

Leviticus 13 Commentary

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[Another Overview Chart of Leviticus](#) - Charles Swindoll
[A third Overview Chart of Leviticus](#)

LEVITICUS THE BOOK OF SANCTIFICATION AND WORSHIP	
<i>Adapted and modified from C. Swindoll</i>	
Leviticus 1-17	Leviticus 18-27
The Way to God Access	The Walk with God Lifestyle
The Approach: Offerings	Practical Guidelines
The Representative: Priest	Chronological Observances
The Laws: Cleansing Physically & Spiritually	Severe Consequences Verbal promises
Ritual for Worship Worshipping a Holy God	Practical for Walking Living a Holy Life
Location: Mt Sinai for one full year	
Theme: How sinful humanity can approach and worship a holy God	
Key Verses: Lev 17:11, 19:2, 20:7-8	
Christ in Leviticus: In every sacrifice, every ritual, every feast	
Time: about 1446BC	

Leviticus 13:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

- [Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#)
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries
- See also in depth commentaries in Gospel of Luke where Jesus healed lepers - Luke 5:12-17commentary, Luke 17:12-19-commentary.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses 64 times -

Exod. 6:13; 13:1; 19:21; 25:1; 32:7; 33:1; 40:1; Lev. 4:1; 5:14; 6:1,8,19,24; 7:22,28; 8:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:16; 22:1,17,26; 23:9; 24:1,13; Num. 1:1; 3:5,14,44; 4:1,17,21; 5:1,5,11; 6:22; 7:4; 8:1; 9:9; 13:1; 15:17; 16:20,23,36; 17:1; 18:25; 19:1; 20:23; 25:10,16; 26:52; 27:6; 28:1; 31:1,25; 33:50; 34:1,16; 35:9

Leon Hyatt - A new message is introduced in this verse. It was spoken to Moses and Aaron, probably because Aaron was still present in The Tabernacle for the seven days of fillings

William MacDonald - - Chapter 13 has to do with the diagnosis of leprosy, and chapter 14 with its cleansing. Opinion is divided as to the nature of biblical leprosy. Bible lepers were usually mobile, were not deformed, were harmless when completely leprous, and were sometimes cured. In some ways the priest filled the role of physician, perhaps a subtle reminder of the close connection between the spiritual and the physical. Man is a tripartite being, and what affects one part affects all. Chapter 13 is admittedly

difficult, dealing as it does with technical descriptions of leprosy and non-leprosy diseases and with “leprosy” in houses and garments. Dr. R. K. Harrison, who has medical training as well as being a Hebrew scholar, points out that there is “no translation that is satisfactory for all the conditions covered by the Hebrew word, but that it should be broad enough to include the disease we call Hansen’s disease.” He summarizes the known facts about the Hebrew term and its Greek translation (whence our English terms leprosy, leper, leprosy):

The Hebrew term *sāra’at* comes from a root meaning “to become diseased in the skin,” and is a generic rather than a specific description. In Old Testament usage it was extended to include mould or mildew in fabrics, as well as mineral eruptions on the walls of buildings, and possibly dry rot in the fabric of such structures. In the LXX the Hebrew was rendered by the Greek word *lepra*, which itself appears to have been rather indefinite in nature and meaning. The Greek medical authors used the word to describe a disease that made the surface of the skin flaky or scaly, while Herodotus mentioned it in connection with an affliction known as *leukē*, a type of cutaneous eruption which seems to have been the same as the Greek *elephantiasis*, and thus similar to modern clinical leprosy (Hansen’s disease).

Andrew Bonar (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus “Very precious.”) AARON is present as well as Moses on this occasion; for the priests were to be judges of leprosy. Hence, the high priest is one of the original receivers of these laws. Jehovah opens up sin under the figure of leprosy—sin, as an evil seen, and disgusting when seen; diffusive as well as penetrating.

An Israelite would naturally turn his thoughts to this chapter when he read such language as Isa. 1:6, “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” In Isa. 53:5, “Smitten of God” is connected with “stricken” (נָגַעַ) as if the stroke of leprosy (לֵפְרָא) were a direct infliction of God. The expressions of Psalm 38 are borrowed in many things from the leprosy. Thus, “My wounds stink and are corrupt,” ver. 5. “My loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh,” ver. 7. And these verses are beyond doubt descriptions of the horrid features of sin. Job’s fearful disease was that more awful leprosy called *elephantiasis*.

It was a disease which man could never heal; and therefore our Lord manifested no less than Divine power and Godhead by healing the lepers as much as by raising the dead. To turn the pale, loathsome, putrid leper to all the beautiful vigor and health of a little child, was what only God could do—only the arm that could raise the mouldering carcass from the grave.

The pain of common leprosy is not vehement, but it keeps the man restless and sad. It is like sin in fallen man—the cause of his restlessness and sadness, the root of his unsatisfied desires; yet not itself felt keenly.

Leprosy is also corrosive, and penetrates unseen—almost unfelt—till it has wasted the substance: like sin in the soul, eating out its beauty and its very life, while outwardly the sinner moves about as before. At length it bursts forth externally, too—the man becomes a skeleton, and a mass of noisome corruption. So does sin at length deface the whole image of God, and every faint vestige of comeliness that was left. And death is the sure end.

The Lord sent forth such a disease on earth after the Fall, to form it would seem, a type of sin. The workings of the leprosy seem appointed by him on very purpose to show forth sin in all its features. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

David Guzik - The methodology in this passage erred on the side of safety. If a person could not be pronounced “clean” with certainty, they were then isolated until they could be pronounced clean.

- i. These judgments were based on sound medical diagnosis and concern. They were made more with the idea of protecting the community from the outbreak of disease than with the idea of the rights of the individual.
- ii. “The Hebrew priest-physicians appear to have been the first in the ancient world to isolate persons suspected of infectious or contagious diseases.” (Harrison)
- iii. Illnesses such as smallpox, measles, and scarlet fever might start out with a skin condition considered to be leprosy—and the person would be isolated for the necessary time until the condition cleared up. This quarantine helped prevent the spread of these diseases among the people of Israel.

George Bush - Among the various diseases to which the Israelites were subject, none was so odious, so formidable, so incurable as the Leprosy, which forms the subject of the present chapter. Although this disease was not peculiar to the Jews, as it prevailed in Egypt, Syria, and the northern part of upper Asia, yet it was regarded by the chosen people as proceeding immediately from the hand of God, and was always considered as a punishment for sin. Accordingly it was usually denominated by them הנגע hannēga, נגע צרעת nēga tzāraath, the stroke or wound, i. e. by supplying the ellipsis, the stroke or wound of the Lord. The disease, though not unknown in modern times, is yet comparatively rare, especially in European countries, and in our own, is scarcely known at all. Its leading characteristic, as outwardly visible, is a spotted skin. These spots in the outset are commonly small, resembling the pustules made by the prick of a pin, but they gradually increase in size, and often for a number of years, till they become as large as a coffee-bean, covering the whole body, and finally terminating in ulcers, which penetrate inwardly till they have produced a complete caries of the bones, and the whole body becomes little better than a mass of corruption. But spots upon the body resembling these were not always the effect of leprosy; at therefore became important to lay down rules for distinguishing between

leprous spots and those which are harmless, and result from other causes. This is the object of the present chapter; and no part of the Levitical code will appear more worthy of its divine author than this, when we consider that it was designed, not wantonly to fix the charge of being a leper upon an innocent person, and thus to impose upon him a load of grievous restraints and inconveniences, but to ascertain in the fairest and most satisfactory manner the real subjects of the scourge, and to separate them from all intercourse with their fellow-men. As this was the prominent aim of the laws on this subject, viz. to secure a fair and impartial decision of the main question, of the fact of the disease, Moses has not mentioned those signs of leprosy which admitted of no doubt, but those only which might be the subject of contention, and left it to the priests to distinguish between the really leprous, and those who had only the appearance of being such. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Arnold Fruchtenbaum has an interesting note on leprosy in his article entitled "[The Three Messianic Miracles](#)"....

Some time prior to the coming of Yeshua (Jesus), the ancient rabbis separated miracles into two categories. First were those miracles anyone would be able to perform if they were empowered by the Spirit of God to do so. The second category of miracles were called "messianic miracles," which were miracles only the Messiah would be able to perform. Yeshua did miracles in both categories: general miracles and also messianic miracles. So because of the rabbinic teaching that certain miracles would be reserved only for the Messiah to do, whenever He performed a messianic miracle it created a different type of reaction than when He performed other types of miracles.

The first messianic miracle was the healing of a leper....From the time the Mosaic Law was completed, there was no record of any Jew who had been healed of leprosy. While Miriam was healed of leprosy, this was before the completion of the Law. Naaman was healed of leprosy, but he was a Syrian Gentile, not a Jew. From the time the Mosaic Law was completed, there was never a case of any Jew being healed of leprosy.

Leprosy was the one disease that was left out of rabbinic cures; there was no cure for leprosy whatsoever. Yet Leviticus 13-14 gave the Levitical Priesthood detailed instructions as to what they were to do in case a leper was healed. On the day that a leper approached the priesthood and said, "I was a leper but now I have been healed," the priesthood was to give an initial offering of two birds. For the next seven days, they were to investigate intensively the situation to determine three things. First, was the person really a leper? Second, if he was a real leper, was he really cured of his leprosy? Third, if he was truly cured of his leprosy, what were the circumstances of the healing? If after seven days of investigation they were firmly convinced that the man had been a leper, had been healed of his leprosy, and the circumstances were proper, then, on the eighth day there would be a lengthy series of offerings. All together, there were four different offerings. First, there was a trespass-offering; second, a sin-offering; third, a burnt-offering; and fourth, a meal-offering. Then came the application of the blood of the trespass-offering upon the healed leper followed by the application of the blood of the sin-offering upon the healed leper. The ceremony would then end with the anointing of oil upon the healed leper.

Although the priesthood had all these detailed instructions as to how they were to respond in the case of a healed leper, they never had the opportunity to put these instructions into effect, because from the time the Mosaic Law was given, no Jew was ever healed of leprosy. As a result, it was taught by the rabbis that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jewish leper.... ([The Three Messianic Miracles](#))

Leon Hyatt has an in depth introduction - ([Original Article](#))

Introduction A third type of uncleanness was from a type of disease. In people it began with a spot on the skin that spread and eventually became an open sore. The Hebrews were familiar with a malady that affected cloth and leather that had a similar appearance to the human disease. They were also aware of a malady that affected stone houses that had a similar appearance. They called all three conditions by the same name, which was **tsaraath**. Jehovah chose the three conditions called by that name as another symbol of sin, to remind His people of their responsibility to avoid sin at all times and to work to remove the effects of sin from their lives.

Few Biblical subjects have been more clouded with misinterpretation and harmful, superstitious, unscholarly speculation than this one. The misunderstanding originated in the fact that the conditions described in Leviticus 13 are not known today, and translators did not know how to translate the name into other languages. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek in the first or second century B.C., the translators rendered the Hebrew name for the disease with the Greek word "lepra." Whereas the Hebrew name seems to have meant "an humbling malady," the Greek name means "scaly." The Greek word lepra, unlike the Hebrew word **tsaraath**, was general in meaning and did not apply to any certain malady. Centuries later, when Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, he transliterated the Greek name instead of using a Latin word. Later when the Bible began to be translated into English,

English translators followed Jerome's practice and transliterated the Greek word into their versions. Thus, in English translations the disease came to be called "leprosy." Modern leprosy is not the same disease that the Hebrews called **tsaraath**, so English readers began with a misconception of the disease described in this chapter. Then one layer of misinformation was laid upon another until people came to believe that the disease described in this chapter was one of the most terrible that ever existed. They came to have a superstitious fear of the word "leprosy." That fear has made it exceedingly difficult for Bible readers to arrive at a proper interpretation of this chapter. Only in recent years are people beginning to overcome that fear, allowing us to make a more reasoned interpretation of this chapter.

In seeking to unravel the confusion that has existed with regard to this disease, it is important to examine the manner in which the disease is described in Scripture. First, the disease could affect cloth or leather (Lev. 13:47-58) and stone houses (Lev. 14:34-53), as well as people (Lev. 13:2-46). Second, the disease in humans was characterized by six symptoms: (1) a swollen, scabby, or itchy spot or spots on the skin (Lev. 13:2,6-8,10,19,30,31,35-36,43), (2) loss of color of the skin in the affected spot or spots (Ex. 4:6; Lev. 13:3,10,19,24,42-43; Num. 12:10; 2 Kings 5:27), (3) lightening of the color of the hair in the affected spot or spots (Lev. 13:3,10,20,25,30); (4) a tendency for the spot or spots to spread in the skin (Lev. 13:6-8,22,27,35-36); (5) penetration of the spot or spots into the flesh below the skin (Lev. 13:20,21,25,30) and (6) in advanced stages, an open, raw sore or sores in the spot or spots (Lev. 13:10-11,14-15). Third, nowhere in the Scripture is the malady called loathsome, foul, repugnant, horrible, stinking, or deadly. Num. 12:11-12 has been wrongly used to support the position that leprosy was a repulsive and deadly disease. Those verses contain the plea of Aaron in behalf of Miriam after she was stricken with the malady for defying Moses. Aaron said, "Alas, my lord, I beseech you, do not lay the sin on us, by which we have done foolishly, and by which we have sinned. Do not let her be like a dead one, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb." Aaron's description is horrible and frightening, but Aaron was describing the effects of sin on a person's life, not the symptoms of the disease. Aaron's description has nothing to do with the symptoms of the disease that is described in this chapter. Fourth, the disease is not described in Scripture as being incurable. In fact, quite to the contrary, Leviticus 14:1-32, which describes cleansing from the disease, is built on the assumption that the disease was curable and that a cure could be expected (see comments on those verses in MESSAGE 17). The disease described in this chapter, according to these facts, was definitely not the unspeakably abominable affliction that it has so often been described as being.

Several successive steps led to the false ideas about the Biblical disease that were prevalent for so many years. The first step was misinterpreting the Scriptures to contend that the disease described in this chapter was proof that the person had sinned a terrible sin. That view is just one form of the idea that affliction is always proof of sin, a position that should have been dispelled for all time by the book of Job. The disease is not described as a result of sin or proof of sin, but as a symbol for sin. Then, Scripture was further misinterpreted to contend that the disease was a special malady visited on people only by a blow from the Lord. The striking of Moses (Ex. 4:6), Miriam (Num. 12:10), Gehazzi (II Kings 5:27), and Uzziah (II King 15:5; II Chr. 26:20-23) with the disease has been used as evidence that the disease was contracted only as a punishment from Jehovah God. However, just because some people were struck with this disease as punishment does not mean that every case of the disease was a visitation of God's wrath. Actually, Moses' contracting the disease supports that view. When Moses was not stricken with the disease, God did not put it on him as a punishment but as a sign of His power to persuade Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free (Ex. 4:6-8).

The second step in the development of false ideas about the disease described in this chapter came from an effort in relatively modern times to identify the Biblical disease with the disease that today is called by the name "leprosy." The name "leprosy" did not come from a disease known by that name, but by transliterating a Greek word into English. So after the Greek word was brought over into English, people sought to know what disease it represented. In trying to identify the disease, people began by observing diseases that begin as a spot on the skin and then spread through the body. Since it was already believed that the Biblical disease was an awful visitation from sin, they sought for the most terrible disease known that could by any stretch of the imagination could fit the Biblical description. Some connected the disease with elephantiasis, which certainly is a fearful disease because of the way it distorts the appearance of the afflicted person. It is caused by a type of worm that cuts off the flow of blood and lymph from the extremities of the body. Its effects are first seen as a spot on the skin. As it progresses, the legs, arms, or head become filled with fluid and are distorted all out of shape. Then, the skin often breaks and bleeds. If it affects the legs, they become so puffy that the skin of the legs expands over the feet until the legs of the person look like the legs of an elephant. Thus, the disease was named "elephantiasis." However, no connection exists between elephantiasis and the disease described in this chapter. At no time is elephantiasis characterized by whiteness or clearness of the skin and lightening of the hair in the affected part. And, nowhere in the Scripture are the severe symptoms of elephantiasis described in connection with the Biblical disease.

In the end, the Biblical disease came to be connected with the disease that is called "leprosy" today, but that name came from applying the transliterated Greek term *lepra* to the disease, not because it already had that name. The disease that is known as leprosy in modern times has two forms: lepromatous (skin) and tuberculoid (nerve). The two forms are caused by slightly different bacilli and have slightly different symptoms in that the tubercular variety results in greater nerve damage. Both forms of the disease begin with reddish or brownish patches on the skin. As the disease progresses, the bacilli spread along the nerves to affect

especially the ear lobes, the eyes, the chin, the elbow, the knees, or the mucous membrane of the nose, throat, and hands. Bones become porous and fragile, and the nerves become insensitive. The afflicted person damages the fragile bones because he or she has no feeling in the affected parts of the body. The bones chip away and are absorbed by the body, so that the fingers and toes grow shorter. The modern disease called “leprosy” is a serious disease, but it has no more connection with the disease described in this chapter than elephantiasis has. Modern leprosy is not characterized by loss of color in the skin or by lightening of the hair, and nowhere in Scripture are the severe later stages of modern leprosy mentioned in connection with the Biblical disease. Modern leprosy is simply not the same disease as the disease described in this chapter.

The third step in the development of false ideas concerning the disease described in this chapter came as Christian preachers and teachers, desiring to show the awfulness of sin, dramatized and elaborated the symptoms of modern leprosy and used them as symbols and pictures of the results of sin. They sometimes confused and combined the symptoms of modern leprosy with elephantiasis. Then they exaggerated the symptoms beyond reality and described them in the most vivid of language. Thus, leprosy came to be thought of as a much more horrible disease than it really is, and all of those horrible ideas were then applied to the Biblical disease. Actually, the concept of the disease in the minds of most Christians bore no resemblance to the disease described in the Scripture.

The final step in this ugly process was turning uncleanness from the Biblical disease into a stigma placed on modern leprosy. People with modern leprosy were isolated in colonies and ostracized from society. This quarantining of people with modern leprosy was unnecessary, because leprosy is only slightly contagious. When leper colonies were maintained around the world, people served in them as doctors, nurses, and orderlies for years without ever contracting the disease, simply because they observed simple, easy-to-follow rules of hygiene. However, the person afflicted with the modern disease called “leprosy” became a despised and feared person, totally out of proportion to the real seriousness of the disease. The social ostracism that was placed on the disease was worse than the physical symptoms of the disease.

A young man named Sidney Maurice Levysen, became afflicted with modern leprosy in its lepromatic form and was confined in a leprosarium at Carville, Louisiana. He soon realized the injustice of fearing and ostracizing people with leprosy, and he began a campaign to educate the world in an effort to correct the false ideas that had grown up in connection with the disease of leprosy. He conducted his campaign through a newspaper named “The Sixty-six Star,” which he published and distributed from the hospital. Eventually the newspaper gained world-wide reading. He also conducted his campaign through a book he wrote with Lawrence G. Blochman, entitled *Alone No Longer*. The book was published in 1963 by Funk and Wagnalls Co., Inc., of New York City. Response came more quickly than expected. Two concrete accomplishments resulted. One was the changing of the name of modern leprosy to “Hansen’s Disease,” a name that was taken from the name of the man who pioneered modern research on the disease. Many resisted this change of name on the grounds that a disease should not be named for a man who worked toward its cure. The contention was that such a name seems to indicate that Doctor Hansen had the disease rather than that he worked toward its cure. Nonetheless, the name gained wide acceptance and is commonly used today.

The second result of Levysen’s efforts was an effort on the part of some to rename the disease described in Leviticus 13. This effort has not gained wide acceptance, though it still should happen. The effort to bring a foreign word into another language by transliteration is always a dangerous one, because the word so easily changes its meaning and its connotation in the process. Just such a change in meaning occurred with the Biblical disease as described above, and it opened the way for serious misunderstanding of the nature of the disease. However, an effort to coin another new English word meets with the same difficulties. No modern disease is known that fits the symptoms of the disease described in Leviticus 13; therefore, most modern English translations of the Bible continue to use the traditional rendering and transliterate the name from Greek through Latin as “leprosy.” Two exceptions to this practice are the Jerusalem Bible, which translates the name as “a malignant skin disease” and Holman Christian Standard Bible, which translates it as “skin disease.” These renderings are not helpful, because they tend to indicate that the disease of Leviticus 13 can be any skin disease. That implication is certainly false, because the chapter describes specific, identifiable symptoms for the disease. Therefore, this writing will use the transliteration of the Hebrew name for the disease. That practice has its difficulties, but it at least breaks free from the mistaken ideas connected with names used in the past. Therefore, please try to become accustomed to the name “**tsaraath**.”

The disease described in Leviticus 13 was not a dreadful, repulsive disease that doomed a person to sure and painful death. It was rather a malady that was not exceedingly injurious to the person’s health and from which he could have reasonable hope of recovery. Sidney Levysen, who did so much to inform the world of facts about modern leprosy, was not as well informed concerning the Biblical disease. He followed certain interpreters who contended that the Hebrew term applied to a whole family of skin diseases. One careful reading of Leviticus 13 will show that view is not correct. The symptoms of the disease are clearly defined and always consistent. Leviticus 13 also gives instructions concerning how to distinguish this disease from other similar diseases (see comments on Lev. 13:4-6,12-13,28,34,38-39 below). As described in this chapter, the disease was one certain malady that began on the skin and spread outward and inward in the person’s flesh. Its most serious stage was characterized by a raw sore in the stricken spot or spots. However, the Hebrew name for the disease was also used to designate a certain type of growth that attached itself to

cloth and leather and another type of growth that attached itself to stone houses. The three maladies could not have been the same disease, because human infections do not spread to cloth and stone, and germs that thrive in living flesh do not live in inanimate matter. The symptoms of the three maladies were similar in appearance. Therefore, the Hebrews considered them to be one malady and called all three conditions by the same name.

Much misunderstanding has also been involved in the effort to explain the purpose of the Leviticus regulations concerning this disease. Most often, the regulations have been explained as health laws. It has been said that their purposes was to identify an especially contagious disease and isolate the people who were afflicted with it to prevent the disease from spreading. However, no mention is made in the Bible of isolating people with other diseases that were known to be contagious; and the Bible places no emphasis on any contagious qualities of this disease. Furthermore, in the text no attention at all is given to trying to cure the disease. The concern of the text is with cleansing the person after he or she had been cured. The text does not reveal concern with stopping a spreading health menace but concern with using the disease as a symbol.

The proper understanding of the purpose for uncleanness from **tsaraath** was to use them as teaching symbols. Like the other types of uncleanness, the three conditions called "**tsaraath**" were chosen by Jehovah, not because of their inherent awfulness, but in order to use them as symbols. They were made to be symbols of sin. Wherever the diseases occurred, they were to be reminders to the Israelites that they were obligated to avoid contact with sin in every way possible.

A man afflicted with **tsaraath** was put to considerable inconvenience, but he was not in as severe a physical condition as has been supposed. It might be questioned as to whether it was fair to put a man or woman to such inconvenience, simply so that he or she could become a symbol useful to Jehovah. The answer depends on how much significance is attached to the surrender of a person's life to Jehovah to be used in any way He sees fit. Accepting the covenant meant that an Israelite surrendered his or her life to Jehovah in just that fashion. If the person really meant to make that kind of a surrender, he knew that the highest achievement of his life was to do the will of Jehovah, even if it meant giving up his wealth, his friends, or his life. From that point of view, it was an honor for a person to be used by Jehovah to warn others of the dangers of sin. Being used in that manner by Jehovah was as worthy a purpose for a person's life as any other calling that Jehovah could give him. If Jehovah chose to set him apart from other people as a priest.

Leviticus 13:2 "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or a scab or a bright spot, 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.

- **skin of.** Lev 7:8. Isaiah 3:9. rising. or, swelling. Lev 14:10, 19, 43, etc.
- **a scab.** Lev 14:56. Dt 28:27. Isaiah 3:17.
- **the plague of leprosy.** Lev 14:3, 35. Ex 4:6, 7. Nu 12:10, 12. Dt 24:8, 28:27. 2 S 3:29. 2Kings 5:1, 27. 2 Ch 26:19-21. Ps 38:5-7. Isaiah 1:5, 6. Mt 10:6-8. 11:4, 5. 1 Co 6:11.
- **he shall.** Dt 17:8, 9. 24:8. Mal 2:7. Mt 8:4. Mk 1:44. Lk 5:14. 17:14.
- **the priest.** Ps 19:12. Jn 2:25. Heb 4:13. Rev 1:14)
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

REGULATIONS REGARDING LEPROSY

KEY WORDS IN LEVITICUS 13

- **Mark** - 20x in 14v
- **Clean** (cleansing) - 19x in 14v
- **Unclean** - 22x in 17v
- **Wash** - 7x in 6v
- **Priest** - 56x in 40v
- **Leprosy** - 18x in 16v

Leon Hyatt - When a person was suspected of having **tsaraath**, he was to be taken to the priests, who were expected to be qualified to determine if the condition really was **tsaraath**. Either the high priest or an ordinary priest could make the determination. The reason for taking him to a priest instead of to a doctor was not the shortage of doctors in the wilderness, though we know nothing about whether any Israelites at that time were skilled in medicine or not. The Israelites had other surprising skills, like those required for building The Tabernacle (Ex. 35:30-36:3). Other people with special training may have been present as well, out of 600,00 men over 20 years of age who left Egypt (probably at total of about 2,000,000 when women and children are so considered). Neither was he to be taken to the priests because of a lack of respect for doctors, as some have suggested. The reason was that

medical questions were not involved. A religious ceremony was involved. It is best, therefore, not to refer to the examination of the priest as a diagnosis. The priest was not expected to diagnose the disease for treatment but to recognize the malady for ceremonial purposes. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

David Guzik - Leprosy is like sin in many ways. There are some good reasons why many ancient rabbis considered a leper as someone already dead. Leprosy is like sin in that:

- It begins as nothing.
- It is painless in its first stages.
- It grows slowly.
- It often remits for a while and then returns.
- It numbs the senses—one cannot feel in the afflicted area.
- It causes decay and deformity.
- It gives a person a repulsive appearance.

“These precautions were taken not merely for sanitary reasons, or to guard against contagion, for it is not certain that leprosy was contagious, but in order that the people might be taught through the parable of leprosy, what a fearful and loathsome thing sin is in the sight of God.” (Taylor)

iv. “Leprosy was indeed nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humours of life; a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away.” (Trench)

Criswell - The biblical term "**leprosy**" (sara`at, Heb.) denoted any scaly condition of human skin or even of inanimate objects. It might have included, **but was not identical to, modern leprosy or Hansen's disease**. It might also have included ringworm, scabies, forms of dermatitis, mildew, fungus, etc. This extended section on leprosy is important because in the Scriptures leprosy frequently symbolizes sin (cf. Ps. 38:3-8; Isa. 1:6). The repulsive features of sin are vividly illustrated in leprosy:

(1) Leprosy portrays the internal nature of sin (cf. James 1:14).

(2) Leprosy is a loathsome disease, showing the exceeding despicableness of sin (cf. Rom. 7:13).

(3) Leprosy isolates someone both from society and from the services of the sanctuary, just as sin separates a man from the presence of God (cf. Isa. 59:2; Rev. 21:27).

(4) Leprosy, like sin, is an illness that grows progressively worse (cf. James 1:15).

(5) Leprosy is considered to be a contagious disease (cf. Lev 13:45-46, note); sin is also contagious in that when the clean and the unclean come together, the unclean invariably contaminates the clean.

Andrew Bonar (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") Here are three indications of leprosy begun:—1. "A rising," or boil. 2. "A scab," or small tumor. 3. "A bright spot." There is inquiry to be made into the slightest indications of the disease; if not prominent, as a boil or tumor, yet as a "bright spot" it may be there. Observe the first appearances of evil in your soul. Detect the leprosy by what you see in your heart's desire, if not in your words, or in acts. It is said, that "the bright spot" which indicates a leprosy begun, is often so small that it is like pustules made by the pricking of a pin; and so may be your first slight, passing wish, or half-curious look upon forbidden fruit.

It is known that one infected with this disease may live long; one born with it may live fifty years: one who got it by contagion, twenty years (Jahn's Archæologie); and then in the end die suddenly, and leave the same awful disease to his children. It was thus with Adam; in him it began with no more than a small "bright spot"—yon fruit so fair, pleasant, to be desired. It then wrought in him all the 930 years of his lifetime—and he left it to us. A special sin often resembles the beginning of leprosy; as for example, Noah's drinking too freely of the wine that was the produce of the first grapes that grew on the new earth. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush - Heb. דהיה לנגע צרעת vehâyâh lenega tzârâath, and it become to a stroke of leprosy. That is, so as to assume the appearance and excite the suspicion of leprosy. The term 'leprosy,' is derived from the Gr. λεπρα, lepra, from λεπις, a scale, because in this disease the body was often covered with thin white scales, so as to give it the appearance of snow. Thus it is said of the hand of Moses, Ex. 4:6, that it was 'leprous as snow;' and of Miriam, Num. 12:10, that 'she became leprous, white as snow;' so also of Gehazi, 2 Kings, 5:27, that 'he went from his (Elisha's) presence, a leper as white as snow.' This peculiarity of the disease is thus accounted for in the 'Medica Sacra' of Mead. 'The seeds of leprous contagion are mixed with an acrid and salt humor, derived from the blood, which, as it naturally ought partly to have turned into nutriment, and partly to have perspired through the skin, it now lodges and corrodes the little scales of the cuticle, and these becoming dry and white, sometimes even as white as snow, are separated from the skin, and fall off like bran.' The Heb. term is צרעת tzârâah, from a root signifying to strike, or smite as with some

venomous or infectious matter. Hence, the true import of the original is a fretting soreness, or a piercing infectious scabbiness, denominated also in the scriptures, 'the plague' i. e. the 'stroke,' or the 'wound' of leprosy, as the Jews regarded it as a disease sent directly from God as a punishment of sin, Moses having prescribed no natural remedy for the cure of it. In the Chal. it is termed סגירות segiruth, shutting up, because it caused men to be secluded from society. This dreadful disease which prevails in Egypt and Syria, generally manifests itself at first, in the manner described in the text. Its commencement is scarcely perceptible; there appearing only a few reddish spots on the skin which are not attended with pain or any other symptom, but which cannot be removed. It increases imperceptibly, and continues for some years to be more and more manifest. The spots become larger, spreading over the skin, till at length they cover the whole body with a leprous scurf. The disease affects at the same time the marrow and the bones; so much so, that the farthest joints in the system gradually lose their powers, and the members fall together in such a manner, as to give the body a mutilated and dreadful appearance. In its final stages, the whole mass of the patient's flesh and blood seems to turn to corruption, and he may be said almost literally to fall to pieces. This disease, though very infrequent in Europe, indeed, almost extinct, made its appearance about the year 1730 in the western continent, and spread its ravages in the sugar islands of the West Indies, particularly Guadaloupe. M. Peyssonnel, who was sent to that island in order to acquaint himself with the nature of the disease, observes, after giving the symptoms as above mentioned, that 'as the disease advances, the upper part of the nose swells, the nostrils become enlarged, and the nose itself soft. Tumors appear on the jaws; the eyebrows swell; the ears become thick; the points of the fingers, as also the feet and toes, swell; the nails become scaly; the joints of the hands and feet separate and drop off. On the palms of the hands, and on the soles of the feet, appear deep dry ulcers, which increase rapidly and then disappear again. In short, in the last stage of the disease the patient becomes a hideous spectacle, and falls in pieces. These symptoms supervene by very slow and successive steps, requiring often many years before they all occur. The patient suffers no violent pain, but feels a sort of numbness in his hands and feet. During the whole period of the disorder, those afflicted with it experience no obstruction in what are called the Naturalia. They eat and drink as usual; and even when their fingers and toes mortify, the loss of the mortified parts is the only consequence that ensues; for the wound heals of itself without any medical treatment or application. When, however, the unfortunate wretches come to the last period of the disease, they are hideously disfigured, and objects of the greatest compassion.' ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

The word **leprosy** includes modern leprosy (Hansen's disease), but clearly referred to many other kinds of skin conditions. The symptoms described in Lev 13:2, 6, 10, 18, 30, 39 are not sufficient to diagnose precisely the various skin conditions referred to. Isolation and observation were required in all suspected cases. Though the leper is always described in Scripture as ceremonially unclean rather than sinful, the fact that leprosy was a "stroke" from God, something loathsome to which stigma and taboo were attached, strongly suggests that it may have served as an illustration of sin (cf. Isa. 1:6; Ps. 51:7).

Chronic ([03462](#))(yashen) means to sleep and here conveys the idea of that which remains a long time.

See Medical Article -

- [Biblical Leprosy- A Suggested Interpretation \(In depth - 25 page article\)](#)

Arnold Fruchtenbaum expounds on the significance of leprosy in the Jewish community - This is the account of the healing of a Jewish leper. How do we know he was Jewish? Because Jesus ordered him to go to the priests and observe the offerings that Moses commanded. Jesus had performed a number of miracles up until this time, but this is the FIRST instance of a Jew being healed of leprosy. We need to realize that this sign was very special and unique. From the time of the giving of the Mosaic Covenant there is no record of any Jew being healed of leprosy. The case of Miriam was before the completion of the giving of the Law. In the case of Naaman, he was Syrian, not Jewish. Leviticus 13-14 are devoted to dealing with leprosy, more than 100 verses. The priesthood was given detailed and specific instructions regarding leprosy. Only the priest had the authority to declare someone a leper. Once someone was declared a leper he would tear his garment. He would have to move out of his or her community and into a quarantined area for lepers. While this sounds cruel, notice how the Law protected society from the spread of disease before anyone understood the nature of microbes and germs. He would be excluded from Jewish society, and reviled. He would have to wear a face covering below the eyes. He would never be able to enter the Tabernacle or Temple compound. He had to announce himself "unclean, unclean," when encountering someone on the road. Anyone touching him would also become unclean. A person with leprosy was viewed as having been judged by God. (Life of Messiah)

Leprosy ([06883](#))(tsaraath) is a "feminine noun referring to a skin disease, leprosy. It refers to a skin disease on humans (Lev. 13:2, 3, 8; 2KI. 5:3) but also to similarly appearing mold, mildew, or fungus in garments, walls of houses, etc. (Lev. 13:47, 49, 51, 52, 59). Most translations still render this as leprosy, but many scholars hold that it refers to leucodermia, etc. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament)

Elmer Martens in TWOT on **tsaraath** - While usually rendered leper or leprous, the term "leper" is not correct medically, since **tsaraath** refers to a wider range of skin diseases (cf. "malignant skin disease," NEB). For convenience, however, the term "leper" can be retained. A person with leprosy, apart from the telltale malignant raw flesh and white hair, was to be otherwise identified by

torn clothes, announcement of "unclean" when in the streets and was to live isolated from the community. Four persons are named in the OT as becoming leprous. Not counting Moses (Ex 4:6; cf. also 2Kgs 7:3), there were Miriam (Nu 12:10), Uzziah (2Ki 15:5), Gehazi (2Ki 5:27) and Naaman, the Syrian (2Ki 5:1). God may inflict the disease of **tsaraath** as punishment for sins such as jealousy (cf. Miriam), anger, and lack of full compliance with God's commands (cf. Uzziah), and covetousness (cf. Gehazi). One must not conclude, however, that all sickness is a result of an individual's sin (cf. Job; Lk 13:1–5; Jn 9:1–7). **Tsaraath** was not necessarily incurable (cf. 2Ki 5:7). Leprosy by contrast, was likely incurable (Lev 13). In any event, healing of **tsaraath** could serve as a sign of divine power (Ex 4:6; 2Ki 5:8). The isolation of a leprous person was doubtless a sanitary measure in order to avoid further contagion. That a priest in Israel's theocracy was to diagnose the illness does not mean that today's clergy should become health officers. But the principle of God's concern for the health of bodies is not only self-evident but remains an enduring principle (cf. Jesus, Mt 8:2–3). Diseases with eruptions affecting the skin are sometimes mild, sometimes, as in smallpox, scarlet fever, etc., both dangerous and highly contagious. The only effective control in antiquity would have been isolation. Only the Hebrew laws had this very valuable provision. **Tsaraath** is found primarily (twenty times) in the two chapters that govern the diagnoses and the cleaning measures for one who had become unclean (tāmē, Lev 13, 14). In the nature of a contagion, **tsaraath** refers not only to eruptions on the skin but to mildew or mold in clothing (Lev 13) or in houses (Lev 14:34–53); therefore obviously the word is not specific for leprosy. The determination by the priest of an individual as unclean meant separation from the community, and ceremonial unfitness to enter the temple (cf. 2Chr 26:21). The cleansing measures to be performed upon recovery involved a ritual with two birds, which ritual according to KD was necessary for restoration to the community (Lev 14:2–9). An additional set of offerings followed, notably the guilt offering, perhaps because disease is ultimately to be linked with sin (Lev 14:10–20). **There is no Scriptural warrant for regarding leprosy as a type of sin, though the analogy can be helpful for illustrative purposes.** (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Holman Bible Dictionary - A generic term applied to a variety of skin disorders from psoriasis to true leprosy. Its symptoms ranged from white patches on the skin to running sores to the loss of digits on the fingers and toes. For the Hebrews it was a dreaded malady which rendered its victims ceremonially unclean—that is, unfit to worship God (Leviticus 13:3). Anyone who came in contact with a leper was also considered unclean. Therefore, lepers were isolated from the rest of the community so that the members of the community could maintain their status as worshipers. Other physical disorders or the flow of certain bodily fluids also rendered one unclean (see Leviticus 12:1-14:32; Leviticus 15:1-33). Even houses and garments could have "leprosy" and, thus, be unclean (Leviticus 14:33-57). Jesus did not consider this distinction between clean and unclean valid. A person's outward condition did not make one unclean; rather that which proceeds from the heart determines one's standing before God (Mark 7:1-23; compare Acts 10:9-16). Therefore, Jesus did not hesitate about touching lepers (Mark 1:40-45) and even commanded His disciples to cleanse lepers (Matthew 10:8). Jesus even made a leper the hero of one of His parables (Luke 16:19-31).

A person with leprosy, apart from the telltale malignant raw flesh and white hair, was to be otherwise identified by torn clothes, announcement of "unclean" when in the streets and was to live isolated from the community.

Tsaraath - 33v in the OT translated leprosy(30), leprous(4), mark(1).

Leviticus 13:2 "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or a scab or a bright spot, 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.

3 "The priest shall look at the mark on the skin of the body, and if the hair in the infection has turned white and the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is an infection of leprosy; when the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him unclean.

8 "The priest shall look, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is leprosy.

9 ¶ "When the infection of leprosy is on a man, then he shall be brought to the priest.

11 it is a chronic leprosy on the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not isolate him, for he is unclean.

12 "If the leprosy breaks out farther on the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of him who has the infection from his head even to his feet, as far as the priest can see,

13 then the priest shall look, and behold, if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce clean him who has the infection; it has all turned white and he is clean.

15 "The priest shall look at the raw flesh, and he shall pronounce him unclean; the raw flesh is unclean, it is leprosy.

20 and the priest shall look, and behold, if it appears to be lower than the skin, and the hair on it has turned

white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the infection of leprosy, it has broken out in the boil.

25 then the priest shall look at it. And if the hair in the bright spot has turned white and it appears to be deeper than the skin, it is leprosy; it has broken out in the burn. Therefore, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy.

27 and the priest shall look at him on the seventh day. If it spreads farther in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy.

30 then the priest shall look at the infection, and if it appears to be deeper than the skin and there is thin yellowish hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a scale, it is leprosy of the head or of the beard.

42 "But if on the bald head or the bald forehead, there occurs a reddish-white infection, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or on his bald forehead.

43 "Then the priest shall look at him; and if the swelling of the infection is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the body,

47 ¶ "When a garment has a mark of leprosy in it, whether it is a wool garment or a linen garment,

49 if the mark is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, or in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is a leprous mark and shall be shown to the priest.

51 "He shall then look at the mark on the seventh day; if the mark has spread in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in the leather, whatever the purpose for which the leather is used, the mark is a leprous malignancy, it is unclean.

52 "So he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or in linen, or any article of leather in which the mark occurs, for it is a leprous malignancy; it shall be burned in the fire.

59 ¶ This is the law for the mark of leprosy in a garment of wool or linen, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, for pronouncing it clean or unclean.

Leviticus 14:3 and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper,

7 "He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field.

32 "This is the law for him in whom there is an infection of leprosy, whose means are limited for his cleansing."

34 "When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you for a possession, and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession,

44 then the priest shall come in and make an inspection. If he sees that the mark has indeed spread in the house, it is a malignant mark in the house; it is unclean.

54 ¶ This is the law for any mark of leprosy-- even for a scale,

55 and for the leprous garment or house,

57 to teach when they are unclean and when they are clean. This is the law of leprosy.

Deuteronomy 24:8 ¶ "Be careful against an infection of leprosy, that you diligently observe and do according to all that the Levitical priests teach you; as I have commanded them, so you shall be careful to do.

2 Kings 5:3 She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."

6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy."

7 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 is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me."

27 "Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

2 Chronicles 26:19 But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense.

Resources on Leprosy

- [Leprosy - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Leprosy - Torrey's Topical Textbook](#)
- [Leprosy - Easton's Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Leprosy - Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Leprosy - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Leprosy - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Leprosy - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Leprosy - Morrish Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Leper, Leprosy - Smith's Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Leprosy - 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- [Leper; Leprosy - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Leprosy - Kitto's Popular Cyclopeda of Biblical Literature](#)
- [Leprosy - Cyclopeda of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- [Leprosy - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)
- **The following are links to "modern" leprosy**
- [WHO - Leprosy](#)
- [Leprosy - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
- [Leprosy- Medline Plus Medical Encyclopedia](#)
- [Hansen's Disease \(Leprosy\) - CDC](#)

Today in the Word (Moody Bible) - Leviticus 13:1-59 If an [unclean] person does not purify himself, he must be cut off from the community, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. - Numbers 19:20

TODAY IN THE WORD - If you think issues of uncleanness are limited to the ancient world, consider this cover story headline last year from an issue of U.S. News & World Report: "The Future of Water: Costly • Dirty • Scarce."

The article began with an account of dirty water in Atlanta, where in some neighborhoods it had been flowing brown from the tap. From time to time, "boil water" advisories had been issued to let residents know the water was not safe to drink. The situation may grow worse as 700,000 miles of aging pipes and mains throughout America decay and reach the end of their life spans. One federal official called clean water "the biggest environmental issue that we face in the 21st century."

Such health concerns help bring the world of Leviticus closer to home. For example, our readings for today and tomorrow deal with the problems of infectious skin diseases and mildew.

Some Bibles translate infectious skin disease as leprosy, or Hansen's disease, as it is called today. But the Hebrew word used here is a general term, and the symptoms don't seem to fit leprosy. The word for mildew is similarly a general term, and can also refer to mold or fungus. These two health or hygiene issues may be paired here because they were seen as parallel problems—one affecting living things, one affecting inanimate objects.

The Law prescribed several practical responses to these problems, including careful diagnosis, various forms of quarantine, and thorough washing. Why were the priests responsible for this? Perhaps because diseases and such, while not sin, were still consequences of the Fall and thus results of sin. Additionally, the priests were the community's guardians of purity, no matter what kind of purity was involved.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Today, we are going to leave this application portion of the devotional open for the Holy Spirit to direct you. We recommend that you pray for a specific application for yourself based on the principle of purity, modernized for today, and personalized for you. To begin, you might review "Today Along the Way" for the past two days, both of which dealt with the question of purity.

Leviticus 13:3 "The priest shall look at the mark on the skin of the body, and if the hair in the infection has turned white and the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is an infection of leprosy ; when the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him unclean.

- **shall look.** Lev 13:2. Lev 10:10. Ezek 44:23. Hag 2:11. Mal 2:7. Ac 20:28. Ro 3:19, 20. 7:7. Heb 13:7. Rev 2:23.
- **turned.** Lev 13:4, 10. Nu 6:5. Ezek 16:30. Ho 7:9.
- **white.** Ex 4:6. Nu 12:10, 12. 2Kings 5:27. 2 Ch 26:20.
- **deeper.** Ge 13:3. Je 17:9. Mt 15:19, 20. 2 Ti 2:16, 17. 3:13.
- **pronounce.** Ge 2:17. 2Kings 5:27. 2 Ch 26:20. Mt 16:19. 18:17, 18. Jn 20:23. Ro 3:19, 20. 1 Co 5:4-6. 6:11. 2 Th 3:14, 15. 1 Ti 1:20
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

God may inflict the disease of sara'at as punishment for sins such as jealousy (cf. Miriam), anger, and lack of full compliance with God's commands (cf. Uzziah), and covetousness (cf. Gehazi). One must not conclude, however, that all sickness is a result of an individual's sin (cf. Job; Lk 13:1-5; Jn 9:1-7).

Leon Hyatt - The priest was to look for two symptoms in determining if the spot was **sara'at**. The first was that the hair growing out of the spot had turned white or lighter in color. The second was that the spot extended beneath the skin and the priest could see that the flesh below the skin was affected. This second symptom shows that **tsara'at** was more than a skin disease. When it penetrated below the skin, it was tsara'at. Thus, the translation "skin disease" for the name of this disease is deceiving. If the two signs listed were present, the disease was tsara'at. The man was to be declared unclean. A declaration that he was unclean meant that he was to be a symbol of moral evil. It had nothing to do with his moral character or the treatment of his disease. He had been chosen as teaching symbol. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Pronounce unclean (verb) ([02930](#))(**tame**) means to become unclean, make unclean and this context to pronounce unclean. To become ceremonially unclean. To defile oneself (Hos 5:3, 6:10, Ezek 20:30). A wife defiles herself by adultery (Nu 5:13, Jer 2:23 = speaks of Israel as God's wife who had defiled herself by her spiritual adultery with idols!, Ezek 23:13 = refers to Judah and in context to the 10 Northern tribes - both had defiled themselves). To defile (violate) a girl (Ge 34:5), a woman (Ezek 18:6)

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **tame** with the verb **miaino**, means literally to dye with another color. As used in the NT figuratively **miaino** describes a mind and conscience that is morally contaminated, corrupted, tainted, tinged and polluted (Titus 1:15 note = "defiled and unbelieving"). In a ceremonial or cultic sense it means to defile or make unclean or to be unacceptable. To **defile** something is to sully (damage the purity or integrity of), mar (impair the appearance of; disfigure) or spoil it. Jude uses **miaino** in a physical and a moral sense of the one's flesh defiled by licentiousness and so to corrupt morally. (Jude 1:8-note)

We see a parallel instruction by Paul to the Corinthians saints (immersed in a licentious, pagan, idol worshipping culture)...

Do not be bound (present imperative with negative - stop doing this or do not let it begin) together with unbelievers; for (term of explanation) what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony (symphonia - concord, gives us English "symphony") has Christ with Belial (Name for Satan), or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols (Temples for idol worship were common in the ancient world)? For (term of explanation) we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, **COME OUT FROM** (**aoist imperative** - "Just do it!" "Don't delay!" "Don't procrastinate!" But do it as you renounce self-reliance and rely on the Holy Spirit!) **THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE** (**aoist imperative** - all these commands are contingent upon reliance on the enablement of the Spirit)," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** (**present imperative with a negative**) **WHAT IS UNCLEAN** (**akathartos** - **word study** = adjective used in Septuagint of Leviticus 11 to translate "unclean"); And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. (2 Co 6:14-18)

Based on the incredible promises Paul has just recorded he exhorts them...

THEREFORE, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2Cor 7:1-[note](#))

Andrew Bonar (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") GENERAL RULES AS TO ALL THE THREE SYMPTOMS - Leprosy begins far within—in the bones and marrow; and it is sometimes three or four years ere it come out to sight (Jahn's Archæol.) This typical view of sin we see realized in the case of the tender infant, who lies so innocent-like on the mother's breast. Or, if we take the case of special sins, we see it in David, who seemed of all men the least likely to be guilty of adultery and murder on the day when he sang Psalm 36 or Psalm 32. Or in Hazeal, when he honestly exclaimed, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" (2 Kings 8:13.)

If the "hair was turned white," and the plague evidently "deeper than the skin," then two things were evident, viz., that corruption was

begun in the blood, and that it was not superficial. There was a tendency to decay, and a tendency in this decay to advance inwards. Were it a mere external deformity, there might be little alarm felt; but not so when there are tokens that decay is begun near the seat of life. By this the Lord taught Israel that mere acts of sin would not be so alarming, were it not that they indicated evil in purpose and feeling—a sinful nature—deep-seated depravity within.

The priest was to examine and pronounce him unclean. Our Priest, Jesus, has eyes of fire to discern sin in his people. He detects its first risings. We ought to be of the same mind with our Priest, as anxious as He to detect sin. For it is not as Judge, but as Priest that he lays it bare to our view. These eyes of flame belong to our Priest (see Rev. 1:14) when he visits his golden candlesticks. And so we may willingly submit to have our filthiness brought to light, when One standeth by who is ready that very moment to cleanse it away. Oh! there is sweet comfort in the words, "The priest shall pronounce him unclean!" To be completely convicted of sin casts us completely into the hands of that High Priest, who does not drive us from the sanctuary, but fits us for its holy services. The deep convictions which his Holy Spirit works are meant to direct the eye of the unclean to the cleansing Priest. Our High Priest sends the Spirit to the sinner, and the Spirit sends the sinner to the High Priest. "So," says one, "when the Prodigal had spent all, and was famishing with hunger, the blessing came." ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush - Pronounce him unclean. Heb. תמא תמא timmē otho, shall make him unclean, or shall pollute him; a phraseology of not unfrequent occurrence, by which one is said to do that which he merely, in a ministerial capacity, pronounces, predicts, or declares to be done. Thus Ezek. 43:3, is said to 'destroy the city,' when he simply pronounced or prophecied its destruction. In like manner the apostles, as ministers of Christ, are said to have been empowered to bind and to loose, to remit men's sins, and to retain them, when all that is intended is, that they were simply to declare them to be so bound or loosed, remitted or retained, according to the tenor of God's word. It is to be observed, that there are three signs of a leprosy stated in the first verse; (1) a tumor or swelling; (2) a scab; (3) a bright spot. Of these indications, the sacred writer begins with the last, viz. the bright spot, in which, if the hair were turned white, and it was not a superficial whiteness merely, but the spot seemed to have eaten deeper, even into the very flesh, then it was beyond doubt that it was a true leprosy. But if upon inspection there merely appeared a white spot in the skin, which had not affected the color of the hair, then it could not be positively determined that the disease was leprosy. But it had some of the symptoms of leprosy, and might prove to be such; at any rate appearances were so far against the person that it was proper he should be separated from others long enough to afford time for an accurate judgment of the nature of the affection. The priest therefore was to shut him up for seven days, during which time it would be apt to develop its true character.

Shall shut up him that hath the plague. The words 'him that hath,' it will be noticed, are not found in the text, of which the true rendering is, 'Shall shut up the plague.' Gr. ἀφοριε την φην, shall separate the plague. This is a usage of the sacred writers, by which the abstract is put for the concrete, often met with, as 'captivity' for 'captives,' Ps. 68:19; 'the hoary head' for 'hoary headed person,' Lev. 19:32; 'rebellion,' for 'the rebellious,' Ezek. 44:6; 'a charge' for 'those having charge,' Ezek. 44:11; 'pride' for 'proud man' Jer. 50:31; 'circumcision' for 'those circumcised,' Rom. 2:26. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:4 "But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has not turned white , then the priest shall isolate him who has the infection for seven days.

- **shut up.** Lev 24:12. Nu 12:15. Dt 13:14. Ezek 44:10. 1 Co 4:5. 2 Th 3:14, 15. 1 Ti 5:24. Jude 1:22.
- **plague.** Ge 34:29
- [Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

Leon Hyatt - If the spot had turned white, that is, had lost its pigment and become light in color but the other two signs of **tsaraath** were not present, then the person was to be "shut up" for seven days to give the condition time to develop so that a sure determination could be made at the end of that time. Some have assumed that "shut up" means that the person was to be kept outside the camp during this period. The expression likely means that he was to be kept from his normal duties or in a room to himself. This conclusion is confirmed in verses 9- 11 below, where it is stated that a person with an advanced stage of **tsaraath** was not to be "shut up" whereas he definitely was to be put out of the camp (see comments on Lev. 13:9-11 and on Lev. 13:45- 46 below). Contagion was not in their minds. The person was simply kept for observation until a clear determination could be made as to whether he had **tsaraath** or not. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:4-8) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") THE BRIGHT SPOT - If no proof appeared of deep-seated corruption (which is meant by its being "in the skin" and "no whiteness in the hair") it was not a leprosy; but until it be ascertained that there is none such, the man must be kept apart from others seven days. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." The six days of his confinement might be expected to be a season wherein the disease would take a turn; God had appointed that period of probation.

God taught Israel that he is not in haste to condemn. "He is slow to anger." Time is afforded for full proof. He allows the sinner a long day, during which the man's leprosy is plainly manifested. He allows the fallen world its six days—its 6000 years—during which time

no judgment is pronounced on it. He waits for the seventh day, when the priest, who has examined already into the case, shall come and see the “shut up” leper, and declare his doom. “God hath concluded them all in unbelief,” said Paul, in Rom. 11:32. The original is, “hath shut them up together” (συνεκλεισε), and seems to be borrowed from this case of the leper. And so in Gal. 3:22, “The Scripture hath concluded”—shut up together—“all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” The whole world is allowed time to prove itself sinful—utterly sinful; and then the priest comes and deals with them, either for their cleansing, or for their eternal exclusion from the camp!

If in the leprous-looking spot, there was no spreading of the disease (ver. 5),—this was so far well. Corruption is stayed, or else never was begun. Such a man is to have the trial of six days, and on the seventh to be examined. And if, on the seventh day, there is proof that there is no spreading (ver. 6) of the plague, and that the hair is darker than it was, the man is set free. Now, here we have the case of souls pardoned—God’s company of pardoned ones, whom he treats for 6000 years in the way of probation. They show that the disease has been stayed—pardon has brought in a new principle of holiness. They are not to be excluded from the camp on the seventh day. The staying of the leprosy in the soul—the ceasing from sin—proves that there has been forgiveness of sin. If the lower waters of Jordan are ever getting shallower, then the upper waters must have been out off.

But if, after an apparent healing, the scab spread (ver. 7), then the man is a leper after all. Is this not typical of him who, after appearing to be one of the justified, returns to his old sins? True, believers have a scab remaining—they have remnants of corruptions; but if this scab—these remnants of corruptions—spread over the soul, is not the man an unforgiven man? This is not opposed to the doctrine of perseverance to the end, any more than are Christ’s words, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” (John 15:6.) It is speaking to us according to external appearance. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

Wiersbe - Since disease is an illustration of sin in the Bible, as you read these verses, you will learn a great deal about the “symptoms” of sin.

Sin is “deeper than the skin” (Lev 13:3–4, 25, 30–32, 34). “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9) The word translated “wicked” in this verse means “sick”; the NIV translates it “beyond cure.” Sin is not a surface problem that can be solved with simple remedies, like trying to cure cancer with hand lotion. Sin comes from within, from fallen human nature; unless the heart is changed, there can be no solving of the sin problem. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (Rom. 7:18, NKJV). Those who talk about the “innate goodness of man” know neither the Bible nor their own hearts.

In eighteenth-century England, if you were convicted for stealing, the judge could order the authorities to chop off your right hand. If you were convicted a second time, they could cut off the left hand. I recall reading about a pickpocket who lost both hands but managed to succeed in his career because he perfected picking pockets with his teeth! Even if the authorities had pulled all his teeth, it wouldn’t have solved the problem, because sin is deeper than the skin. Jesus said, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man” (Matt. 15:19–20).

In Jeremiah’s day, the false prophets were like physicians who lied to their patients and refused to give them bad news. “They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14). The medical profession today would discipline a doctor who did that, but the practice is perfectly acceptable for humanistic counselors, liberal preachers and professors, politicians, and newspaper columnists. People still believe the “progress myth” that people are good and are making themselves and the world better and better day by day. (Be Holy)

Leviticus 13:5 "The priest shall look at him on the seventh day, and if in his eyes the infection has not changed and the infection has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days.

- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leon Hyatt - At the end of seven days, he was to be examined by the priest again. If the disease diseased spot had not changed and had not spread, he was to be kept for observation for another seven days. The reason for not waiting a full two week period to begin with was that the disease might have spread and he could be declared unclean at the end of the first week. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Wiersbe - Sin spreads (Lev 13:5–8, 22–23, 27–28, 32, 34–36, 51, 53, 55, 57; 14:39, 44, 48). True leprosy (“Hansen’s disease”) affects the skin and the nerve endings; as it spreads, it produces nodules and ulcers. The tissues then contract and the limbs become deformed. What begins as one sore gradually spreads and turns the whole body into a mass of corruption and ugliness. How like sin! “Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:15,

NKJV).

Our first parents were thieves. Their son Cain was a liar and a murderer. From that small beginning, sin spread so as to corrupt and enslave the whole human race. By the time God sent the Flood, the earth was filled with wickedness, evil, violence, and corruption (Gen. 6:5, 11–13); and things haven't become any better since then. Scientific progress has made life more comfortable, but it hasn't made the world less corrupt. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores" (Isa. 1:5–6, NKJV).

For nearly fifty years, Alexander Whyte preached God's Word at Free St. George's Church in Edinburgh, Scotland, and gained a reputation for exposing the sins of the human heart and bringing them under the scrutiny of the Word of God. "Surgical preaching" people called it. At one time, he had an assistant named Hugh Black who preached at the evening service and was much more liberal and optimistic in his message. The congregation said they were blackened by Whyte on Sunday mornings and whitewashed by Black on Sunday evenings!

But when the church has a superficial view of sin, this attitude affects everything the church believes and does. If men and women are basically good and not sinners under the wrath of God, then why preach the Gospel? Why send out missionaries? For that matter, why did Jesus even die on the cross? If people are good, then what they need is counseling and consoling, not convicting; we should give them encouragement, not evangelism. (Be Holy)

George Bush -If the plague in his sight be at a stay. Heb. נגַע נגַע nēga âmad, the plague stand. If the priest, at the week's end, saw no alteration in the symptoms, as the case remained dubious, he was to prolong the period of separation another seven days, and if at the end of that time the appearance of the affected part continued the same, except that the white spot began to assume a somewhat darkish hue, then he was to pronounce him clean, i. e. free from the plague of leprosy. Still as the very cause that had led to his being suspected showed that there was some degree of impurity in his blood, a slight purification was prescribed, the moral effect of which would naturally be to teach that the very appearance of evil is an adequate ground of humiliation to any one that fears God. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:6 "The priest shall look at him again on the seventh day, and if the infection has faded and the mark 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.

- **look.** Isaiah 1:16-18. Jn 15:6. 2 Co 2:6, 7. Ga 6:1. James 5:19, 20.
- **pronounce.** Isaiah 11:3, 4. 42:3. Ro 14:1. 2 Co 2:6, 7. Ju 22, 23.
- **a scab.** Lev 13:2. Dt 32:5. James 3:2.
- **wash.** Lev 11:25, 28, 40. 14:8. Ge 35:2. 1 K 8:38, 45. Ps 19:12. Pr 20:9. Eccl 7:20. Isaiah 1:16-18. Jn 13:8-10. 15:3. 2Co 7:1. Gal 6:1. Heb 9:10. 10:22. James 5:19, 20. 1 John 1:7-9)
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt - At the end of the second seven day period, if the spot was not as prominent because some of the pigment had returned and if the spot had not spread, the disease was not tsaraath. The man was to be pronounced clean. This statement clearly shows that the spreading of the disease was a third sign that tsaraath was present, to be added to the two symptoms identified in verse 3. Since this man did not have tsaraath, he had never been unclean. However, since he had been under suspicion of being unclean, he was to wash his clothes to remove any suspicion. No one was to doubt his cleanness. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

The healing of leprosy in some cases is clearly a sign of God's supernatural power as in God's interaction with Moses...

Exodus 4:6-7 And the LORD furthermore said to him, "Now put your hand into your bosom." So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh.

Pronounce clean (02891)(**taher**) commonly refers to ritual purity or cleanness in the OT. In fact except for Job 37:21 and Mal 3:3, **taher** almost exclusively of ritual or moral purity. It means to be clean, be pure, innocent, righteous or to make clean or purify. Taher is the antonym of the Hebrew word "tame" (unclean) Those who contracted impurity, **tame (adjective)** ([02931](#)), were not permitted to participate in the rituals until they were purified (Lev 22:4-7). Disqualification might be due to afterbirth (Lev 12:7, 8) or other bodily discharges (Lev 15:13). Priests were to be medical examiners to determine when lepers were 'cleansed" (Lev 14:8ff.).

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** is translates **pronounce clean** with the verb **katharizo** which describes cleansing from ritual contamination or impurity (Acts 10:15). Katharizo was used of cleansing lepers from ceremonial uncleanness (Mt 8:2-3, et al)

Katharizo is derived from **katharos** which means pure, clean, without stain or spot. This Greek word gives us our English words like **catharsis** which describes emotional or physical purging. Cathartic is a substance used to induce a purging. Cathar was a member of a medieval sect which sought the purging of evil from its members. So the idea of katharizo is to make clean by taking away an undesirable part and thus to cleanse from filth or impurity.

Taher is translated in the NAS as -- become clean(2), becomes clean(2), becomes cleansed(1), clean(25), cleanse(15), cleansed(19), cleansing(1), cleared(1), pronounce him clean(6), pronounce the clean(1), pronounce clean(2), pronounces him clean(1), pronouncing it clean(1), pure(2), purge(1), purged(2), purified(5), purifier(1), purify(5), purifying(1), remain(1), unclean*(1).

Taher is used in 79v and is especially concentrated in Leviticus -

Ge 35:2; Lev 11:32; 12:7f; 13:6, 13, 17, 23, 28, 34, 37, 58f; 14:4, 7ff, 11, 14, 17ff, 25, 28f, 31, 48, 53; 15:13, 28; 16:19, 30; 17:15; 22:4, 7; Num 8:6f, 15, 21; 19:12, 19; 31:23f; Josh 22:17; 2Kgs 5:10, 12ff; 2Chr 29:15f, 18; 30:18; 34:3, 5, 8; Ezra 6:20; Neh 12:30; 13:9, 22, 30; Job 4:17; 37:21; Ps 51:2, 7; Prov 20:9; Isa 66:17; Jer 13:27; 33:8; Ezek 22:24; 24:13; 36:25, 33; 37:23; 39:12, 14, 16; 43:26; Mal 3:3

Leviticus 13:7 "But if the scab spreads farther on the skin after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall appear again to the priest.

- **the scab.** Lev 13:27, 35, 36. Lev 14:4, 10, 21, 22. Ps 38:3. Isa 1:5, 6. Lk 5:14. 17:14. Ro 6:12-14. 2 Ti 2:16, 17)
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:7-8 - If, after being pronounced clean, the disease should spread in the skin, the man was to be taken back to the priest. If the priest saw that it had indeed spread, he was to know that the malady was **tsaraath**. The man was to be pronounced unclean. The first decision of the priest did not finally settle the matter if the disease further developed and did indeed become **tsaraath**. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

George Bush -If the scab spread much. The real leprosy might after all lurk in the system, notwithstanding the rigid examination and the probationary seclusion to which the person had been subjected. If the scab spread subsequently in the skin, the symptom was decisive, and the priest was to give his verdict of 'unclean' accordingly; and Maimonides tells us, that if any one were so profane as to neglect his case under these circumstances, and to forbear going to the priest for his judgment, the penalty was, to have his leprosy cleave to him through life. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:8 "The priest shall look, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is leprosy

- **pronounce him.** See on Lev 13:3. Mt 15:7, 8. Ac 8:21. Phil 3:18, 19. 2Pe 2:19
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:9 "When the infection of leprosy is on a man, then he shall be brought to the priest.

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:9-11 - A more advanced case of tsaraath is discussed here. Three signs of advanced **tsaraath** are given: a white swollen spot in the skin, white hair in the swollen spot, and an open, raw sore in the swollen spot. Those symptoms are unpleasant but far from the awfulness that has so often been described for the disease in advanced stages. If those symptoms were present, the person definitely had **tsaraath**. Tsaraath in an advanced stage could be recognized immediately. No waiting period for observation was needed. The statement, "He must not shut him up, because he [is] unclean" does not mean that he was not to be isolated from other people, because verses 45-46 below say that a person with tsaraath was to live outside the camp and was to call out "Unclean, unclean" when other people drew near (see comments on those verse below). They mean it was not necessary for him to be confined for observation because he obviously had tsaraath. The statement that he was not to be "shut up," shows that

“shutting up” did not mean putting him outside the camp. Putting him outside the camp was exactly what was required. The statement means that, without the necessity of waiting, the person in whom the disease was spreading was to be declared immediately to be unclean. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

NET Note - Heb “When there is an infection of disease in a man.” The term for “a man; a human being” (אָדָם, 'adam; see the note on Lev 1:2 and cf. Lev 13:2 above) refers to any person among “mankind,” male or female. For the rendering “diseased infection” see the note on v. 2 above.

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:9-11) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus “Very precious.”) **THE RISING** - When there is a rising, or tumor, which has the skin white, and the hair in it white, and quick raw flesh also in the swelling, then there is no doubt of the disease being there. “It is a leprosy grown old (בוֹשָׁן) in the skin.” Not only the flower has died, but also the very soil in which it grew. (Procopius apud Patrick.) These symptoms put the case beyond doubt. Treat the man, then, as unclean.

Here we see that the discovery of inward corruption is the strongest reason that can occur for at once pronouncing the man unclean. It is stronger far than any abundance of external marks. And so in God's view, the existence of corruption in the heart is far worse than all its effects on the life. The fact that the sinner's soul is long ago corrupt—that it is infected by a leprosy that is grown old—that it inherits depravity and enmity to God,—this aggravates the sinner's awful state. On bringing out this to light, the judge at once may say, “What need we any further witnesses?” The white rising and the white hair, and the quick raw flesh are traced back to a deep-seated disease within that manifests itself in these forms; so, the foolish talk, the giddy conduct, and the worldly heart are traced back to their source, viz., a nature totally depraved. The proof is complete. The sinner is utterly lost. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” Let him take his true position—out of the camp—among the unclean! ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

Leviticus 13:10 "The priest shall then look, and if there is a white swelling in the skin, and it has turned the hair white , and there is quick raw flesh in the swelling,

- **white.** Lev 13:3.
- **shall see him.** Lev 13:3, 4. Nu 12:10-12. 2Kings 5:27. 2 Ch 26:19, 20.
- **quick raw flesh.** Heb. the quickening of living flesh. Lev 13:14, 15, 24. Pr 12:1. Am 5:10. Jn 3:19, 20. 7:7. Ti 3:11
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries
- [Notes by Andrew Bonar](#)

Five named individuals in OT were leprosy:

1. Moses (Ex 4:6; cf. 2Ki 7:3),
2. Miriam (Nu 12:10) = punishment for sin
3. Uzziah (2Ki 15:5) = punishment for sin
4. Gehazi (2Ki 5:27) = punishment for sin
5. Naaman, the Syrian (2Ki 5:1). - See "cure" for leprosy.

Moses' sister Miriam was struck with **leprosy** by God because of her sin (Nu 12:1-9)

Num 12:10 But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was **leprous**, as white as snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was leprous. 11 Then Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account this **sin** to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12 “Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mothers womb!”

King Uzziah was struck with **leprosy** because he became prideful which led to his downfall and prompted him to burn incense on the altar of incense...

2Chr 26:16 But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

17 Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men.

18 And they opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful, and will have no honor from the LORD God."

19 But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the

priests, the **leprosy** broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense.

20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was **leprous** on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because **the LORD had smitten him**.

21 And King Uzziah was a **leper** to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.

Comment: Clearly Uzziah was struck with leprosy for his sin of usurping the role of the priest. This recalls Nadab and Abihu's offering of strange fire at the altar of incense, a sin which resulted in their death!

Jesus exercised authority over leprosy...

Luke 5:12 And it came about that while He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." 13 And He (Jesus) stretched out His hand, and touched (Greek = touch with implication of relatively firm contact) him, saying, "I am willing; **be cleansed katharizo** in the **aoist imperative** = command Greek)." And **immediately** the leprosy left him. 14 And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and **show (aoist imperative)** yourself to the priest, and **make an offering** for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded (Lev 13:2, 14:4, 10, 21-22), for a testimony to them." (**Read detailed commentary on these verses**)

Comment: Jesus' command reminds one of His two quick commands to the raging sea to **Hush, Be still!**" (Mk 4:39)

Jesus again demonstrated His authority and power to heal from leprosy...(Read detailed commentary on these verses)

Luke 17:11 And it came about while He was on the way to Jerusalem, that He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as He entered a certain village, **ten leprous men** who stood at a distance met Him;

13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14 And when He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed.

15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,

16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine-- where are they?"

18 "Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"

19 And He said to him, "Rise, and go your way; your faith has made you well."

George Bush -If the rising be white in the skin, etc. These symptoms were peculiar to the first form of leprosy mentioned, v. 2, viz. that of the tumor or swelling. If in addition to the whiteness on the skin, and the hair turning white, there was also the presence of quick raw flesh in the swelling, it was an indubitable sign of an old or inveterate leprosy, which had been long seated in the system, and the priest was at once to pronounce him unclean, without the ceremony of a previous shutting up, which was ordered in doubtful cases only. Here the case was too plain to admit of doubt. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible - Lev. 13:10 The priest shall look. -- Even until to-day leprosy is so dire a disease that it completely baffles the skill of the physician. Much may be done to alleviate the distress which it causes, but there is no cure for it. In countries where sanitary laws obtain, it is almost eliminated, but that is done by removing causes, not by curing those suffering from it. In Eastern countries, and under the conditions obtaining in many of them, it is still prevalent. In these laws it is dealt with at great length comparatively, and that undoubtedly because of its dire nature. We cannot wonder that it became, and still continues to be, the very symbol of sin. It is a disease in the blood itself, which is the life; its manifestations are most terrible and loathsome; and—as we have said—it is incurable. In these two chapters we have the laws for dealing with it; and in the brief words, "The priest shall look," we have revealed the utmost that could be done for those suffering from it. The whole fact may thus be stated, that the only thing that the priest could do, was to discover whether or no the disease was actual leprosy. If it were not, then there might be a period of separation, and presently a restoration to the community. If it were leprosy, nothing could be done other than to separate the sufferer completely from others. In the light of these considerations, we

remember that there came in the fulness of time One Who could not only look at, but touch the leper—One Who could cure. That is also the story of His dealing with sin.

Leviticus 13:11 it is a chronic leprosy on the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not isolate him, for he is unclean.

- **old leprosy.** Mt 8:2-4. Lk 5:14
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

NET Note on chronic - The term rendered here “**chronic**” is a Niphal participle meaning “grown old” (HALOT 448 s.v. II ׀ַשׁׁ nif.2). The idea is that this is an old enduring skin disease that keeps on developing or recurring.

NET Note on the skin of his body - Heb “in the skin of his flesh” as opposed to the head or the beard (Lev 13:29; cf. Lev 13:2 above).

Pronounce unclean (verb) ([02930](#))(**tame**) means to become unclean, make unclean and this context to pronounce unclean.

Unclean (adjective) ([02931](#))(**tame**) describes that which is ceremonially or ritually impure or defiled.

The Lxx translates this adjective with the Greek adjective **akathartos**, which in the present context speaks of that which would make a man unfit from being in God's presence. Akathartos and the noun akatharsia, refer to the whole realm of uncleanness, ranging from menstruation to moral pollution through wrongdoing

Vine adds that "uncleanness is a state of being. The leper was compelled to announce his uncleanness wherever he went (Lev 13:45); however, even here there is a religious overtone, in that his uncleanness was ritual. Hence, it is more appropriate to recognize that the second usage is most basic. **Tame** in the religio-cultic sense is a technical term denoting a state of being ceremonially unfit."

NET Note on pronounce him unclean - Instead of just the normal quarantine isolation, this condition calls for the more drastic and enduring response stated in Lev 13:45–46. Raw flesh, of course, sometimes oozes blood to one degree or another, and blood flows are by nature impure (see, e.g., Lev 12 and 15; cf. J. E. Hartley, Leviticus [WBC], 191).

Leviticus 13:12 "If the leprosy breaks out farther on the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of him who has the infection from his head even to his feet, as far as the priest can see,

- **cover all.** 1 K 8:33. Job 40:4. 42:6. Isaiah 64:6. Jn 16:8, 9. Ro 7:14. 1 Ti 1:15. 1 J 1:8-10
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:12-13 - If the person brought to the priest had a condition in which his skin had turned white all over his body, he did not have **tsaraath**. That condition was a symptom of a different disease. It is said that a disease exists in the Middle East that causes a white scaliness of the skin all over, which soon peels off and leaves fresh, whole skin. That disease is not **tsaraath**. Obviously tsaraath did not affect the skin all over the whole body. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:12-17) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") Some think a reference is made to this verse (ver. 12) in Isaiah 1:5, “from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it.” If there be, the reference is to the entireness of the outward, visible spread of corruption in the land, in Isaiah’s days.

At first sight it seems strange, to ordain that the man should be reckoned clean, if the leprosy were out upon him, and covered him wholly. The reason, however, may be, first, naturally; secondly, moral. If natural; then it is either because the leprosy is not so infectious when it has thus come all out on the body, the hard dry scurf not being likely to spread infection, whereas the ichor of raw flesh would have this effect; or, because it really is not a proper leprosy if it so come out—it is a salt humor cast out by the strength of the man’s constitution, and is not deep-seated. It is rather a relief to the constitution; even as when measles or small-pox come out to the surface of the body, recovery is hopeful. If it was for a moral reason; then it seems meant to teach that the Lord has a deep abhorrence of a corrupt nature—deeper far than merely of corrupt actions. We are ever ready to take home the guilt of evil deeds, but to palliate the evil of a depraved heart. But the Lord reverses the case. His severest judgment is reserved for inward depravity. He hates Sodom’s lewdness and open vice; but he hates yet more Bethsaida’s heart of unbelief wherein, as on a couch,

all Sodom's vice could softly repose within its inner chamber. And yet more. Is it not when a soul is fully sensible of entire corruption, as Isa. 1:5, that salvation is nearest? A complete Saviour for a complete sinner?

If there appeared any "raw flesh," then the man is unclean. For this indicates inward disease—not on the surface only. It is working into the flesh.

But if the "raw flesh" turn and be "changed into white," then it is plain that the disease is not gone inwards; it is playing on the skin only. Let him stand, therefore, as clean.

Perhaps, the case of a pardoned man may be referred to again in this type. His iniquity comes all out to view, when it is thrown into the fountain opened; and the inner source of it is checked. The seat of corruption has been removed. But if, after the appearance of pardon, the man turn aside to folly (if "raw flesh" appear), he is to be counted unclean. If, however, this turning aside to folly be checked, if this backsliding be healed, then it is like the "raw flesh" turning "into white"—it evidences that his nature is sound—it has not returned to its state of thorough depravity. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush - If a leprosy break out abroad, &c. The precept in this case appears singular. Why should the partial leper be pronounced unclean, while the person totally covered with the disease was to be pronounced clean? The true answer perhaps is, that it was owing to a different species or a different stage of the disease; the partial being infectious, the total not. The fact moreover that the disease was driven out to the surface argued a sound and healthy state of the system in general. Yet it is but proper to remark, that Patrick takes entirely a different view of the drift of this passage. He supposes that which is here called 'leprosy' was not truly such, but another disease having so strong a resemblance to the leprosy, as to prompt the writer to give it the same denomination. But the difference lay in the fact, that in this quasi-leprosy the skin was entirely covered by one continuous scurf, whereas in the true leprosy, the spots or scabs did not run together in the manner here intimated, but gave a sort of scaly appearance to the body. This universal eruption from head to foot, however loathsome to the eye, might still be harmless in itself, and perhaps a relief to the morbid internal condition of the body, as in the case of measles and small-pox. The man, therefore, under these circumstances was to be pronounced clean.

Shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague. Heb. טָהַר אֶת הַנֶּגַע *tâhar eth hannâga*, shall clean the plague; i. e. shall pronounce clean him that hath the plague, as rightly rendered in the English translation. See above the Note on v. 3. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:13 then the priest shall look, and behold, if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce clean him who has the infection; it has all turned white and he is clean.

- **covered all.** 2 Sa 12:13. Job 33:27, 28. 40:4. 42:6. Isaiah 6:5. Lk 5:8, 12. 15:21. 18:13. 23:41. Ro 7:18.
- **turned white.** Nu 12:10.
- **plague.** Ge 34:29.
- **he is clean.** Isaiah 64:6. Jn 9:41
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

C H Spurgeon - Leviticus 13:13 (Morning and Evening) "Behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague." - Leviticus 13:13 --- Strange enough this regulation appears, yet there was wisdom in it, for the throwing out of the disease proved that the constitution was sound. This evening it may be well for us to see the typical teaching of so singular a rule. We, too, are lepers, and may read the law of the leper as applicable to ourselves. When a man sees himself to be altogether lost and ruined, covered all over with the defilement of sin, and in no part free from pollution; when he disclaims all righteousness of his own, and pleads guilty before the Lord, then he is clean through the blood of Jesus, and the grace of God. Hidden, unfelt, unconfessed iniquity is the true leprosy; but when sin is seen and felt, it has received its deathblow, and the Lord looks with eyes of mercy upon the soul afflicted with it. Nothing is more deadly than self-righteousness, or more hopeful than contrition. We must confess that we are "nothing else but sin," for no confession short of this will be the whole truth; and if the Holy Spirit be at work with us, convincing us of sin, there will be no difficulty about making such an acknowledgment—it will spring spontaneously from our lips. What comfort does the text afford to truly awakened sinners: the very circumstance which so grievously discouraged them is here turned into a sign and symptom of a hopeful state! Stripping comes before clothing; digging out the foundation is the first thing in building—and a thorough sense of sin is one of the earliest works of grace in the heart. O thou poor leprous sinner, utterly destitute of a sound spot, take heart from the text, and come as thou art to Jesus—

"For let our debts be what they may, however great or small,
As soon as we have nought to pay, our Lord forgives us all.
'Tis perfect poverty alone that sets the soul at large:

C H Spurgeon - Leviticus 13:13a (Morning and Evening) - "Behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague." - Leviticus 13:13 -- Strange enough this regulation appears, yet there was wisdom in it, for the throwing out of the disease proved that the constitution was sound. This morning it may be well for us to see the typical teaching of so singular a rule. We, too, are lepers, and may read the law of the leper as applicable to ourselves. When a man sees himself to be altogether lost and ruined, covered all over with the defilement of sin, and no part free from pollution; when he disclaims all righteousness of his own, and pleads guilty before the Lord, then is he clean through the blood of Jesus, and the grace of God. Hidden, unfelt, unconfessed iniquity is the true leprosy, but when sin is seen and felt it has received its death blow, and the Lord looks with eyes of mercy upon the soul afflicted with it. Nothing is more deadly than self-righteousness, or more hopeful than contrition. We must confess that we are "nothing else but sin," for no confession short of this will be the whole truth, and if the Holy Spirit be at work with us, convincing us of sin, there will be no difficulty about making such an acknowledgment-it will spring spontaneously from our lips. What comfort does the text afford to those under a deep sense of sin! Sin mourned and confessed, however black and foul, shall never shut a man out from the Lord Jesus. Whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out. Though dishonest as the thief, though unchaste as the woman who was a sinner, though fierce as Saul of Tarsus, though cruel as Manasseh, though rebellious as the prodigal, the great heart of love will look upon the man who feels himself to have no soundness in him, and will pronounce him clean, when he trusts in Jesus crucified. Come to him, then, poor heavy-laden sinner,

Come needy, come guilty, come loathsome and bare;
You can't come too filthy-come just as you are.

F B Meyer (Our Daily Homily) Leviticus 13:13 Behold if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean.

At first sight this seems a very extraordinary provision. When the leprosy was beginning to show itself, and whilst the marks were hardly distinguishable, the poor patient was treated as unclean; but, when it was fully developed, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, the priest pronounced the leper clean. As long as we palliate and excuse our sins, and dream that there is much in us which is noble and lovely, we are not fit subjects for God's saving grace. But when we take our place as helpless and undone, without one plea or one redeeming trait, we are in the position in which the free grace of God can have its blessed way with us. We must come to an end of ourselves, and fall prostrate, in the very helplessness of our despair, in the very dust at our Saviors feet; we must confess that from the crown of our head to the sole of our foot we are full of need and sin — then we are nearest Christ, and in a fit condition to be richly blest, and made the channel of blessing to others. Would you rise? then you must humble yourself before God. God's thrones are approached, not by steps up to them, but by steps down to them. It is the publican who beats his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me the sinner," that goes down justified to his house. It is when sin abounds, that grace much more abounds. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15).

Leviticus 13:14 But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean.

- **when.** Ge 2:17.
- **raw flesh.** Lev 13:10
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Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:14-15 - If, however, one or more open, raw sores were on the person's body in addition to the whiteness that covered his whole body, it was a sign that the disease was tsaraath. A priest was to declare the person so affected to be unclean ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

George Bush on Lev 13:14-17 - But when raw flesh appeareth in him, &c. That is, sound flesh, Gr. $\chi\rho\omega\varsigma\ \zeta\omega\nu$, living flesh. If patches of sound or natural flesh appeared intermingled with the white scurf or scales, the presumption was, that the genuine leprosy was upon him, which was to be thus distinguished from that cutaneous eruption mentioned above. Still even this sign might be fallacious, as the sound parts of the skin, or the 'raw flesh,' might ere long become white like the rest, and then the proof would be decisive that it was not leprosy, and the priest was to pronounce him clean ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:15 "The priest shall look at the raw flesh, and he shall pronounce him unclean; the raw flesh is unclean, it is leprosy .

- **raw flesh.** Nu 22:34
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:16 "Or if the raw flesh turns again and is changed to white , then he shall come to the priest,

- Lev 13:16.
- **turn again.** Ro 7:14-24. Gal 1:14-16. Phil 3:6-8. 1 Ti 1:13-15
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:16-17 - On the other hand, if the raw sore should heal over and become white like the rest of the affected person's body, it was a sign that the sore was caused by something other than **tsaraath**. The determination that he had tsaraath was mistaken. He was to be declared clean. Evidently this man did not have to go through the cleansing process described in chapter 14. He had never really had leprosy or been unclean, though the priest had thought he was. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:17 and the priest shall look at him, and behold, if the infection has turned to white , then the priest shall pronounce clean him who has the infection; he is clean.

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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:18 "When the body has a boil on its skin and it is healed,

- **a boil.** Ex 9:9. 15:26. 2Kings 20:7. 2 Ch 16:12. Job 2:7. Ps 38:3-7. Isaiah 38:21
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Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:18-20 - Evidently the scar left by a boil was a common place for tsaraath to attack. A careful watch was to be kept on a scar left by a boil or a carbuncle. A suspicious sign of **tsaraath** in the scar of a boil was a swelling of pinkish color. Should that condition appear, the person was to be taken to a priest. If the priest should find that the spot appeared to penetrate below the skin and the hair growing in the spot had turned white, he was to declare the person unclean. Such a condition was an indication of tsaraath. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:18-23) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") **THE BOIL** Old ulcers were to be carefully watched, lest they became means of the infection more easily insinuating itself into the person. If the healed ulcer have any mark like a white rising or bright spot, wherein the hair is turned white, then corruption is at work below the skin. As in former cases, however, if there was no sign apparent of its spreading, there must be seven days, probation. The spreading would show that the blood was much vitiated.

Israel were thus taught to watch against new sins, after old ones were healed; or, more especially, the danger of coming near infection after being once delivered from the vicious atmosphere. Pardoned men must be jealous men. "Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away."

It taught, also, that marks, or remnants of former sins, may remain, though the leprosy be not there. Remains of an old peevish temper, of a proud, haughty demeanor, of a hasty judgment, of a taste for some earthly things, may exist in a pardoned man. They are remnants—scars—of an old wound. But if these indicate a tendency to spread, or show that they are "deeper than the skin," then the leprosy is there—the man, in spite of other appearances, is really an unforgiven, unsaved man. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush on Lev 13:18-23 - The flesh also in which, even in the skin thereof, was a boil, &c. Chal. 'The man also in whose skin,' &c. In this and the following verses, the writer treats of those cases of leprosy that rose from old ulcers that had once been healed. Such cicatrized sores might break out afresh and prove a real leprosy. A person with any sore or disposition to contagion, was more likely to catch the infection from contact with the diseased person, than he was whose skin was whole and sound, and his habits good. The requisite rules of discrimination in such cases, are here given. In the place of the boil. In the place where the boil formerly broke out, but seemed afterwards to be healed. The original word for 'boil' is שחין she'hin, the explanation of which see in the Note on Ex. 9:9. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:19 and in the place of the boil there is a white swelling or a reddish-white, bright spot, then it shall be shown to the priest

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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:20 and the priest shall look, and behold, if it appears to be lower than the skin, and the hair on it has turned white , then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the infection of leprosy , it has broken out in the boil.

- **in sight.** See on Lev 13:3. Mt 12:45. Jn 5:14. 2Pe 2:20
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:21 "But if the priest looks at it, and behold, there are no white hairs in it and it is not lower than the skin and is faded, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days;

- **shut him.** 1Co 5:5
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Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:21-23 -If the priest examined the swollen spot that appeared in the scar of a boil and found that it did not penetrate deeper than the skin and that the hair in it was not white, the priest was to shut him up for seven days for observation. If, at the end of seven days, the swelling had spread, it was a sign that the malady was tsaraath; and the priest was to declare him unclean. However, if spot had not spread, it was a sign that the swelling was not tsaraath but an inflammation of the scar. The man was to be pronounced clean. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:22 and if it spreads farther on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection.

- **an infection.** i.e. The plague of the leprosy.
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:23 "But if the bright spot remains in its place and does not spread, it is only the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

- **stay.** Ge 38:26. 2Sa 12:13. 2Chr 19:2, 3. Job 34:31, 32. 40:4, 5. Pr 28:13. Mt 26:75. 2 Co 2:7. Gal 6:1. 1 Peter 4:2, 3
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:24 "Or if the body sustains in its skin a burn by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white,

- **hot burning.** Heb. a burning of fire. Isaiah 3:24. Heb 12:5, 11. 1Peter 4:12.
- This is supposed to state the case of such as had been hurt by fire; which would leave a scar, in which the leprosy might appear, and which was to be distinguished by the rules here given
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Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:24-28 -A second condition in which it was common for tsaraath to occur was in the scar of a burn. A sign that tsaraath might have been starting in the scar was that the scar had a shiny appearance and was pinkish or white in color. If those two conditions existed, the person was to be taken to the priest, and the priest was to look for two additional signs. If the hair in the spot has turned white and the spot appeared to be deeper than the skin, the person had tsaraath. The priest was to declare the person unclean. However, if the hair in the spot was not white and it did not penetrate deeper than the skin but instead it had gained more of its natural color, then the person's condition was questionable. The priest was to shut the person up for seven days for observation. After seven days, the priest was to examine the person again. Then if he should find that the swelling had spread, it was a sign of tsaraath. The man was unclean. But, if the swelling had stayed the same and not spread and if its white color was less obvious, the malady was not tsaraath. Instead, the problem was an inflammation of the burn scar. The person was clean. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:24-28) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") **THE HOT BURNING -**

For ver. 24 see note on ver. 19. The meaning of the expression "hot burning" is rather obscure. Some think it was an erysipelas; others that it was a hurt caused by the falling of some hot iron on the spot. The rules to be observed in examining it are the same as above. God is still the same holy, jealous God, but also the same long-suffering God—waiting calmly till the sin be undoubted, not swift to take advantage of mere symptoms. O! how ungodlike it is "to make a man an offender for a word!"

We seem, also, to be taught another lesson here, viz., that in all keen suffering there is a tendency to sin. In all diseases that made the flesh raw, there was a tendency to leprosy. A time of suffering, of whatever sort be the suffering, should be a time of vigilance on our part, lest it end in sin. Many things provoke, many things gall and irritate, many things tend to make us selfish, and so to lead us to forget God.

Again: the staying of the symptoms was to be taken favorably. In this we see our God again—ready to forgive. If Ahab put on sackcloth, then the Lord turns away from immediate vengeance. If Nineveh repent, and "the bright spot is somewhat dark," then the Lord pronounces them clean. If Ephesus lose her "first love," there is a "bright spot;" but as yet there is no "white hair on the bright spot," and possibly it may not be "lower than the skin;" therefore, Ephesus is shut up seven days, with the warning, "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. 2:5.) ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush on Lev 13:24-28 - Distinction of Leprosy, when occasioned by a former Burning - vv 24–28. In the skin whereof there is a hot burning. Heb. מכות אש mikvath ēsh; burning of fire. The case alluded to is probably one where a burning coal, or hot iron, or something of that nature had fallen upon the flesh and caused an inflammation that might easily give rise to leprosy if a predisposition to it already existed. Horsley, however, supposes the 'hot burning' was an erysipelas or St. Anthony's fire. What ever it were, the case was to be determined by the rules here given. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:25 then the priest shall look at it. And if the hair in the bright spot has turned white and it appears to be deeper than the skin, it is leprosy ; it has broken out in the burn. Therefore, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy .

- **turned white.** Lev 13:4, 18-20
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:26 "But if the priest looks at it, and indeed, there is no white hair in the bright spot and it is no deeper than the

skin, but is dim, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days;

- **then the priest.** Lev 13:4, 5, 23
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:27 and the priest shall look at him on the seventh day. If it spreads farther in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of leprosy .

- **it is the plague of leprosy.** See on Lev 13:2
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:28 "But if the bright spot remains in its place and has not spread in the skin, but is dim, it is the swelling from the burn; and the priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is only the scar of the burn.

- **And if.** Ps 38:3-7, 11. Je 3:12-14. 8:4-6. Rev 2:5
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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:29 "Now if a man or woman has an infection on the head or on the beard,

- **upon the head or.** 1 K 8:38. 12:28. 2 Ch 6:29. Ps 53:4. Isaiah 1:5. 5:20. 9:15. Mi 3:11. Mt 6:23. 13:14, 15. Jn 16:2, 3. Ac 22:3, 4. 26:9, 10. 2 Co 4:3, 4. 11:3. Col 2:18. 2Th 2:11, 12.
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Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:29-37 - Tsaraath might break out on the skin under the hair on a man's or a woman's head or under a man's beard. Jehovah used a different word to describe the disease in this verse, which is translated above as "itch." The use of the word "itch" does not indicate that a different disease is under question here. It means that itching of the swollen spot was another possible symptom for the illness. The word comes from a root that means "to pull down" or "to break down." It probably means an itch that causes the person to scratch and tear the skin away. Though the affected spot might itch, itching was not a means of determining if the spot was tsaraath. The same signs mentioned above were to be looked for in determining whether or not the malady was really tsaraath. If the spot penetrated deeper than the skin and the hair in it had lightened in color, the person had tsaraath. In this case, the hair was expected to be yellowish instead of white. In other words, where the hair was thicker, all of the pigment in the hair might not have been lost, leaving it faded and yellowish but not completely white. Another sign of tsaraath was that some of the hair would fall out of the affected spot, making the hair thinner. If the signs of tsaraath were present, the person had tsaraath of the head or beard. He was unclean. If, on the other hand, the signs of tsaraath were not definitely present, the same procedure of shutting up the person for observation for a second seven-day period was to be followed. An additional provision was made that, if the case was still doubtful after the first week, the hair was to be shaved from around the spot but not on the spot, to make observation easier and the determination more accurate. If at the end of the second seven-day period the eruption had not spread and the sore had not penetrated deeper than the skin, the priest was to declare the person clean. He or she was only required to wash his clothes, and he was free to return to a normal life. However, if the eruption should spread after the person was declared clean, then the priest was to examine the person again. If indeed the eruption had spread, no further evidence was needed. The priest was to declare the person unclean. And if at the end of the second seven day period the eruption had not spread and color had returned to the hair, the eruption was to be judged healed, and the priest was to declare the person to be clean. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:29-34) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") **DISEASE IN THE HEAD, OR IN THE BEARD** - Leprosy might begin, not only in the skin, but even under the hair of the head, or in the beard. Sin may originate in most unlooked-for ways and places, and must be watched against everywhere. The head and the beard are the proper seat of honor, or

of what is seemly and lovely to look upon. When the hair became “yellow” corruption was at work, changing the bushy hair into lank tufts, and the healthy color into a yellow paleness. Herein the change of external aspect, produced by sin, is declared.

But as it was possible that the hair might really be drawing its nourishment from the vitality of the body, notwithstanding this unfavorable symptom, there is to be caution shown. The inner parts may be sound; this may be only a scall on the head, and not a leprosy.

Again we see the character of our God. 1. How holy is he! The first rising of evil is watched and pointed at with hatred. 2. How loving is he! He deals most tenderly with the suspected man. 3. How just is he! It must be noonday clearness ere he pronounces sentence; all doubt is gone! ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush on Lev 13:29-37 - Distinction of Leprosy from Dry-scall - vv 29–37. It is a dry-scall. Heb. נֶתֶחַk nēthek. Gr. θραύσμα εσπ, it is a broken sore. The original comes from the root נָתַח nāthak, to pluck, tear, or draw off, and is the name of a disease peculiar to the head or beard, so called from the hairs being drawn off from the place where it broke out, and leaving a morbid baldness in its stead. The Hebrews describe it thus: ‘The plague of the head or beard, is when the hair that is on them falleth off by the roots, and the place of the hair remaineth bare; and this is that which is called ‘nethek.’’ ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:30 then the priest shall look at the infection, and if it appears to be deeper than the skin and there is thin yellowish hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a scale, it is leprosy of the head or of the beard.

- **scale.** Lev 13:34-37. Lev 14:54.
- **leprosy.** Je 14:7-9. Ho 11:7, 8. 14:4
- [Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:31 "But if the priest looks at the infection of the scale, and indeed, it appears to be no deeper than the skin and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate the person with the scaly infection for seven days.

- **plague.** Ge 34:29.
- **seven days.** Lev 13:4-6
- [Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:32 "On the seventh day the priest shall look at the infection, and if the scale has not spread and no yellowish hair has grown in it, and the appearance of the scale is no deeper than the skin,

- **yellow hair.** Lev 13:30. Mt 23:5. Lk 18:9-12. Ro 2:23
- [Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:33 then he shall shave himself, but he shall not shave the scale; and the priest shall isolate the person with the scale seven more days.

- **be shaven.** 1 Peter 5:6
- [Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:34 "Then on the seventh day the priest shall look at the scale, and if the scale has not spread in the skin and it

appears to be no deeper than the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes and be clean.

- **the seventh.** 1 John 4:1. Jude 1:22. Rev 2:2. be not. Lev 13:23.
- **and he shall.** See on Lev 13:6
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:35 "But if the scale spreads farther in the skin after his cleansing,

- **spread much.** Lev 13:7, 27. 2 Ti 2:16, 17. 3:13.
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:29-34) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") **DISEASE IN THE HEAD, OR IN THE BEARD** - The examination is never allowed to go into other hands than the priest's, whose skill, and experience, and compassion fitted him best for the work. Oh, how sweet to know that "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son." (John 5:22.) He leaves us to be judged by no new standard, but just by that same standard whereby Jesus judged when on earth. Therefore, we may be assured that for every sin that the Judge will bring to light in us, there is a remedy in the blood of his own atonement.

The unchecked spread of the disease proves him a leper. So does the unchecked flow of sin prove a man a child of hell! you need not to insist on "the yellow hair"—the outward indications—if the man's heart be as before, he is unclean! "For he that is born of God sinneth not."

We have a God ready to bless! If the "hair be black," and "the scall at a stay"—the conduct changed and the heart cleansed—then there is no waiting, no suspense of seven days; but, on the contrary immediate, acquittal. No man, who was clean, was to be kept in uncertainty of his cleanness; and no man, when cleansed from every symptom, to be detained in a probationary state. We see the very features of the Lord's merciful haste to the sinner. Immediate pardon—full and present assurance—restoration to his love and favor on the spot—liberty that hour. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

Leviticus 13:36 then the priest shall look at him, and if the scale has spread in the skin, the priest need not seek for the yellowish hair; he is unclean.

- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:37 "If in his sight the scale has remained, however, and black hair has grown in it, the scale has healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

- **the priest.** Jn 5:22
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:38 "When a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, even white bright spots,

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Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:38-39 - Tsaraath also could occur in a part of the skin that grew no hair. In that case, the only symptom for determining the presence of tsaraath was a loss of color in the affected spot. If the spot was not fully white and still somewhat pigmented, the man did not have tsaraath. Instead he had the disease the Israelites called boshap, and he was clean. Boshap is a transliteration of the Hebrew name of a different disease, with which people of that day were familiar but the whose identity is not

known today. . ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:38, 39) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") **FRECKLED SPOTS NOT LEPROSY** - These spots might be only a cutaneous eruption; but they were grounds of suspicion, because leprosy often begins in this form. But spots so small, not altering the color of the hair, appearing only on the neck and face, are only the sign of what they call "Bochak," an eruption that passed away soon. The Lord as carefully guards against imputing to a man more than is due, as against letting a man escape from what is his due. He holds the balance even. "A God of truth and without iniquity"—he goeth neither to the right hand nor left. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush on Lev 13:38 - Distinction of Leprosy from the 'Bohak' or Freckled Spot -v38. If a man also or a woman. The species of leprosy here defined is distinguished from others by the term בֹּהַק bohak, from the Syriac 'bohak,' to be white or shining. The word is used to denote a cutaneous eruption, of which Niebuhr says, 'I myself saw a case of the Bohak leprosy in a Jew at Mocha. The spots in this disease are of unequal size. They have no shining appearance; nor are they perceptibly elevated above the skin; and they do not change the color of the hair. Their color is an obscure white, or somewhat reddish. The rest of the skin of this patient was blacker than that of the people of the country is in general; but the spots were not so white as the skin of an European, when not sun-burnt. The spots, in this species of leprosy, do not appear on the hands, nor about the navel, but on the neck and face; not, however, on that part of the head where the hair grows very thick. They gradually spread, and continue sometimes only about two months; but in some cases, indeed, as long as two years, and then disappear, by degrees, of them, selves. This disorder is neither infectious nor hereditary, nor does it occasion any inconvenience.' ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:39 then the priest shall look, and if the bright spots on the skin of their bodies are a faint white, it is eczema that has broken out on the skin; he is clean.

- **if the bright** Eccl 7:20. Ro 7:22-25. James 3:2
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:40 "Now if a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald; he is clean.

- **hair is fallen off his head.** Heb. head is pilled. Lev 13:41. Song 5:11. Ro 6:12, 19. 8:10. Gal 4:13.
- **bald.** Lev 21:5. 2Kings 2:23. Ezra 9:3. Job 1:20. Isaiah 3:24. 15:2. 22:12. Je 7:29. 16:6. 47:5. Ezek 7:18. 27:31. 29:18. Am 8:10. Mic 1:16
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:40-44 - Tsaraath might also break out on a bald head. These verses first emphasize that baldness by itself did not make a man unclean. Why it needed to be stressed that baldness in and of itself did not make a person unclean is not fully clear. Perhaps baldness at that time was considered in some sense to be shameful or disgraceful. 2 Kings 2:23 may indicate that the Hebrews did have that attitude toward baldness. The rule that baldness did not make a person unclean applied whether the baldness was in the back side of his head or in the front side of his head. The Hebrew language has two words for baldness, one for baldness in the front of the head and the other for baldness in the back of the head. Both words are used in this passage. In the case of a bald head, the color of the hair could not be used to determine if the malady was tsaraath. Two criteria were to be used: the color of the skin was pinkish, and the appearance was like tsaraath in regular skin. The priest was to make his judgment on the basis of his familiarity with the appearance of tsaraath in other parts of the body. If the signs of tsaraath in a bald head were present, the priest was to declare the person unclean. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:40-44) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") **BALDNESS** - The falling off of hair from the forehead indicated some decay; yet it might not be any more than on the surface. The Great Physician knows what are not indications of deep corruption, as well as what are. Ceasing from some busy undertaking may, at one time, be no proof of any real decay of inward love; whereas, at other times, it may be the outward discovery of what was long going on within secretly. When the disciples all fled, this was "the hair of the forehead" decayed; yet still there was no "white, reddish sore." When, however, the many, in John 6:66, went back and walked no more with Jesus, this falling off of hair that looked fair before, brought into view the leprosy that had been working its way behind this concealment. When John Mark left Paul and Barnabas, there was a call for the physician examining. Paul suspected a hidden leprosy. It turned out that there was none. When Simon Magus offered money to Peter, "his bald head and forehead" too plainly revealed "the rising of the sore, white, reddish." ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its](#)

Leviticus 13:41 "If his head becomes bald at the front and sides, he is bald on the forehead; he is clean.

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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:42 "But if on the bald head or the bald forehead, there occurs a reddish-white infection, it is leprosy breaking out on his bald head or on his bald forehead.

- **forehead.** 2 Ch 26:16-20
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:43 "Then the priest shall look at him; and if the swelling of the infection is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the body

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See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:44 he is a leprous man, he is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his infection is on his head.

- **utterly unclean.** Job 36:14. Mt 6:23. 2 Pet 2:1, 2. 2John 8-10.
- **his plague.** Isaiah 1:5.
- **head.** 2Co 10:5
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Wiersbe - Sin defiles (Lev 13:44–46). The word “unclean” is used fifty-four times in Leviticus 13–15. It describes the ceremonial defilement that makes the victim unfit for social life or for participation in worship at the house of God. The Prophet Isaiah confessed that he was “a man of unclean lips” (Isa. 6:5), and then he spoke for all of us when he wrote, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa 64:6). Whatever sin touches, it defiles; only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away that defilement (1 Cor. 6:9–11; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). When you read Psalm 51, David’s prayer of confession, you can’t help but notice how his sins defiled every part of his being: his eyes (Ps 51:3), his mind (Ps 51:6), his ears (Ps 51:8), his bones (Ps 51:8), his heart (Ps 51:10), and his mouth (Ps 51:13–15). His hands were stained with Uriah’s blood (Ps 51:14), and all he could do was throw himself on the mercy of God and cry out, “Wash me!” (Ps 51:2, 7)

George Bush on Lev 13:40-44 - Distinction of Leprosy from Baldness - vv40–44. The man whose hair is fallen off his head, &c. ‘Another description of persons, for whose exemption from the charge and hardships of leprosy Moses took care to provide, were those whose heads became bald. Among us, and indeed in any country where leprosy is not extremely prevalent, such persons require no such attention; for nobody would think of accounting a man leprous because his head happened to become prematurely bald, were it even in the days of his youth. As, however, the falling of the hair is sometimes, and in connection with other symptoms, a strong criterion of leprosy, and as there actually is a particular kind of leprosy, which might, perhaps, even then, have been observed to have the peculiarity of being limited either to the fore or hind part of the head, it was not strange that a person who became bald, and more especially if not very far advanced in years, should incur the suspicion of being leprous. Now in such cases, we find Moses giving an explanation, viz. that if no farther symptoms were found than mere baldness, the person was not to lie

under the suspicion of leprosy, but to be considered as clean.'—Michaelis ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:45 "As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'"

- **his clothes.** Ge 37:29. Josh 7:6. 2Sa 13:19. Job 1:20. Isaiah 6:5. Je 3:25. 36:24. Joel 2:13.
- **and his head.** Lev 10:6. 21:10.
- **bare.** Nu 5:18. Ps 140:7. Pr 28:13. Jn 3:36. Heb 4:13. put. Job 40:4. Ezek 24:17, 22. Mic 3:7.
- **Unclean.** Job 42:6. Ps 51:3, 5. Isaiah 6:5. 52:11. 64:6. La 4:15. Lk 5:8. 7:6, 7. 17:12. Ep 5:5
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:45-46 - A person afflicted with tsaraath was to conduct himself as a mourner. Tearing one's clothes was a familiar expression of mourning or sorrow (Gen. 37:34; 44:13; Num. 14:6; Josh. 7:6; Jud. 11:35; II Sam. 1:11; 3:31; 13:19; I Kings 21:27; II Kings 5:7,8; 6:30; 19:1; 22:11,19; II Chr. 34:19,27; Ezra 9:3,5; Esther 4:1; Job 1:20; 2:12; Isa. 37:1). Loosing one's hair had previously been mentioned in Leviticus 10:6 as a sign of mourning (see comments on that verse in MESSAGE 11). The word translated "mouth" is a rare word. It was related to the Hebrew word for "lip," "Mouth" seems to be the best rendering, because a natural sign of mourning is covering the mouth as a sign that the sorrow is so great the person is not able to speak. This same expression is used in Ezekiel 24:17, 22 as a sign of mourning. (SGV and NASB render this word as "moustache," while RSV, JB, NEV, LB, ABV join KJV in rendering it "upper lip." ASV translates it "lips," while DRV and HCSB translate it "mouth.") Since tsaraath was a symbol of sin, the one having tsaraath was to practice those symbols of sorrow as a sign that sin brings sorrow to the life of one who indulges in it. The one having tsaraath was also to cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" to strangers who approached him. Doing so was to be a symbolic declaration of the fact that sin makes a life morally unclean and close association with a sinful person contaminates the lives of others. As long as tsaraath continued in the body of the one stricken with it, he was to dwell away from his brethren outside the camp. His living alone was a symbol of the fact that sin separates a person from other believers. Sin interferes not only with fellowship with God but also with one's fellowship with God's people. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:45-46) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") The leper, in this state of declared uncleanness, is the awful type of a sinner under sentence of wrath. His "clothes are to be rent,"† just as in all cases of mourning and woe. This indicated that the leper was now exposed to the full view of God and man in his state of decay and corruption. His "head bare," also. All coverings are stripped off, as in the case of one mourning for the dead. For the leper was counted as dead in his flesh; as we read in Num. 12:12, when Miriam's leprosy was prayed for, "Let her not be as one dead; of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb." So, also, he "covers his upper lip"—another token of woe. His mouth is regarded as shut; he cannot speak to men any longer, only through the shroud comes the half-suppressed cry, "Unclean, unclean." The pale, ghastly face—the covering spread up to the sunk and hollow eyes—the unsightly form muffled up from view to hide corruption and putrifying sores—all conveyed the idea of one already cut off from the number of living men, lingering at the gates of death and hanging about its door-posts, impatient for entrance there. He is forced to dwell alone, "as those who have long been dead;" permitted to come only within sight of the camp, but not to enter; tantalized by seeing afar off the happy tents of healthy, holy Israel. He sits without,* in mourning and sadness, pining away in his woe—every vein in every limb running down with putrid blood, his head sick and pained, his countenance disgusting the onlooker by the sallow hue of death, his mind filled with sad remembrances and gloomy imaginations. A gray blister, indicating the rising boil, now and then spots his temples; the hair hangs dry, lank, and sapless on his brow; the nails of his bony fingers are discolored and tainted. He moves his body slowly, tottering along on feet that are nearly powerless, and men "hide their faces from him" (Isa. 53:3) as he draws near. Even the wild Arab, that scours past on his swift steed, starts at the loathsome spectacle and hastens away. The leper himself feels life ebbing slowly; the blood still flows, but it is not with the freedom of health, and the arteries have no longer their full floods, like rushing torrents, but are clogged with thick, clammy, sluggish, moisture.

Here is the state of the sinner, not in the second death, but in this world, in his exclusion from the Lord's presence, and dead in sin. The inner man has lost every principle of holiness; his powers are withered, every sinew shrunk. Any attempts at spiritual motions are slow and lifeless. Streams of putrid impurity burst forth in his soul. His eye has none of the brightness of one gazing on a holy God and a reconciled countenance, but indicates an absence of all that can really cheer or delight. The death-like hue of the whole form proclaims the total departure of the breath of God and the Divine nature. From such a soul, God turns away his face. Nor can the sinner pretend to any fellowship with the saints, or any right to a place in the camp of Israel. Often he sees their joy; he is present in their solemnities, and looks on from afar, and feels his misery deepened by the contrast of these happy multitudes. His own conscience compels him to cry, "Unclean, unclean."

Such was Isaiah's experience for a time, when, with no more than the remnants and remembrance of his leprosy, he entered the holy sanctuary above. Such is every convinced soul's experience in the day of the Spirit's dealing with it; when the High Priest has begun his treatment of the sin-sick soul, compelling it to uncover its head and rend its garment, and, with lips covered up, to take the

position of one exposed to death and curse.

Yet all this is but the shadow of death. Convictions here, and fears and terrors here, are only faint shadows. Death itself—the second death—which casts this shadow, is behind. And then the leprous soul is eternally loathsome, eternally abhorred, eternally dead and corrupt, eternally excluded from the fellowship of saints, eternally hid from the face of God, and eternally within hearing and sight of happy Israel, though there is a gulf that cannot be passed, between! And none will or can offer sympathy to the eternally exiled man!

Oh, leprous soul, a High Priest passes through thy country now, who could deliver thee from thy diseases. Come, come, though thou hast sat alone under thy juniper-tree, apart from men, these many, many days! Come, though in vain thou hast hitherto looked for any abatement of thy disease! Perhaps no man ever cared for thy soul? Perhaps thou hast looked on the right hand, and there was no man that would know thee? Perhaps it is long since refuge failed thee? But a High Priest is in the land, who can deliver thee. He takes thee as thou art; he pronounces thee as thou really art, “Unclean, unclean;” and then he stoops down and says, “Look unto me and be saved?” He passes by; he walks on the outside of the city, where the lepers are sitting, wistfully looking in through its gates, yet not daring to enter; he will soon enter in, and shut its everlasting gates! Invite him near; nay, he is near. “He it is that talketh with thee!” He has blood that cleanses from all sin. His touch is healing; his look is life! But if once in hell, thou art forever and forever miserable. No balm in Gilead is there; no tidings of a leaf of the healing tree! The High Priest that can deliver never passes through that cursed land. Leprosy is eternal there; and therefore wailing and woe never end. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!” ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush on Lev 13:45 - **Conduct to be observed by Lepers** The leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent. The leprous person was required to be as one that mourned for the dead, or for some great and public calamity. He was to have his clothes rent in token of extreme sorrow; his head was to be made bare; the ordinary bonnet or turban being omitted, and to have a covering upon the upper lip; or rather, as the original word ‘upper lip’ is with equal probability interpreted of the whole chin, he was to have the lower part of his face bound around with a bandage, leaving the mouth just freedom enough to make the declaration, unclean! unclean! which uttered from lips thus muffled up, must have been sounded forth in a peculiarly doleful accent. The reason of uttering this cry was to prevent any person from coming near him, lest defilement might be incurred by contact. Therefore the Chal. renders it, ‘Be ye not made unclean! be ye not made unclean!’ and Tar. Jon. ‘Avoid! avoid the unclean!’ In allusion to this it is said, Lam. 4:15, ‘They cried unto them, depart ye; (I am) unclean; depart, depart, touch not.’ In the East lepers are not at this day absolutely interdicted from going abroad, for they are not considered as pestilential. Niebuhr says, ‘I might have seen numbers of them; but whenever I observed any of them meeting me in the streets, I deemed it prudent to avoid them.’ ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Constable - Tearing the clothes, messing the hair, and covering the upper lip were all signs of mourning (cf. 10:6; 21:10; Gen. 37:34; Num. 14:6; 2 Sam. 1:11; 2 Kings 11:14; 19:1; 22:11, 19; Ezra 9:5; Ezek. 24:17, 22; Mic. 3:7)

A person with leprosy, apart from the telltale malignant raw flesh and white hair, was to be otherwise identified by torn clothes, covered head and cry of “**unclean**” when in the streets and was to live isolated from the community (Lev 13:46).

Wenham - “The holiest area, where one was closest to God, was the tabernacle. It was here that the holy men, the priests, worked. The tabernacle was surrounded by the camp where Israel the holy people of God lived. This in turn was encircled by the area outside the camp, which was populated by non-Jews, sinners, and the unclean. To live outside the camp was to be cut off from the blessings of the covenant. It is little wonder that when a man was diagnosed as unclean he had to go into mourning. He experienced a living death; his life as a member of God’s people experiencing God’s blessing came to an end. Gen. 3 presents a similar picture. . . . As Adam and Eve experienced a living death when they were expelled from Eden, so every man who was diagnosed as unclean suffered a similar fate.”

Sailhammer - as human skin was the focus of guilt and shame in the beginning, so now diseases of the skin provide an occasion to demonstrate the need for human cleansing. In other words, just as the effects of the first sin were immediately displayed in human skin (‘And their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked,’ Ge 3:7), so the writer uses the graphic horror of skin diseases found in these texts to depict the human state of uncleanness before a holy God. “According to the regulations in Leviticus, if one were found to be unclean, ‘As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp’ (Lev 13:46). In the same way, the Genesis narratives show that when Adam (and Eve) sinned, ‘the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. And he drove Adam out’ (Ge 3:23–24). Like the unclean person in Leviticus, they had to live ‘outside the camp.’”

Wenham - “Holiness in Leviticus is symbolized by wholeness. Animals must be perfect to be used in sacrifice. Priests must be without physical deformity. Mixtures are an abomination. Men must behave in a way that expresses wholeness and integrity in their actions. When a man shows visible signs of lack of wholeness in a persistent patchy skin condition, he has to be excluded from the covenant community. Temporary deviations from the norm do not attract such treatment, but if the symptoms last for more than two weeks, he must go to live outside the true Israel. . . . Anyone might fall victim to these complaints and face the prospect of being cut

off from his family and friends for the rest of his days. Yet it was considered so important to preserve the purity of the tabernacle and the holiness of the nation that individuals and families might be forced to suffer a good deal. Individual discomfort was not allowed to jeopardize the spiritual welfare of the nation, for God's abiding presence with his people depended on uncleanness being excluded from their midst (cf. Isa. 6:3–5)."

Leviticus 13:46 "He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

- **the days.** Pr 30:12.
- **alone.** Isaiah 59:2. Jn 8:16, 29.
- **without.** Lev 16:27. Nu 5:2. 12:12, 14, 15. 2Kings 5:1. 7:3. 15:5. 2 Ch 26:21. La 1:1, 8. 4:15. Isaiah 52:11. Ezek 24:17, 22. Lk 17:12. 1Co 5:5, 9-13. 2 Th 3:6, 14. 1 Ti 6:5. Heb 12:15, 16. Rev 21:27. 22:15
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Outside the camp - several of the following notes discuss this topic (this exact phrase 28x in 27v in NAS) - Ex 29:14; 33:7; Lev 4:12, 21-**note**; Lev 6:11-**note**.; Lev 8:17-**note**.; Lev 9:11; Lev 13:46-**note**.; Lev 16:27-**note (good note by Richard Phillips)**.; Lev 17:3-**note**.; Lev 24:14, 23-**note**.; Nu 5:3-4; 12:14-15; 15:35-36; 19:3, 9; 31:13, 19; Dt 23:10, 12; Josh 6:23; Heb 13:11-**note** Heb 13:13-**note**. and "outside the gate" in Heb 13:12-**note**.

George Bush on Lev 13:46 - He shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be. Heb. בַּדָּד יֵשֵׁב *bâdad yēshēb*, he shall sit alone. Gr. κενωρισμενος καθησεται, he shall sit separated. This was a salutary precaution for the sake of the sound, and the temporary seclusion might easily be turned to a useful account to the leper himself; for there was every thing in his condition calculated to admonish him of his moral defilement, and prompt him to seek for an effectual cleansing of that inner malady which was so strikingly set forth by the loathsome leprosy that covered his body. The law here enacted seems to have been strictly observed. So early as the second year of the Exodus, lepers were obliged to reside without the camp, Numb. 5:1–4; and so strictly was this law enforced, that the sister of Moses himself becoming leprous, was expelled from it, Numb. 12:14–16. When the Israelites came into their own land, and lived in cities, the spirit of the law thus far operated, that lepers were obliged to reside in a separate place, which was called בית חפשיית *beth 'hophshith*, the house of uncleanness; and from this seclusion, not even kings, when they became leprous, were exempted, 2 Kings 15:5. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Constable - Not everywhere outside the camp was unclean; there were clean places outside the camp (e.g., Lev 4:12). However the unclean person was to live in an unclean area outside the camp. The idea was that he or she could not come close to God who resided in the tabernacle at the center of the camp.

Wiersbe - Sin isolates (Lev 13:46). What solemn words: "He is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." He had to tear his clothes, put a covering on his upper lip, cry "Unclean, unclean!" whenever anybody approached him, and remain outside the camp until either he died or was healed. "Free among the dead" is the way Heman described it in Psalm 88:5. God struck King Azariah (Uzziah) with leprosy, and he had to dwell in a "separate house," literally "a free house," which was isolated from everybody else (2 Kings 15:5, NIV). He was free—among the dead! If you've done any witnessing, you've probably met people who seem to have no concept of the tragedy of sin and the awfulness of hell. "I don't mind going to hell," they say rather flippantly. "I'll have lots of company." But there is no company in hell, because hell is a place of eternal isolation and loneliness. Like the lepers outside the camp, lost sinners will dwell alone; they will be alone forever. (Be Holy)

Leviticus 13:47 "When a garment has a mark of leprosy in it, whether it is a wool garment or a linen garment,

- **The garment.** Ps 109:18. Isaiah 3:16-24. 59:6. 64:6. Ezek 16:16. Ro 13:12. Ep 4:22. Col 3:3. Jude 1:23. Rev 19:8
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:47-48 - Another type of uncleanness was tsaraath in cloth or leather. Some have supposed that the germ causing tsaraath in people also was able to attack cloth and leather. That conclusion is not necessarily valid, especially since people did not know about germs at that time. God knew of germs, but He was speaking in terms that people of that time could understand. Likely tsaraath of cloth or leather was a growth of some kind that caused conditions in cloth and leather that resembled tsaraath in people. Because of the similarity in appearance, people in that time called both conditions by the same name. Tsaraath in cloth

could affect woolen or linen cloth. Wool and linen were virtually the only kinds of cloth available at that time. The words translated “woven cloth” and “knitted cloth” are used in the Bible only in this chapter. The meaning of the root of the first is highly doubtful, while the idea of the root of the second is “mixed.” Traditionally, those words have been understood to mean “warp” and “woof,” but those translations give little meaning that is understandable. It is hard to see how an infection could affect only the threads running in one direction. Some have suggested that tsaraath affected only the threads of the warp or the woof of a piece of cloth because the condition was in the thread when it was woven. However, it is most unlikely that a person would use thread already affected by the condition in making a piece of cloth. A more likely understanding of the meaning of these words is that they refer to two different methods of making cloth, such as, weaving and knitting. This view is most likely the correct understanding of the words, and they are translated in that manner above. (KJV and most other modern English translations translate these words as “warp” and “woof.” JB and LB translate these words as “fabric” and “covering.” SGV translates “woven or knitted material.”) Thus, tsaraath could affect cloth or leather and could affect cloth whether wool or linen and whether woven or knitted. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:47-48) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus “Very precious.”)

This leprosy in garments is to represent something quite different from leprosy in the man himself. It is to be a type of sin and defilement, not in his person, but in the things around him. Anything round about the man is this garment; the circumstances in the midst of which he is placed, the business he engages in, the comforts that impart a warmth to his person, the occurrences that affect his daily feeling. When Jude (ver. 23) speaks of “the garment spotted by the flesh,” he evidently means the person’s external contact with the world around him; and when the few names in Sardis are commended because “they have not defiled their garments” (Rev. 3:4), reference is made to the allurements and sinful habits of all around them.

A clothes-leprosy and house-leprosy may have existed then, though it does not now; just like the case of the demoniacs, in the time of our Lord. And the plague that was called leprosy in garments, was co-relative to that disease in the human subject. It is like (as observed by others) the application of the term “cancer,” to a disease in trees, and of “rot,” to a disease among sheep. As the skin of the leper is fretted away, so there is a mode in which garments may be affected analogous to this—when vermin or animalculb settle secretly in the garment, and fret away the threads. Michaëlis mentions, what is called “dead-wool,” that is, wool of sheep that died by disease; and it is found to be bad, losing the points, and ready to be settled in by vermin. Cloth made of it soon becomes very bare, and then full of holes. Such is the literal circumstance from which the type is taken. Learn, reader, to wear no garment that is exposed to corrosive influences. Frequent no company that has a fretting leprosy—unsound at heart, and communicating its unsoundness to you. Withdraw from the wells of Esek and Sitnah (Gen. 26:20, 21), like Isaac, when you feel that there is evil in the situation, and the men who are there. If much prosperity is apt to make you settle on your lees, like Israel (Deut. 8:11) when they had eaten to the full, and walked among their countless flocks, and heaped up silver and gold—then, shake the garment; beware of Atheism; “beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God.”

It was of little consequence how goodly the garment appeared. Be not deceived by a fair show. Whether the garment was wrought of material got from the animal creation (“wool”), or from the vegetable world (“linen”); or whether it was composed of a mixture of threads, those in the warp being of wool, those in the woof of linen or flax; nay, though it were a strong garment of skin, or of some manufacture of skin*—whether of simple, primeval strength and roughness, or fashioned into a finer texture—still, if there was the least ground for suspicion, it must be subject to instant examination, however costly and however esteemed for comfort. You must not judge of the innocuous nature of an employment or a possession by its appearance only, nor by its suitability to your taste, nor by the estimation in which it is held; you must be prepared to admit examination. ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

George Bush on Lev 13:47 -**The Leprosy of Garments** - The garment also that the plague of leprosy is in. This leprosy in garments appears so strange to us, that it has induced some to consider it as an extraordinary punishment inflicted by God upon the Israelites, as a sign of his displeasure against sin; while others consider the leprosy in clothes, as also in houses, as having no relation to the leprosy in man. Indeed, the probability is that the term ‘leprosy,’ in this connexion, is not intended to be used in the same sense in which it is applied to denote a disease affecting the human system, but has rather a figurative import, just as ‘cancer’ is used by agriculturists in reference to a disease of trees, and as, inversely, the word ‘rot’ is applied to a disease of sheep, though primitively used of the decomposition of timber. The language was no doubt intended to intimate that the garment was fretted by a process similar to that which takes place in the skin in a case of real leprosy, occasioned in all likelihood, by a species of animalcula or vermin, which by breeding in the garments must necessarily multiply their kind, and fret the threads, i. e. corrode a portion of the finer parts after the manner of moths, for their nourishment. It is thus that the human skin is affected in the itch, a disease caused by the psora, or itch animal, which is often communicated from garments. This plague of vestments is termed, v. 51, a ‘fretting (or rankling) leprosy,’ a word which is applied in Ezek. 28:24, to a ‘pricking’ or ‘rankling brier,’ and is strikingly expressive of the sensation produced by the irritating effect of the itch in the human subject. We may suppose, moreover, that the metaphorical term ‘leprosy’ was used in this connexion on account of the disgusting ideas which, by association with the human disease, the view of a blemish in clothing, called also ‘leprosy,’ would excite in the mind. So much in respect to the term. As to the fact indicated by it, the inquiries of Michaelis on the subject have brought out the following results, which are well worth transcribing in his own words. ‘The leprosy of clothes is described as consisting of green or reddish spots, that remain in spite of washing, and still spread; and by which

the cloth becomes bald or bare, sometimes on the one side, sometimes on the other. This Moses terms dropping or losing the hair; that is, if we are to give the literal truth of the Hebrew text, in a passage which might have its difficulties to a man of learning, if he knew nothing of the manufacture of woollen. These symptoms, too, of leprosy, are said to be found sometimes only in the warp, and at other times only in the woof. To a person who has nothing to do with the manufactures of woollen, linen, or leather, but with books only, this must doubtless be obscure; or, at most, he will be led to think of specks of rottenness, but still without being rightly satisfied. I have not been able to obtain complete information on this subject; but in regard to, wool, and woollen stuffs, I have consulted the greatest manufacturer in the electorate of Hanover; and he informs me, that what he has read in my German Bible, at this passage, will be found to hold good, at any rate with regard to woollen articles; and that it proceeds from what is called dead wool, that is, the wool of sheep that have died by disease, not by the knife: that such wool, if the disease has been but of short duration, is not altogether useless, but in a sheep that has been long diseased, becomes extremely bad, and loses the points; and that, according to the established usage of honest manufacturers, it is unfair to manufacture dead wool into any article worn by man; because vermin are so apt to establish themselves in it, particularly when it is worn close to the body and warmed thereby. When I told him, that in the countries, with a view to which I questioned him, the people, for want of linen and from poverty, had always worn, and still wear, woollen stuffs next the skin, he stated it as his opinion that there the disagreeable effect just mentioned, must take place in a still higher degree than in countries where, according to our German fashion, which would there be a luxury, a linen shirt is worn between the woollen clothes and the body. He added, that dead wool was usually manufactured into sacks and horse-cloths; and he expressed his wish for a statute, in the style of Moses, which should discourage the use of dead wool, or inflict a punishment on those who either sold it, or knowingly manufactured it into human clothing.—I am likewise informed by Hamburgers, that in their neighborhood, many frauds are committed with dead wool, from its being sold for good wool; in consequence of which, the stuffs made of it not only become very soon bare, but full first of little depressions, and then of holes.’—Comment on L. M. Art. 211. ([Leviticus 13 Commentary](#))

Leviticus 13:48 whether in warp or woof, of linen or of wool, whether in leather or in any article made of leather,

- **thing made of.** Heb. work of. Lev 13:51. Dt 8:11. Jude 1:23. Rev 3:4
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:49 if the mark is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, or in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is a leprous mark and shall be shown to the priest.

- **thing of skin.** Heb. vessel, or instrument. Lev 13:52, 53, 57-59. Lev 15:4.
- **it is.** See on Lev 13:2.
- **showed unto.** Mk 1:44
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:49 - A suspicious sign that tsaraath might be present in cloth or leather was a greenish or reddish coloration. Any piece of cloth or leather so affected was to be taken to the priest for examination. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Andrew Bonar (on Lev 13:49-59) (Spurgeon called his notes on Leviticus "Very precious.") A garment really infected must be burnt. There must be a final forsaking of every real sin. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off;" or if not, "thou goest to hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

So hateful to God is every approach to sin. Therefore, even on suspicion of evil, examine anxiously. If there be even suspicion as to a garment, the priest shuts it up—lays it by. So you give over the company you are afraid has an injurious influence on you; you give up the meats about which you are in doubt (Rom. 14:15), or about which your brother is in doubt. If you can really rend out the spotted part, this is well. David's pride of heart when he numbered the people, must be rent from him by the sharp stroke that cut off 70,000 threads of life. Hezekiah's pride must be rent off by the sword that is to destroy his people, and carry his wealth to Babylon. Peter's self-confidence must be torn from him, by his being placed among the other disciples in abasement; "Lovest thou me more than these?"

If, however, again the plague break out, the garment is no doubt deeply spoiled. It is to be burnt. Thus, when Israel's plenty and security—their garment of beauty and confidence—led them to indulgence and sin, the Lord rent off the pieces. But when, at last, the same sin ever returned, then he cast them away into an enemy's land.

But, lastly, if the garment out of which the piece was rent, be found remaining clean, then "let it be washed a second time." Let Peter,

after his recovery from his fall, be warned once more, to impress the special need he has of securing himself against the temptation in time to come. There is to be no doubtful holiness with God. He requires in his people definite and distinct purity. He likes us to make much use of His Holy Spirit, so that our freedom from the world's snares and the world's maxims may be plain to every eye. Oh, how holy is our God! How holy in himself! His heart has no other than holiness as its feeling. And when his eye looks abroad on us, it is holiness it searches for. He seeks for holiness in our person, and holiness in our circumstances—a holy people moving amid holiness! Hence it was that when Isaiah was enjoying a truly divine and heavenly gaze of the Lord of Glory, he perceived at once that both the person and his circumstances ought to be holy before such a God. He felt not only "Woe is me because I am a man of unclean lips;" but even had he been himself holy and pure, still, before such a God, how distressing the thought, "I dwell among a people of unclean lips!" Alas! alas! I am a leper myself—"Unclean, unclean!" and my garments have the fretting leprosy also! I dwell among the unclean!

There remains yet the mention of an unclean earth. That subject is taken up, chap. 14:33. But it is not mixed up with the person and his garments, because these two may be clean, while still the earth remains unpurified. There is to be a cleansing of our persons and of our circumstances now; but not a cleansing of the land or of its properties till an after period. And, to show this the more, observe that the laws about the person and his garment came into full operation while they wandered in the desert. But those laws that concerned the land—typical of the earth—did not come into operation till they reached Canaan. See chap. 14:34, "When ye be come into the land of Canaan." We are journeying onward to a pure land, to a new earth; but, meantime, we are carefully to see that our persons and circumstances be pure. No sight is more peculiar, and perhaps more attractive to the eye of angels and of God, than holiness in full bloom, though springing up from the soil of a cursed earth! Such a magnificent plant, with such waste sands, and barren clay, and rocky soil all around! This recalls the image of the Son of Man, when in Nazareth "he grew up before him as a tender plant!"

Oh, seek to be holy in heart and life, in circumstances and situation! Breathe holiness from within, and breathe holiness on all around! Send a fragrant gale of holiness along the wild desert; it may slacken the pace of some weary, miserable wanderer, as the spices breathed from "Araby the blessed" delay the ship that passes by. Send up the incense of holiness to the Lord, giving him back his own; and let it be known above that the Spirit who goeth to and fro in all the earth, striving with men, has found a dwelling-place in some souls, and has begun to create a heaven below! ([Leviticus 13 The Leprosy - Indwelling Sin - Its Horrid Features](#))

Leviticus 13:50 "Then the priest shall look at the mark and shall quarantine the article with the mark for seven days.

- **look upon.** Ezek 44:23.
- **plague.** Ge 34:29
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:50-51 - After examining the piece of cloth or leather, the priest was to "shut it up" for seven days. At the end of seven days, he was to examine the article again to see if the condition had spread. "Shut up" in this case can scarcely mean put outside of the camp, strengthening the conclusion that it also does not have that meaning in verses 4, 5, 26, 31, 33 (see comments on those verses above). If after seven days the spot had spread, it was tsaraath. The piece of cloth or leather was unclean. The word translated "penetrating" is found only in this chapter and in Ezekiel 28:24. Its meaning is not known today. Translators have varied much in rendering it in English. (KJV and ASV use "fretting," meaning "gnawing" or "eating." DRV uses "fixed." RSV, SGV, and NASB, use "malignant." LV, JV use "contagious." NEB uses "rotting." HCSB uses "harmful." All of these renderings are guesses.) Judging from Ezekiel 38:24, it probably means "piercing" or "penetrating," indicating that the tsaraath had penetrated into the piece of cloth or leather. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:51 "He shall then look at the mark on the seventh day; if the mark has spread in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in the leather, whatever the purpose for which the leather is used, the mark is a leprous malignancy, it is unclean.

- **fretting leprosy.** Lev 14:44
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:52 "So he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or in linen, or any article of leather in which the mark occurs, for it is a leprous malignancy; it shall be burned in the fire.

- **burn.** Lev 11:33, 35. Dt 7:25, 26. Isaiah 30:22. Ac 19:19, 20. Col 3:5.
- **fretting leprosy.** Lev 14:44, 45
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:52 - The piece of cloth or leather that had been penetrated by tsaraath was to be burned up. Evidently no way was known to rid the cloth or leather of tsaraath. This requirement taught that whenever sin becomes an ingrained habit of a person's life, the sinner will be destroyed by it. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

MacDonald - Harrison explains the wisdom of destroying garments so tainted: "Moulds are fungous growths on dead or decomposing animal or vegetable matter, and occur in patches of various shades." He goes on to make a spiritual application: "The fungous growth affects the entire article by its presence, just as the taint of original sin reaches all areas of the human personality."

Jehovah's people must be pure and clean externally as well as internally:

Oh, for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that's trusting in the blood
So freely shed for me.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean,
Which neither death nor life can part
From Him that dwells within.

—Charles Wesley

Wiersbe - Sin is fit only for the fire (Lev 13:52, 55, 57). A defiled garment was to be burned in the fire; it was not to be purified but destroyed. When Jesus spoke about hell, He used the word gehenna, which referred to the garbage dump outside Jerusalem "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44; see Isa. 66:24). Hell is God's eternal garbage dump prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41) and for those who follow the devil by rejecting Jesus Christ. It's a lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 21:10, 14–15) where Satan and his associates will suffer forever along with people whose names were not found in the Book of Life because they hadn't trusted Jesus Christ and been born again into God's family. The consequences of leprosy were temporal, but the consequences of sin are eternal. The Jews knew no cure for leprosy, but there is a remedy for sin—faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Have you trusted Him? If you have, are you telling others the good news that they don't have to be lepers and live forever in the fiery garbage dump of hell? (Be Holy)

Leviticus 13:53 "But if the priest shall look, and indeed the mark has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather,

- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:53-54 - If the spot had not spread after seven days, a second test was to be applied. The piece of cloth or leather was to be washed and "shut up" for seven more days. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:54 then the priest shall order them to wash the thing in which the mark occurs and he shall quarantine it for seven more days.

- **wash.** Hag 1:6
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:55 "After the article with the mark has been washed, the priest shall again look, and if the mark has not changed its appearance, even though the mark has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire, whether an eating away has produced bareness on the top or on the front of it.

- **after.** Ezek 24:13. Heb 6:4-8. 2 P 1:9. 2:20-22.
- **not changed.** Je 13:23. Lk 13:6-9. 1 Co 7:20, 24. Titus 3:5.
- **color.** lit. eye.
- **it be bare within or without.** Heb. it be bald in the head thereof, or in the forehead thereof. Lev 13:43
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:55 - At the end of the second seven-day period, if the coloration of the spot was as bright as ever, it was tsaraath, even if it had not spread. The cloth or leather piece was unclean and was to be burned. The word translated "boring inside" occurs only here. It seems to mean that, though the spot had not become larger, it was growing inside the cloth or the leather. It does not seem to mean that the infection had eaten a hole in the piece of cloth or leather, because all other descriptions show the malady to have been a coloration growing on a piece of cloth or leather. It seems rather to mean that the tsaraath had grown deeper into the cloth or leather. The words translated "[whether it is] on its bare back side or on its shaved front side." mean literally "in his bald back side of his head or in his bald front side of his head." Translators and interpreters have struggled to explain those words. (KJV, AS, and RV translate these words as "within or without," BBE as "inside or outside," CJB as "on the inside or on the outside," LITV as "in its inside or in its outside," MSG as "the back or the front," NASB as "on the top or on the front of it," and HCSB as "on the front or on the back." CEV omits these words altogether.) It may be that they are words added by mistake by an ancient copyist, perhaps by inadvertently picking them up from verse 42. The identical words occur in verse 42 in some ancient manuscripts, though in most manuscripts a slight difference occurs in that they omit the word "his" in verse 42. No manuscripts omit these words in verse 47, so they may have been an idiomatic expression that referred to the bare inside of a piece of leather and to the hairy outside from which the hair had been removed in processing the leather. They are translated in that manner above. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:56 "Then if the priest looks, and if the mark has faded after it has been washed, then he shall tear it out of the garment or out of the leather, whether from the warp or from the woof;

- **rend it out.** Ep 4:25
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:56-57 - If at the end of the second seven-day period the coloration was not as bright, then another test was to be applied. The affected part was to be torn from the piece. It was not removed to prevent the tsaraath from spreading in the piece, because if it had been known that the spot was tsaraath the piece would have been destroyed immediately. Instead this action was another test to determine if the piece was affected by tsaraath. After cutting out the spot, if the coloration reappeared in the rest of the garment, it was tsaraath. The piece was unclean. It was to be burned. Evidently tsaraath could not be removed from cloth or leather. No cleansing ceremony was provided for cloth or leather affected by tsaraath. Instead they were to be destroyed. The destruction of the piece taught that, when sin becomes ingrained in the life of a believer, it will destroy that life. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:57 and if it appears again in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is an outbreak; the article with the mark shall be burned in the fire.

- **shalt burn.** Isaiah 33:14. Mt 3:12. 22:7. 25:41. Rev 21:8, 27
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Leviticus 13:58 "The garment, whether the warp or the woof, or any article of leather from which the mark has departed when you washed it, it shall then be washed a second time and will be clean."

- **be washed.** 2Kings 5:10, 14. Ps 51:2. 2 Co 7:1, 12:8. Heb 9:10. Rev 1:5. 7:14.
- **the second time.** Ac 19:1-5
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:58 - If at the end of the second seven-day period the coloration was gone, the spot was not tsaraath. The words "that you washed" refer to the washing mentioned in verse 54. It had been washed and then observed for a second seven-day period. If the color had disappeared, the piece of cloth or leather was clean. It had never been unclean, but it had been under suspicion. Like the clothing of the man in verse 6, it was to be washed again to remove any suspicion, and it was clean. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

Naaman the leper - 2Kgs 5:10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you and you shall be clean... 14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Leviticus 13:59 This is the law for the mark of leprosy in a garment of wool or linen, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, for pronouncing it clean or unclean.

- **pronounce.** 1 Co 5:3-5. Rev 19:8
- Leviticus Resources - Multiple sermons and commentaries

Leon Hyatt on Lev 13:59- This verse is a summary statement, stating that the passage above gives the principles that were to govern recognition of tsaraath and uncleanness from tsaraath in woolen or linen cloth whether woven or knitted and also in articles made of leather. Comparison with other summary notes (see references cited in comments on Lev. 11:46-47) indicates that it was written by Moses as he compiled the messages of Jehovah, rather than that it was a part of the message that was spoken by Jehovah. After examining this passage, it is possible to speculate on the nature of tsaraath in cloth and leather. Many have supposed that it was a form of mold or mildew. Since the Sinai desert and that whole area of the world are extremely dry and since mold and mildew thrive only in much dampness, this explanation seems unlikely. Also, mold and mildew are greenish but not reddish. So, the descriptions of this chapter do not fit mold or mildew. It seems more likely that it was a type of fungus growth, since fungus growths can thrive in dry conditions and are more penetrating and persistent. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

Leon Hyatt - Application. When a Christian allows sin to come into his life, he becomes morally unclean. His sin separates between him and his Christian brothers and sisters and between him and God. It also brings sorrow into his life. When it becomes an ingrained habit, it destroys his physical life. Though he is saved forever, he can suffer great damage if he allows himself to participate in sin. The Christian must make every effort to avoid contact with sin and to keep it out of his life. A Christian must also take care to prevent articles that belong to him from being used for sinful purposes. He should not allow cloth or leather clothing that belongs to him to be worn to a bar, a casino, a pornographic movie, or to any other place where sinful deeds are practiced. Allowing his clothes, his car, or any other possession to be used in some sinful activity damages his reputation and makes him more susceptible to participating in sinful deeds himself. If he makes the mistake of allowing his possessions to be misused, he should ask God for forgiveness and rededicate them to God through prayer and through making a commitment never to make that mistake again. ([Message 16 - Leviticus 13:1-59](#))

See [notes by Andrew Bonar above](#)

The Leprosy Removed

"BUT GOD, WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, FOR HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US, EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SINS, HATH QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST: (BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED;) AND HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS: THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS

GRACE IN HIS KINDNESS TOWARDS US THROUGH CHRIST JESUS.”—Eph. 2:4–7.[-note](#)