

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 13: 09-28

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. This week we'll be reading Leviticus chapter 13, and today we'll read from verse 9 to verse 28.

The leprosy mentioned in the Bible is different from what modern medicine identifies as leprosy. Today, leprosy, known medically as Hansen's disease, is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*, which is transmitted through the air and can be treated with specific antibiotics over a course of about a year. In contrast, biblical leprosy was a general term for various skin diseases, often those that were highly contagious and caused skin ulcers, significantly affecting a person's appearance. People afflicted with this condition were not allowed to live among the Israelites, nor could they participate in the worship or sacrificial rituals. The responsibility of diagnosing leprosy was given to the priests by God. Because biblical leprosy referred to various contagious skin diseases, it could manifest with different causes and symptoms.

In Leviticus 13, the diagnosis of leprosy is outlined in five different methods, with two additional explanations. Yesterday, we covered the first diagnostic method, focusing not on the medical or hygienic aspects but on drawing spiritual principles applicable today. According to the first diagnostic method we studied, the spiritual cause of leprosy represents a lack of submission to God's established authority, His ways of doing things, or the priesthood He has ordained.

The symptoms of biblical leprosy, from a spiritual perspective, manifest in three ways: First, the hair on the infected area turns white, symbolizing the loss of the beauty and good nature that was originally part of God's creation. Second, the infection goes deeper than just the skin, indicating that sin's root lies deep within, beyond just outward actions, and speaks to the hidden nature of a sinful life. Third, the infection spreads, symbolizing the pervasive and expanding effect of sin. These

three characteristics together define leprosy. The second diagnostic method is explained in verses 9-17.

Verse 09-11: “When the leprous sore is on a person, then he shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the swelling on the skin is white, and it has turned the hair white, and there is a spot of raw flesh in the swelling, it is an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he is unclean.”

When someone who had previously been afflicted with leprosy shows signs of a possible recurrence, they are to be brought to the priest. The priest is to carefully examine them. If there is a white swelling on their skin and the hair in that area has turned white, these could be residual marks from the earlier leprosy. However, if a reddish swelling appears in the white area, this indicates that latent leprosy is re-emerging. The priest must declare the person unclean without the need for quarantine; they are already unclean and must be immediately sent outside the camp, cut off from the people of Israel.

Dear brothers and sisters, this serves as a reminder that within each of us, there are dormant seeds of rebellion. Satan is well aware of this and often uses the world's political, economic, and cultural issues to stir up that latent rebellion in us, with the goal of leading us to disobey God's ordained order. Therefore, we must have no confidence in our old self. Without God's grace, we are hopeless sinners. We must constantly remind ourselves not to stray from the place of grace and to remain obedient under the authority established by God.

Verse 12-13: “And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the one who has the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, then the priest shall consider; and indeed if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. It has all turned white. He is clean.”

When latent leprosy erupts and spreads outward, covering the entire body from head to toe, the priest is to carefully inspect the person. If the individual is indeed completely covered with leprosy and their entire body has turned white, the priest is to declare the person clean. This may seem surprising at first, but once the leprosy has fully manifested, the person is considered clean.

From a medical perspective, this may be difficult to understand, but from a spiritual viewpoint, it is quite clear. When a person realizes that they are entirely sinful, they no longer try to hide it and are willing to confess openly because their entire body has been affected by sin. Everyone who sees them knows they are a sinner. But the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise. When someone is willing to repent, the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse them from all their sins, making them clean. On the other hand, when sin is still hidden and has not manifested, and the person is trying to cover it up, fearing exposure, that is when spiritual leprosy is the most dangerous.

Verse 14-15: “But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. And the priest shall examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean; for the raw flesh is unclean. It is leprosy.”

When the leprosy has fully manifested, and the entire body has turned white, the person is aware of it, and others can see it too. At this point, the leprosy is considered clean. However, if at any time raw flesh appears again on the body, it indicates that the leprosy has returned. When the priest sees the raw flesh, he must declare the person unclean, for the raw flesh is a sign of leprosy, and it is uncleaned.

Verse 16-17:” Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. And the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. He is clean.”

If the raw flesh recedes and turns white again, the person must go to the priest for examination. If the priest finds that the raw flesh has turned completely white and there are no more signs of redness or swelling, the priest will declare the person clean.

Dear brothers and sisters, the seeds of rebellion always lie dormant within us and never fully disappear. Satan is constantly seeking opportunities for our old sins to resurface, which is the lifelong struggle for every Christian. Our fleshly desires will follow us throughout our lives. Therefore, when we become proud or arrogant, we are not far from falling into sin. Let us ask the Lord to give us a humble heart, continually relying on His grace, so that we may remain clean. Now, from verses 18 to 23, the third method of examination is described.

Verses 18-20: “If the body develops a boil in the skin, and it is healed, and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest; and if, when the priest sees it, it indeed appears deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore which has broken out of the boil.”

When a person develops a boil, it causes the skin to ulcerate, but boils are not contagious. Once the boil heals, it often leaves a scar. If a white swelling or a reddish-white bright spot appears in the place where the boil was, the person must go to the priest for examination. The priest will carefully inspect the affected area to see if the disease has penetrated beneath the surface of the skin and whether the hair in the area has turned white. If these signs are present, it indicates that leprosy has developed in the site of the boil, and the priest will declare the person unclean.

The place where the boil once was often retains traces of illness, making it susceptible to infection with leprosy. This speaks to our spiritual condition as well. Any wounds we’ve experienced—whether caused by our own mistakes or by others—may seem healed over time, but if not dealt with properly, they can leave lingering issues. What does it mean to truly deal with them? If it was our own

mistake, we must repent and confess so that our conscience is completely cleansed. If someone else was at fault, we must forgive them and let go of any lingering resentment. If unresolved, these inner grudges can easily grow into a spirit of rebellion against God, ultimately leading to spiritual leprosy, which manifests as a refusal to submit to God's will.

Verse 21: “But if the priest examines it, and indeed there are no white hairs in it, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days.”

When the priest comes to examine the affected area, if he finds that there is no white hair on the skin and the sore has not penetrated beneath the skin, and there are signs that the infection is receding, the priest cannot immediately determine if it is leprosy. In this case, the person must be isolated for seven days within the camp, separated from others, so that they do not interact with anyone during this time. After these seven days of isolation, the priest will re-examine the individual and make a decision based on the condition of the affected area.

Verse 22-23: “And if it should at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore. But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread, it is the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.”

After the seven days of isolation, if the priest re-examines the person and finds that the infected area has spread, the priest will declare it to be leprosy, and the individual will be deemed unclean. However, if after the seven days the priest finds that the sore has remained in the same place and has not spread, it is simply a scar from an old sore, not leprosy, and the person will be considered clean. This process continues with the fourth method of examination, which is described from verses 24 to 29.

Verse 24-25: "Or if the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, then the priest shall examine it; and indeed if the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it is leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore."

When a person's skin shows signs of burning, the term "burn" is used in English translations for this condition. This may occur after a burn injury, leading to inflammation of the skin, redness, and the formation of fire spots, which may appear white with red or completely white. At this time, the priest is to examine the condition. If the hair within the fire spot has turned white and the spot is not just on the surface but has penetrated deeper into the skin, the priest will determine that this is leprosy, arising from the burn, and the individual is unclean and must be isolated outside the camp. Skin affected by fire damage has reduced resistance and is particularly vulnerable to leprosy.

From a spiritual perspective, the fire spots represent a person with a fiery temper and impulsive behavior. Such a character can easily be provoked by minor issues and reacts directly without considering the consequences. This person may not genuinely intend to be disobedient but can harbor negative emotions when they do not understand actions taken by God-ordained authorities or leaders. However, because of their impulsive nature and quick reactions, they may erupt in anger without fully grasping the truth of a situation, ultimately leading to betrayal when they cannot let go of their pride.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you find yourself to be an impulsive person who reacts quickly, you must be especially careful and heed the teachings of James. In James 1:19-20, it says, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." When Christ returns, we will all stand before Him for judgment, and at that time, our natural temperament cannot serve as an excuse. After receiving grace and salvation, we must be renewed and transformed, which is part of every believer's sanctification process. This means our character must change to become gentle and self-controlled, not responding according to the flesh but rather guided by the Holy

Spirit. This way, it will be more challenging for fire spots to arise in our lives. May God help us.

Verse 26: “But if the priest examines it, and indeed there are no white hairs in the bright spot, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days.”

If the priest examines and sees that there is no white hair in the fire spots and that the condition is only on the surface without penetrating deeper, the priest cannot make a definitive judgment. He must then isolate the individual within the camp for seven days, after which a re-examination will be conducted.

Verse 27-28: “And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a leprous sore. But if the bright spot stays in one place, and has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar from the burn.”

After seven days, if the priest examines the fire spots and finds that they have spread to other areas of the skin, he shall declare that this is leprosy; he is unclean. If, after seven days, the fire spots remain in the same place without spreading and show signs of fading, the priest shall determine that this is merely a trace left by a burn, not leprosy, and he is clean.

We have read four ways of examination, and we see that the standards for determining leprosy are the same: the hair in the affected area turns white, and the affliction does not remain on the surface but is deeper. If it cannot be determined, and after seven days of observation the symptoms have spread, this is leprosy. If we have previously committed the sin of disobedience to God, even if the matter seems to be resolved, it can easily resurface in us. If the wounds we have suffered are not properly dealt with, they may develop into leprosy. If our natural temperament is

irritable and impulsive, it may also turn into leprosy. We must be very cautious about these things.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for giving us Your Word. Help us to understand that although we have been saved by grace, the things that have happened to us in the past, if not properly addressed, can easily resurface. Grant us a humble heart to remain in grace and to recognize that our old self is worthless, willing to let the power of the cross put our old self to death. Just as Paul declared in Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Bless my daily life. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!