

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE**LEVITICUS 14-15****CLEANSING FROM SKIN DISEASES**

Leviticus 14:1-32

The previous chapter talked of various skin diseases that made an Israelite unclean. This chapter denotes the procedure that was to be followed if the illness went away.

A person who had recovered had to show himself to the priest *outside the camp*. If the priest determined that he was recovered, two birds were brought. One of the birds was killed and its blood was mixed with fresh water and sprinkled over the person who had recovered. The living bird was then dipped in the blood and allowed to go free.

- ! The blood was sprinkled seven times on the person to be cleansed
- ! cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop were also used in the ceremony
- ! What do you think the symbolism of the "bird ceremony" was?

Following the procedure, the person shaved all the hair from his body and washed himself and his clothes. Then he waited seven days and shaved and washed again. On the eighth day he was allowed to return to the camp, but not without first stopping at the tabernacle.

Through three types of sacrifices (vv8-32), the individual was received back into the community.

A burnt offering

A grain offering

A sin (guilt) offering

Some of the blood of the sin offering was placed on the one to be cleansed.

If a person was poor and could not afford the customary animals for these offerings, less expensive substitutes were permitted (vv23-32).

(Some translations speak of a "log" of oil in vv12, 21. A log was a unit of liquid measure equal to about one-half pint.

CLEANSING FROM MOLD AND MILDEW

Leviticus 14:33-57

Again as read in the previous chapter, mildew in a house made things unclean. The process for cleansing from mildew was similar in some respects to the cleansing from skin diseases.

The priest would examine a house to determine the extent of the mildew. If it is deep, the house is closed for seven days. Then it is checked again. If the mold has spread, then the contaminated stones must be torn out and the inside walls of the house scraped. New material was to be brought in for repairs.

If the mildew returned after the new stones, clay, and plaster were put in, the house was to be torn down.

If it did not return, the priest would perform the ritual of the two birds (sprinkling blood on the house instead of a person this time) and the house was declared clean.

- ! What does this whole section about skin diseases and mildew tell us about our God and our relationship with Him?
- ! Note that Jesus often healed people of skin diseases. How might an Israelite who was aware of all these Levitical regulations understand Christ's work better after being healed?

UNCLEANNESS IN SEXUAL MATTERS

Leviticus 15

Abnormal discharges from male sexual organs also constituted uncleanness. The symptoms listed in w1-13 could suggest the disease we know as gonorrhea. Anyone who came into contact with such an unclean person, was required to wash himself and his clothes and would be considered unclean until evening. If he touched someone else before washing, they too would be made unclean.

Unlike those with serious skin diseases, these unclean persons were not required to live outside the camp. They could remain at home, but were required to avoid direct contact with others. Once the abnormal discharge was gone, the man had to wait seven days, wash his clothes, bathe, and offer a sacrifice to the Lord (w13-15).

Female discharges: During her period a woman was considered unclean and those who had contact with her were required to bathe and be cleansed. No sacrifice was required for menstrual discharges, simply cleansing with water.

w25-30 discuss long-term discharges. A woman was unclean for as many days as the flow of blood continued (recall the woman in Lk 8:43-44 who had been unclean for twelve years). Anyone who came into contact with a woman who had an unclean discharge was made unclean as well. When the problem went away, the woman waited seven days and then brought a small sacrifice to the Lord's altar to make atonement.

DEFILING THE LORD'S TABERNACLE

Leviticus 15:31-32

Those who were unclean could not participate in the worship of God at the tabernacle. Many of these laws in chapter 15 also encouraged proper sexual restraint among the people.