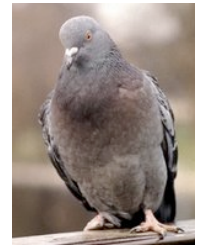


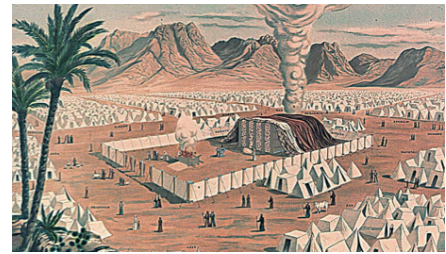
Leviticus Chapter 14

Cleansing Healed Lepers



There are two main sections in this chapter, with an introduction (14:1) and conclusion (14:54-57).
14:1-32 is the ritual for cleansing a healed leper.
14:33-57 is the ritual for cleansing a house with a mark of “leprosy.”

The first section of this chapter is an elaborate ritual of cleansing for a leper. First, there is a ceremony outside the camp. It involves two birds, one is killed and the other is released. Then it involves a ceremony inside the camp where the leper’s hair is shaved, he is washed, and then he presents 4 offerings: a guilt, sin, burnt, and grain offering. Here is an outline of this section.



Leviticus 14:1-7 The Two-Bird Ritual Outside the Camp

No significance is given for the two birds. Many make it parallel to the two goats on the Day of Atonement. Others say it represents freedom from bondage, but the text does not say. One bird is killed, and the other is released through an elaborate ceremony of dipping the live bird in a mixture of spices and water mixed with the blood of the dead bird. The one cleansed from leprosy is then sprinkled seven times before the live bird is released over an open field.

Leviticus 14:8-9 The Ritual Inside the Camp But Outside the House

Next, the former leper stays 7 days inside the camp but outside his house. Then *it will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair... wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and be clean* (14:9).



Leviticus 14:10-32 The Offerings Made for the Atonement of the Former Leper

This long section describes in detail the procedure the priest was to use in presenting, for the former leper, a guilt offering, a sin offering, a burnt offering and a grain offering. The elaborate nature of these offerings and the use of both blood and oil are more like the ordination service of Aaron and his sons than they are like presentations of the basic offerings.

The second major section of this chapter is about cleansing a house.

Leviticus 14: 33-57 The Detection and Cleansing of a House with “Leprosy”



This directive was given at the Tabernacle before the disobedience at Kadesh-barnea, after which they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. At this time, the expectation was that they would go directly from here to the land. So this command was for *when you enter the land of Canaan... and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession* (14:34). So we notice that the command was for the land and the



leprosy was placed there by God.

This procedure is very similar to the one for detecting and cleansing clothing and personal articles (13:47-59). The house with the *mark of leprosy* was reported to the priest. He would examine it, and, if necessary, he would quarantine the house for seven days. Then he would re-inspect it and *tear out the stones with the mark in them* (14:40), or in the worst case, he would tear down the house. The cleansing ceremony for a cleansed house was similar to the two-bird ceremony for the healed human leper.

THOUGHTS AND APPLICATIONS

- If the quarantine of the leper from the camp in Leviticus 13 pictures the removal of the unrepentant sinner (of Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5) from fellowship with believers, then the restoration of the cleansed leper to the camp pictures the restoration of the repentant sinner to fellowship. Notice that this is not a simple acceptance. It required an elaborate ritual. The explanation takes 32 verses and involves two ceremonies plus four animal sacrifices. So the restoration of an unrepentant sinner to fellowship is essential and a joyous occasion. But it should not be taken lightly and there should be an assurance of genuine repentance over a period of time.
- It is fascinating that the leper did nothing to get leprosy. He simply got a disease which manifested itself in the skin and was therefore quarantined from the camp. So why does he have to present four sacrifices as an atonement? The answer seems to be that, once again, uncleanness offends the holiness of God. Sin is anything contrary to the character of God. Leprosy is a disease which is contrary the character of God. Therefore, leprosy requires a sin offering to restore fellowship with a holy God. But think of all the areas of our lives which are unclean and contrary to the character of God. Without the substitutionary atonement of Christ, no fellowship with God would be possible.
- When the Israelites entered the land and built houses, some would get a *mark of leprosy* on the houses which needed to be dealt with. Either it was removed or the whole house was to be destroyed. But God says: *When ... I put a mark of leprosy on a house ...* So the problem which may result in the people losing their house was put there by God. And God requires a purification ceremony for the *mark of leprosy* which He put there. I have no idea what that means. But our lives are full of things like that. Things put there in the sovereign plan of God which require a cleansing out of our lives. We should never say: "If God did not want me to have it, He would not have put it in my life." We may never know why God put it in our lives. But if it is morally unclean, then it must be removed or destroyed.