in verse 19, "If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?" So when Moses heard that, he was content." Aaron endured a lot. Moses realized it was time to show sympathy.

In chapter 10, Moses asked how a priest could differentiate clean from unclean if he was drunk. We might wonder, I don't know the difference when I'm sober!

What did the Lord mean by the designations, "clean" and "unclean"?

Chapter 11 discusses kosher laws. The word “*kosher*” means “*approved*”. We’re told why one animal was considered clean and another unclean.

Verse 1, “And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth: Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud - that you may eat.” Here are the edibles... animals that are both cud chewers and have divided hooves.

An animal that has only one, or neither, is considered unclean and inedible.

“Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: (and he lists some examples...) the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;” Don’t eat a camel, and you probably shouldn’t smoke them either. They are unclean foods.

“The rock hyrax (or rock badger), because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;” When we were in Israel we saw scores of rock badgers up in the Golan Heights. They’re furry little creatures - like chipmunks.

“The hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you...” If there’s a *hare* in your food you shouldn’t eat!

Verse 7, “and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not

touch. They are unclean to you.” And here my friend, is a major reason I’m glad I’m not Jewish. I love bacon, and ham, and sausage, and pork barbeque. Hey, I’m pig-eating Gentile who’s been saved by God’s grace.

Verse 9, “These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers - that you may eat.” Fish was a clean animal. You could eat a water creature that had fins or scales.

“But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water, they are an abomination to you.” Here’s another reason I’m glad I’m not Jewish... I’m also a shrimp-eating Gentile. Shellfish were off-limits. Shrimp, scallops, lobsters were forbidden.

When you sit down before the shrimp lovers’ feast at Red Lobster say a prayer and thank the Lord Jesus we’re saved by grace and free from the Law.

Seafood without fins and scales, “shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales - that shall be an abomination to you.”

Verse 13, “And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind;” Notice, the falcon was a forbidden food. Falcons were non-kosher. Hey, even God called the falcons “dirty birds”.

“Every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the seagull, and the hawk after its kind; the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.” Notice, the bat was considered a *fowl* food. Hey, *bats* and *fouls*...

“All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you.

Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth.

These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind.” Grasshoppers were clean. When John the Baptist ate locust and honey he was keeping kosher. “But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you.”

In Exodus 15:26, God made a promise to Israel, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."

These dietary laws were God’s fulfillment of that promise.

Here in Leviticus 11 God eliminates from the Hebrew diet meat that was prone to carry parasites, and disease, and infection. Keeping *kosher* protected Israel from the types of diseases that plagued the Gentile nations around them.

In the Middle Ages when the bubonic plague swept through Europe, the Jews were the only people who were unaffected. This is why the Gentiles accused them of poisoning their rivers and streams. Their diet and hygiene made them immune. Today, the nation Israel has one of the longest average life-spans of any nation, and it's because of their kosher laws. God was and is an excellent dietician.

Recently, Kathy and I went to a Caribbean Island to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary, and I made a critical mistake. I forgot I was outside the United States. It was a resort. I forgot I was in a foreign land. I ate like a local. It was a mistake.

I think it was the chili con carne. But it kept me over the toilet for 24 hours. I spent a night and a day in the deep. Montezuma's revenge hit me in the gut.

Ancient Israel was kind of like modern America. Our excellent sanitation, and food preparation, and immunizations protect us from disease and infections with which the rest of the world struggles. Israel too, was schooled by God in diet and sanitation, and it protected them from diseases that affected their neighbors.

But I think there was more behind these notions of clean and unclean than just diet. Through these laws God wanted to teach His people vital spiritual lessons.

Understand, man is a consumer by nature – physically and spiritually.

We feed our bodies, and our souls. And just as some of the foods the Israelites ate were deemed clean, and some

unclean - likewise, some of the movies, music, and books we feed our soul are clean - and some are unclean. The old computer adage is true, *garbage in garbage out*. Take in trash, and you'll end up trash.

The health food advocate says, "*You are what you eat!*", which is why my nickname is *Twinkie*. But the phrase - *you are what you eat* - also applies to us spiritually... Moses taught the Hebrews if they ate an unclean food or touched an unclean object it made them unclean – and unfit for the worship or service of God.

The same truth applies to us. Consume unclean material – or dwell on unclean stimuli – and you'll become unclean or unfit for the worship or service of God.

Hey, don't be like the guy who complained that there was too much sex and violence on his VCR. Guys, you can *take control* over what you *take in!*

If you want to be useful and effective for God... *set yourself apart*. Reserve your mind and your soul for God's influence and input. Be spiritually clean.

Verse 24 continues the instruction, "**By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening: The carcass of any beast which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean.**" Touch a carcass of an unclean animal and you're unclean.

“And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It is unclean to you.” And if you were unclean you couldn’t enter the tabernacle or worship God. For a few hours you were unfit for service.

Verse 29, 'These also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse,' Notice, the mouse was unclean – and it teaches us a lesson today. The mouse which connects to your computer – and enables you to surf the internet - can also be a vile and unclean creature.

It’s interesting, that the computer mouse was invented by Douglas Englebart in 1968. Its shape looked like a mouse - the long wire connecting it to the computer looked like a tail - since it scurries across the computer - it was called a mouse.

But like mice the computer carries terrible disease and infection. Pornography is the bubonic plague of our day. It’s killing minds, hearts, and marriages. It makes the mouse an unclean creature. Guys, do whatever it takes to protect yourself!

Here’s some more unclean creatures, “And the large lizard after its kind; the gecko (Does Geico Car Insurance know it has an unclean animal for a mascot?)

As to insects, you can eat the ones that hop – not the ones that crawl. Verse 30 forbids, “the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.

These are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. Anything on which any of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item it is, in which any work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean.” But how do you cleanse something that’s been contaminated? *By the washing of water.*

Spiritually speaking the water is God’s Word. We need to cleanse ourselves constantly by flushing out our minds, and bathing our perspectives in the Bible.

Verses 33-40 tell us if a lizard falls into a cooking pot the pot becomes unclean. God wanted to protect His people from the transmission of infection and disease.

The CDC in Atlanta will tell you that communicable disease is serious business, and in third-world countries one of the main culprits for its transmission are insects. Through verse 40 God protects the Israelites from the potential of contamination.

Verse 41, “**And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth shall be an abomination.** (That’s the same advice my mom use to give me, “**Stay away from creeps.**”) **It shall not be eaten. Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth - these you shall not eat, for they are an abomination.**”

Centipedes are unclean, and an abomination.

Speaking of centipedes... did you hear about the big football game between the insects and the animals? The first half was a slaughter. The animals were winning. Every time the bear, or lion, or elephant touched the ball it was a touchdown. The poor insects had no defense. They were overmatched.

But in the second half the centipede joined the game for the insects, and he was sensational. He scored touchdown after touchdown, and sacked the bear and elephant on numerous occasions. The centipede brought his team back from a huge deficit, and won on a last second field goal... which the centipede kicked.

After the game the elephant asked the lizard, *“That centipede was an incredible football player, but I’ve got just one question... Why didn’t he play in the first half?”*

The lizard answered, *“Well, he was in the locker room lacing up his shoes.”*

Verse 44 is the key verse, *“For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.”* Here’s a great definition for holiness... *“To be holy is to be wholly for God.”* We should be set apart – different from the rest of the world – cut from a different piece of cloth.

“Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” School is about to start back and every High Schooler needs to remember that you can defile yourself by hanging out with creeps. Choose friends wisely.

“For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God.” (God freed us to follow Him) “You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”

Verse 46 summarizes the chapter, “This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.”

Chapter 12 establishes procedures for a woman after she had given birth.

Verse 1, “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean.” A woman’s “customary impurity” was her time of the month – and during the time of her menstrual flow she was considered unclean.

Understand, she was not *morally unclean*, but *ceremonially unclean*.

Before we go further, we need to delve into the mind of the Hebrew. In addition to the idea of moral cleanness they had a concept called *ceremonial cleanness*.

And you need to know the difference!

Moral verdicts of clean or unclean were based on the good or evil intrinsic to the act. But ceremonial verdicts were based on symbolism and typology.

Nothing is immoral or sinful about a woman's menstrual flow, but when the Hebrews thought of human reproduction, God wanted them to recall that sin has poisoned the very fountain of life. We're born into sin. David said in Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Sin has tainted the springs of life. *And to remind us of the fact - to condition us to that truth* - God attached a ceremonial uncleanness to reproductive acts.

Thus following the birth of a son a woman was unclean for 7 days. She had brought a little sinner into the world and she was considered unclean.

But verse 3, "On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

Why did God wait until the 8th day to have the males circumcised? There's a practical reason. Scientists now know the blood of a newborn doesn't coagulate until the 8th day of life. A baby boy might bleed to death if he was circumcised on the 5th or 6th day. God knew this information long before the age of science.

But the circumcision was also symbolic. You can trace it back to Abraham.

God promised Abraham and Sarah a child in their old age. Abraham was 100 and Sarah 90 when Isaac was born. At first, Abraham trusted in his flesh – his own efforts. His lack of faith produced Ishmael - and a ton of problems still felt today.

But God proved his power to Sarah - *when against all odds*, He caused her to conceive. Circumcision became a symbol of man's impotence and God's miracle, life-giving power. Circumcision cuts away the flesh, and obeys God's word.

Circumcision is a reminder that spiritual life comes from God not the flesh.

And it's interesting that the symbol for God's life-giving power was carried out on the 8th day. Another example of that power occurred on the 8th day – the resurrection of Jesus was on the first day of the week, or the 8th day.

All this is laced with symbolism.

Verse 4, **“She shall then continue in the blood of her purification 33 days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification 66 days.”** When a woman bears a son she's unclean 33 days... Add the initial 7 days and that equals 40 days - the biblical number for judgment. Again it's symbolic for God's judgment on sin and the sinner.

It's interesting though that when a woman births a daughter she's unclean twice as long - 66 days... I have a theory. It could be God is warning the parents that a daughter will end up costing them twice as much money as a son. *(Ha!)*

Seriously, the double penalty for the daughter may be in anticipation of the daughter's birth later in her life. She also will bring a sinner into the world.

Verse 6, “When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her.

And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female. And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons - one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.” The turtledoves and pigeons were provisions for the poor. If you couldn’t buy a lamb everybody could afford two turtledoves - which is what Joseph and Mary did in Luke 2 when they brought Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised.

Chapters 13-14 give laws relating to the dreaded disease “leprosy”. Some have called it, “*the AIDS of the ancient world*”. It literally ate away a person’s flesh.

Middle East missionary, William Thompson, once reported an encounter he had with a group of lepers. He writes, “As I approached Jerusalem, I was startled by the sudden sight of beggars, without eyes, without nose, without hair, without everything... They held out their handless arms - unearthly sounds gurgled through throats without palates – in a word, I was horrified.”

There were two types of leprosy in the ancient world...

Tuberculoid leprosy was a benign form. It lasted a few years - then went away.

But *lepromatous* was malignant, and highly contagious. It produced severe deformities, and a part from an act of God there was no known cure.

Both diseases began with a white or red patch on the skin. The sore soon became ulcerated, and spread. The soft tissues deteriorated. Appendages were literally eaten away. Leprosy numbs the nerve endings - thus the leper will often accidentally stick his hand in a fire without realize the damage being done.

Today when lepers begin treatment they're given a cat to take home. The cat shoos away the mice that nibble away at the lepers feet while he sleeps.

Lepers are often called "*the walking dead*". I've got a few pictures I'll show you. But if you have a weak stomach you might want to close your eyes... **(pics)**

Today, leprosy is called "*Hanson's Disease*", named after the Norwegian doctor who discovered the bacillus that causes it. It can now be treated medically.

Because of the highly contagious nature of the disease, in ancient times lepers were isolated from the rest of the camp. As a result they lost their family, business, friends - their right to travel - even their right to worship with God's people.

That's why proper diagnosis was critical. And that's what chapter 13 is about...

But there's another reason this chapter should interest us. In the Bible leprosy is a type of sin. Characteristics of the ancient disease and our spiritual dilemma are strikingly similar. Leprosy is to the outer man what sin is to the inner man.

It's loathsome and ugly.

It starts small and imperceptibly, underneath the surface of the skin.

You're unaware of the damage it does.

It's progressive. It gets worse and worse.

It creates a callousness, and insensitivity.

It stifles fellowship and isolates us from other people.

It hinders our worship.

It can spread to others.

In Bible times, leprosy could only be cured by a miracle from God.

And its healing was pronounced by the priest... In sin's case, our High Priest, Jesus Christ. While on earth Jesus often healed the leper - it demonstrated his power over both the disease, and the sin that brought all disease into the world.

Verse 1, **"And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot,"** Here's some insight into what causes us to sin... sometimes a swelling of our pride – at other times a scab or callous or bitterness that forms over a wound – still at other times a bright spot, a strength or victory we take credit for ourselves. This is how sin begins.

“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. 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.**” Just as leprosy was deeper than the skin, likewise sin is internal not external skin. Sin originates in our mind and heart. Sinful actions come from sinful attitudes.

“Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean.

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. 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.

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.” If the priest has a doubt he can isolate the person for 7 days. When it came to leprosy time would tell. Give it a little time and see what results.

Here’s an example to follow when we’re called on to judge the genuineness of a person’s repentance. Does he or she really want to change or are they just sorry they got caught? Is he sincere? Do I give him a second chance... at ministry, on the job, in the marriage? Hey, time will tell. Give him 7

days, or 7 weeks, and at the end of that time see what's happens to his sinful, leprous-looking spot?

But if the scab should at all spread over the skin,” And remember, sin spreads. It begins a small spot, you barely notice. But it's an infection that spreads to other areas of your life. If sin is not dealt with it can eat away at the whole person.

“After he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again. And if the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy.”

Verses 1-8 deals with leprous-looking patches that appear spontaneously.

Verses 9-17 deals with cases that involve swelling and rawness on the skin.

Verses 18-23 addresses cases of potential leprosy that involve a boil.

Verses 24-28 covers symptoms that begin with a burn on the skin.

Verses 29-37 deals with sores that appear in the beard or on the head.

Verses 38-44 addresses sores that break out on a bald head.

When you get home tonight let me encourage you to read these different procedures, and check yourself over for leprosy. Hopefully we're all clean.

But look in verse 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!' 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."

If another person approached a leper it was his responsibility to ward them off by screaming "Unclean! Unclean!". Imagine the psychological effect of replacing in your vocabulary the word "hello" with the word "unclean". You greet people, and they flee to the other side of the street. Overnight you become a social outcast.

This is why the diagnosis of leprosy was so extremely important.

It's interesting Jesus could've stood clear of the leper who approached him. He could've healed him by just speaking the word, but Jesus touched the man nobody wanted to touch. Matthew 8:3 tells us, "Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

For the first time in years this leper felt the touch of another human. It conveyed love. Before Jesus healed the leper physically, he healed him emotionally.

Guys, Jesus still touches untouchable, but today we are His hands.

Verses 47-59 tell us what to do if leprosy gets into a garment.

In ancient Israel there was an active fungus that bred in the cloth. When this fungus was found in a garment, either the contaminated part was torn out of the garment - or it was

washed - or the clothes were taken out and burned. But the fungus was not allowed to grow. It could produce leprosy. Which reminds me...

“What did one amoeba say to the other amoeba? *Wow, he’s a fun guy!*”

Verse 47, "Also, if a garment has a leprous plague in it, whether it is a woolen garment or a linen garment, whether it is in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, 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."

And Moses goes on to instruct the priest on how to deal with leprous garments.

Let me close with a word to fathers. Dad, you are the priest in your family, and it’s your job to examine your kids’ clothes for fungus and leprosy. Lewd shirts and low-cut jeans – tight pants and obscene T-shirts – need to be taken out of your child’s wardrobe. Beware! Immodest clothes are a sign of a spiritual fungus.

Unless you *address* their *dress* that fungus might lead to leprosy.