A Study of Leviticus 14

I. Outline.
1. Admission of Unclean into Camp (Leviticus 14:1-9).
2. Purification Offering for Cured Skin Infection (10-20).
4. Restoration of a House with Mildew (Leprosy, KJV) in a House (33-42).
5. Reocurrence of Plague (43-53).
6. Plague and Scall—Summary (54-57).
    --Adapted from Mark Rooker, New American Commentary, p., 199.

II. Summary.
Contents: Laws concerning cleansing of lepers.
Characters: God, Moses.
Conclusion: As the leper was cleansed from his fearful malady through the water and the blood, so Christ comes into the soul for its cleansing “by water and blood” (1 John 5:6). See John 19:34.
Key Word: Cleansing, v. 2.
Strong Verses: 20.
Striking Facts: The leper did nothing toward his own cleansing. He was sought out by the priest and cleansed by him. Our cleansing is by Christ alone.


James E. Smith summarizes chapter 14 in these words...
The purification ritual for a cleansed leper was not a healing ceremony, but a testimony that healing had occurred. Three rituals were performed in an eight-day period: (1) On the first day, the priest went outside the camp to certify that the person was healed. A bird was killed over a pot of fresh water. The water and blood were thus mingled. A live bird was immersed in the bloody water along with hyssop and cedar wood. The bird was then set free. Just as the bird was restored to fullness of life, so the cleansed leper had been restored from his deadly disease (14:2–8).

On the seventh day the former victim had to purify himself—shaving, washing himself and his clothing. On the eighth day, a series of offerings was presented “before the Lord” in order to demonstrate the restored status. Some of the blood of the trespass offering was smeared on the former victim’s right ear lobe, right thumb, and right big toe. The same was done with oil after some of it had first been sprinkled seven times “before the Lord” (14:10–20).

As in the case with a woman who had recovered from childbirth, special concessions were made for those who were unable to afford the standard offerings of cleansing (14:21–32).

4. Contamination (13:47–59; 14:33–53). Fabrics and leather might also be contaminated, but the precise nature of this contamination remains unclear. A priestly inspection was required. If after seven days the contamination had spread, the affected object was to be burned. If no spreading had occurred, the object was washed and examined again after seven more days. If the contaminated area had not faded, that part was to be torn away. If that did not stop the spread, the whole object was to be destroyed (13:47–59). Once in Canaan, Israelite houses would have to be inspected by the priests for contamination. Mildew is probably the culprit here. Contaminated houses were to be ordered closed for seven days, then reinspected. If the contamination had spread, the affected stones were to be replaced, and the rest of the interior walls scraped. If the mildew reappeared, the entire house was to be destroyed (14:33–45).
If replacement of the affected stones solved the problem, the priest was to pronounce the house clean. In the purification ceremony, a bird was killed over fresh water in a clay plot. Cedar wood, scarlet yarn and a branch of hyssop and a live bird were to be dipped into the mixture of blood and water. The house was to be sprinkled with the bloody water; the live bird was to be released outside the town. In this way atonement was made for the house (14:48–53) [Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed.). Old Testament Survey Series (Le 13:1–14:57). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.].

III. **Chronology.**

**BIBLE PERIOD:** The Period of the Christ.

**Estimate from: The Reese Chronological Bible:** 1461 B.C.

IV. **Words/Phrases to Study...** Many of the difficult words of this chapter have been defined in the Study Guide for chapter 13: [http://bit.ly/1jhzaoA](http://bit.ly/1jhzaoA)

- **14.4... SCARLET** – “The term rendered here ‘crimson fabric’ consists of two Hebrew words and means literally, ‘crimson of worm’ (in this order only in Leviticus 14:4, 6, 49, 51, 52 and Numbers 19:6; for the more common reverse order, ‘worm of crimson,’ see, e.g., the colored fabrics used in making the tabernacle, Exodus 25:4, etc.). This particular ‘worm’ is an insect that lives on the leaves of palm trees, the eggs of which are the source for a ‘crimson’ dye used to color various kinds of cloth (B. A. Levine, *Leviticus* [JPSTC], 86). That a kind of dyed ‘fabric’ is intended, not just the dye substance itself, is made certain by the dipping of it along with the other ritual materials listed here into the blood and water mixture for sprinkling on the person being cleansed (Lev 14:6; cf. also the burning of it in the fire of the red heifer in Numbers 19:6). Both the reddish color of cedar wood and the crimson colored fabric seem to correspond to the color of blood and may, therefore, symbolize either ‘life,’ which is in the blood, or the use of blood to ‘make atonement’ (see, e.g., Gen 9:4 and Lev 17:11)” [Biblical Studies Press. (2006). *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Leviticus 14:4). Biblical Studies Press.].

- **14.4... HYSSOP**—“*Twigs of hyssop* (probably one or several species of *marjoram thymus*), a spice and herb plant that grows out of walls in Palestine (see 1 Kings 4:33 [5:13 HT], *HALOT* 27 s.v. שען, and J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus* [WBC], 195), were particularly leafy and therefore especially useful for sprinkling the purifying liquid (cf. vv. 5–7). Many of the details of the ritual procedure are obscure. It has been proposed, for example, that the ‘cedar wood’ was a stick to which the hyssop was bound with the crimson material to make a sort of sprinkling instrument (Hartley, 195). In light of the burning of these three materials as part of the preparation of the ashes of the red heifer in Numbers 19:5–6, however, this seems unlikely” [Biblical Studies Press. (2006). *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Leviticus 14:4). Biblical Studies Press.].


- **14.37... HOLLOW STRAKES**—“*The Complete Word Study Dictionary, an e-Sword module*.

- **14.41... SCRAPED**—“The verb meaning to scrape. It means to rub or to move a sharp-edged tool or a rough tool over a surface, such as a plastered wall, to remove unwanted features or materials (Leviticus 14:41)” [The Complete Word Study Dictionary].

- **14.44... FRETTLING LEPROSY**—“A verb meaning to prick, to be painful, to be destructive. It refers to a skin disease or an eruption that is destructive, hurtful (Leviticus 13:51-52); or to some growth or malignancy found in the structure or materials of a house (Leviticus 14:44). It modifies the word *sāra‘at* each time. It is used to modify brier or thorn, a figure of speech for oppressive
people around Israel who were painful or prickly briers or thorns (Ezekiel 28:24)" [The Complete Word Study Dictionary].


- Not everything that looked like leprosy was leprosy. This was why the priest had to examine a person to see if he or she was really infected with the disease or if it was some less serious skin problem. Leviticus 13 with its talk of isolation is discouraging, but chapter 14 offers a ray of hope. A leper could be cleansed and restored to the covenant community. Because there was no cure for leprosy in that age, a person was cured by the grace of God (see 2 Kings 5.1-19; Luke 4.27).
- If the priest was unable to determine the true nature of the disease, the infected person would be isolated from the camp for seven days (Leviticus 13.4). Jewish priests are thought to have been the first to quarantine a person with a potentially contagious disease. After the first seven days, the infected person would be re-examined, and if the sore or skin condition appeared to be unchanged, the person would be isolated for another week (v. 5). At the end of the second week, the infected person would be examined by the priest again. If the discoloration had improved or the sore has not spread on the skin, the person would be pronounced clean. After ceremonial purification, he could re-enter normal society (v. 6). If, however, the sore had spread or if there were signs of the disease spreading after the person had been pronounced clean, the priest would declare him leprous, and he would be permanently separated from the camp (v. 46; see Numbers 12.9ff). Living outside the camp was considered a calamity to people conditioned to live in a community and was, therefore, an occasion of great distress to the sufferer and his family.
- Sin separates one from God and from God’s people (Isaiah 59.1-2). This separation can be temporary in this life, or it can be permanent in the next one (2 Thessalonians 1.7-9). Persons living in this world may not understand what that separation means, but after the judgment, they will come to know how horrible that is (Matthew 25.41, 46). There is a cure for the disease of sin. It is the blood of Christ applied to the soul (Ephesians 1.7; Colossians 1.14). For one afflicted with this disease there is cleansing (Acts 22.16; Revelation 1.5) or restoration (Acts 8.20-24; James 5.16; 1 John 1.9).
- Sin is not merely a surface problem. It comes from within (Matthew 15.19-20). Unless a person can be changed from within, he or she cannot be healed from the disease of sin. Sin is not really a flesh problem, but “the heart of the problem is a problem of the heart.” Jeremiah said—Jeremiah 17.9...

**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**

- There is a cure for the disease of sin, but because of ignorance or rejection of the gospel many are still lost. There is no other cure except the blood of Christ.
- Sin is contagious.
- All sin begins in the heart.

VI. Questions.

**True or False**

01. _____ There are no wave offerings mentioned in this chapter.
02. _____ The priest poured the oil in his own left hand.
03. _____ A cleansed leper would have had blood sprinkled upon him seven times.
04. _____ Last word in this chapter is LEPROSY.
05. _____ Sometimes an infected house had to be broken down and destroyed.
06. _____ Colors were part of the formula for determining when a house was infected with leprosy.

**I Found it in Verse(s)**

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07. _____ The living bird is dipped in blood.
08. _____ Regarding sacrifices, special provision is made for the poor.
09. _____ The toe of which foot was to be sprinkled with oil.
10. _____ Four things needed to cleanse an infected house.

Short Answer

11. One of the birds was to be killed over this: 

12. In seeking to determine if a house was infected, it would be shut up these many days: 

13. The description of the leper who was unable to purchase the animals for cleansing:

14. And the _______ shall _______ his _______ finger in the oil that is in his _______
hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger _______ times before the Lord.

15. And he that is to be _______ shall _______ his clothes, ...

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: 

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Leviticus 13 Questions… 01—True (44); 02—False (32-34); 03—True (2); 04—True (13); 05—True (52); 06—58; 07—16; 08—25, 27; 09—38-39; 10—11; 11—the Lord (1); 12—Burning boil, clean (23); 13—burning, white, white, deeper, unclean, plague, leprosy (24-25); 14—leprosy (54); 15—burn, fire (57).
VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. –DRL

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ARCOMEPARCSR
CDWASHMYHSCP
DRIBEESNAELC
TOTLVNHPLAED
ALUOEASRCHAG
KATONEMENTNM
EMYDLTTTIAG
GBHTGCRSVKOL
RROHNSNFIELDL
GFULBULAGIGA
LYSORPELAMHRW
VUEUGALPITTP
THENREFFOKKV

ATONEMENT    BIRD    BLOOD    CLEAN    CLEANSE
COME         DEAL    FIELD    HAND    HOUSE
KILL         LAMB    LEPROSY   LIVING   LORD
MAKE         OFFER   PLACE    PLAGUE   PLAGAISTER
PRIEST       RIGHT   SCRAPE   SEVEN   TAKE
THEN         TRESPASS UNCLEAN   WALL    WASH
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VIII. Crossword Puzzle.

Leviticus 14 (KJV)

ACROSS
02) House scrapings.
06) This verb is used with an individual and a house and CLEAN.
07) In an open field the living bird was let...
08) A kind of offering mentioned.
11) Used 7 times, preceded by MAKE AN
12) ____ tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering.
13) Kind of wood mentioned 5 times.

DOWN
01) The priest shall go forth out of the...
03) ____ of the congregation before the Lord.
04) Describes the pigeons used.
05) Canaan was given to Israel for a...
07) Used to describe a bird 6 times.
09) One of the birds was killed over running ____.
10) Hair was to be shaved from head, ____ , and eyebrows.

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