

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

Leviticus 14:1-9

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 are going to read Leviticus Chapter 14 and Chapter 15. These two chapters have many verses, so we will move quite quickly; today we will read Leviticus 14:1-9.

Earlier we mentioned that leprosy in the Bible is a typology of sin. When people disobey God's will—whether by rebelling against the authority He has established, violating God's methods of doing things, or not submitting to the worship and service system God has set up—all of these are sins represented by leprosy.

In chapter 13, God entrusted the responsibility of diagnosing leprosy to the priests, and through Moses and Aaron, He revealed five ways to inspect for leprosy. As for those who were diagnosed with leprosy, they had to be separated from the people of Israel. In Leviticus 13:45-46, it says: "Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp."

Leprous people had to be isolated from the Israelites and live outside the camp, which is a place without God's presence, until the day they were cleansed of their leprosy. And how could leprosy be cleansed? In Leviticus 13:12-13, it says: "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."

What is remarkable is that when leprosy is still hidden, the person is unclean. But when the leprosy has fully spread, covering the person from head to foot, at that point, the leprosy is declared clean. This is quite difficult for us to understand

because we have not yet read the cleansing regulations for leprosy. Chapter 14 reveals the regulations for the cleansing of leprosy.

This was not only good news for the Israelites at that time but also a great gospel for New Testament believers. Because Jesus Christ came to earth to fulfill His ministry with the purpose of cleansing those with leprosy.

In Matthew chapters 5-7, we see Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where He declared the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven. And when Jesus came down from the mountain, in Matthew 8:1-4, the first miracle He performed was to cleanse a man with leprosy.

Of course, in the New Testament, when people believe in Jesus Christ and He declares them clean, they are cleansed. But in the Old Testament, it was much more complicated, with many detailed regulations. We need to understand that the Old Testament is a picture, and we must grasp the spiritual meanings behind these regulations.

At that time, we cannot help but sing praises to God because this is truly a beautiful picture of the gospel, even more detailed and vivid than the descriptions by New Testament authors. As we mentioned, the New Testament emphasizes truth, while the Old Testament is a picture that prefigures that truth. A well-drawn picture often conveys more than a thousand words. Chapter 14 is a well-crafted picture. May God grant us the grace to uncover the details in this picture and apply the principles in our lives.

Verses 1-2: "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest.'"

The leprous Israelites could not live within the camp where the Israelites resided. They could not live together, offer sacrifices together, or worship together. They had to live outside the camp, separated from friends and family, and even without God's presence. They had to tear their clothes, leave their heads uncovered, cover their

faces, and cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" whenever they met someone, living a life of shame. Every day, they longed for the day of their cleansing.

Dear brothers and sisters, isn't this a picture of our lives before we received God's grace and salvation? Perhaps at that time, you didn't realize it, because those living outside the camp were all lepers. Everyone was in the same condition, hopeless, and everyone got used to it. It is only after you have been saved and tasted the joy, peace, and hope brought by salvation that you can truly understand how pale and helpless life was before grace, with no hope in sight.

This leper, after the leprosy spread all over his body, finally recognized his own corruption and worthlessness. Now, the leprosy was cleansed, and God commanded that he be brought to the priest. But this was an enormous challenge. The priest lived inside the camp, a place of cleanliness and God's presence, while the leper lived outside the camp. Who would go outside the camp? Who would be willing to approach the leper? And who would dare to bring the leper to the priest? Wasn't God asking for something impossible here?

Verse 3: "And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper,"

Here we see that the difficult problem God poses, He Himself solves. God said that the priest would go out of the camp to examine him. What a gospel this is for the leper! God foreshadows here that His only begotten Son, in the fullness of time, would leave His heavenly throne, as it says in Luke 1:78-79, "Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Jesus Christ not only became flesh and dwelt among us but also personally came outside the camp to save sinners.

Hebrews 13:12 also says, "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate." The leper could not enter the camp by himself, so God sent the priest to go outside the camp. When the leprosy had fully appeared, covering the body, that is when the person acknowledged themselves as a sinner—thoroughly and completely a sinner, full of rebellion, with nothing that could allow them to stand before God. At that point, they were healed. Why? Because the leprosy had fully spread, and it could no longer worsen. The leprosy had no room left to spread. At this point, the person was healed, but they were not yet cleansed. The Bible says that the priest would come to examine and confirm the healing, and the next step was to cleanse them.

Dear brothers and sisters, before we were saved by grace, each of us was like a leper; after believing in the salvation of Jesus Christ, when we are to be baptized, the brother who baptizes us will ask, "Do you acknowledge that you are a sinner?" This question is very important. If you do not acknowledge it, your leprosy has not yet been healed and can continue to spread within you until you confess that you are a sinner and cannot be saved by your own efforts. Only then will your leprosy be healed. However, you are still not cleansed. Next, we will look at the regulations for cleansing.

Verse 4: "And he shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop."

We need to understand that healing and cleansing are not the same. Healing is a declaration to oneself that the leprosy can no longer spread. Leprosy symbolizes sin, and sin has a wage, and the wage of sin is death. Cleansing is a declaration to God, so someone must pay the wage of sin for the debt of sin to be removed. The priest must bring four items for the person seeking cleansing, and these four items essentially symbolize Christ.

The first item is two living clean birds. Birds are celestial; they can be free from the constraints of the earth. These two living birds symbolize Christ; both birds must be clean because only Christ is clean, and only the clean can pay the price for the

unclean. Next, we ask why there are two birds. One symbolizes Christ's death, and the other symbolizes Christ's resurrection. Christ's death removes our sin and filth and addresses all our troubles; it is an all-encompassing death. Christ's resurrection gives us life, and this resurrected life brings us light, helping us to truly know Christ and granting us the ability to overcome the dominion of sin and escape our own weaknesses.

The second is cedar wood. In 1 Kings 4:33, it speaks of Solomon saying, "He spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall." Cedar wood is the tallest among the trees Solomon spoke of. The cedar tree is tall and straight, symbolizing Christ's strong, noble, and glorious humanity.

The third item is hyssop. The smallest among the trees mentioned by Solomon is the hyssop that grows on the wall, symbolizing Christ's humble self, who took on human form to serve mankind. In Exodus 12:22, when the Israelites were still in Egypt, they first celebrated the Passover by using hyssop to apply the lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintels. This foreshadows the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross, whereby the humble and small hyssop applies to us, allowing our sins to be forgiven.

The fourth item is scarlet thread. This symbolizes the blood of Christ shed on the cross. This scarlet thread should bind together the cedar wood and hyssop, representing the combination of Christ's divinity and glory with His humble self. These two distinct characteristics are united through Christ's precious blood, allowing sinners to receive the grace of redemption.

Verse 5: "And the priest shall command one of the birds to be killed in an earthen vessel over running water."

The living bird, cedar wood, scarlet thread, and hyssop in verse 4 are all symbols of Christ; the earthen vessel in this verse symbolizes humanity. We are all created earthen vessels, and this earthen vessel contains living water, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen

vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” We are earthen vessels, but within us is a treasure, and this treasure is what Jesus Christ proclaimed in John 7:38-39, “‘He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Jesus had to go through death, resurrection, and ascension before He could give the Holy Spirit. The process Jesus had to go through was already hidden in the regulations for the cleansing of leprosy. Here it says that one bird is to be killed over the earthen vessel containing running water, which symbolizes Christ's death. The death of Christ brings about great efficacy. In Hebrews 9:14, it says, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” This verse tells us that Jesus Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, and His blood will cleanse our conscience. This verse indicates that the blood of the bird is to be dropped into the living water in the earthen vessel, symbolizing that the Holy Spirit can apply the reality of Christ's precious blood for the forgiveness of sins upon us, allowing our consciences to be cleansed.

Verse 6: “And the living bird shall take it and the cedar wood, the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.”

The other living bird symbolizes Christ's resurrection. The priest is to dip the cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop together with the living bird in the earthen vessel, which contains the living water and the blood of the bird. This is a picture full of spiritual symbols, with the scarlet thread binding the cedar wood and hyssop. It speaks of Christ's noble and strong humanity, qualifying Him to atone for humanity's sins; while Christ's willing and humble humanity indicates His willingness to pour Himself out and die on the cross for these unworthy individuals; and the scarlet thread

symbolizes the rope of salvation. These two characteristics of Jesus's humanity are bound together, expressing that Christ is both qualified and willing to die for humanity, completing redemption. Dipping these three in the bird's blood signifies that Christ has completed redemption. The other living bird is also to be dipped in the bird's blood, indicating that without death, there can be no resurrection; and the blood of the bird mixed in the living water of the earthen vessel indicates that after Jesus Christ goes through death and resurrection, He will give the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7: “And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from his leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.”

The priest is to sprinkle the blood, along with the living bird, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, on the person seeking cleansing who has leprosy, and he must sprinkle seven times. Sprinkling the blood is for the person's cleansing; seven times signifies the completeness of God's work. Then the living bird is to be released into the field. After the living bird is released, it flies high, symbolizing the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. The person with leprosy seeking cleansing has experienced the death of Jesus Christ and the efficacy of death, as well as the resurrection and the power of resurrection. After sprinkling seven times in total, he achieves complete cleansing. The person seeking cleansing from leprosy has received complete salvation; he has already been cleansed within, but his appearance is still unkempt and messy.

Verse 8: “He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes and shave off all his hair, and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean. After that he may come into the camp and shall stay outside his tent seven days.”

After living outside the camp for a while, the leprous man's body and clothes are very dirty. Now that he has been cleansed, he must wash his clothes, symbolizing the removal of the corrupt practices of his former life; he must also shave off all his

hair, indicating the cutting off of his natural life and abilities; and he must wash his body with water to cleanse away past filth and shame.

Dear brothers and sisters, a person's salvation by grace is entirely due to the grace of Jesus Christ. However, one must also take personal responsibility, which is to eliminate the old life, cast off the former life that does not please God, and sever all ties with evil. Now he is a new creation and must live in the newness of life from the resurrection. At this time, he is cleansed inside and out and can re-enter the camp. However, he still cannot go home and must dwell outside his own tent for seven days. Although he has been cleansed and can enter the camp, which is the realm of God's presence, he still cannot return home or enter into fellowship with other saints. He must undergo a public testimony for seven days, allowing everyone to observe this person who was once afflicted with leprosy but is now cleansed. He must pass through everyone's observation and examination before he can be fully accepted as part of God's household.

Dear brothers and sisters, the modern church is often weak and powerless. Is it because we are not careful enough in the matter of baptism, leading newly saved saints to not truly cleanse their old lives and not go through proper observation and examination, creating a false impression that it is easy to enter God's house? Without proper dealings, the church life becomes weak and cannot display a strong testimony.

Verse 9: "And on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, and all his hair he shall shave off; he shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean."

On the seventh day, he shall again shave off all the hair on his head. Here, it specifically mentions the hair, beard, eyebrows, and all the hair on his body. We know that hair refers to a person's glory, the beard refers to a person's self-respect, the eyebrows refer to a person's beauty, and all the hair refers to a person's natural state. In other words, everything that comes from oneself must be removed, and

then he must wash his clothes and wash his body with water, so that the whole person may be clean.

Can he return home just like this? No, he must also undergo the sacrifice on the eighth day. We will read the details of these sacrifices tomorrow. Here we see a person who has leprosy being reaccepted into the community of Israel, which requires a very complicated procedure. Each step of this complicated process is a foreshadowing of Christ. It shows how much effort Jesus put into saving a person. May God help us to truly see how precious and glorious it is to be accepted into God's family; we must not take it lightly.

Let us pray: Lord, thank You. Through the picture in Leviticus, we understand that the salvation we have is so rich, and the salvation You have prepared for us is so detailed. Help us and grant us spiritual insight, so that we can fully experience this grace of redemption. Bless the church I belong to, that it may have a holy and victorious testimony. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.