

Leviticus Chapter 14 – John Karmelich

1. The last lesson dealt with horrible diseases, and about separation from God. This lesson continues with the same themes but with a happy ending. In this chapter, the diseases go away.
 - a) I call this chapter “restoration”. It is one of the most wonderful word-pictures in Leviticus and the bible itself. The word-pictures can be used to describe someone who has committed their lives to following and serving Christ. It is about what happens to us when we make that commitment.
2. It’s important here to state what is not discussed Leviticus 14: How to be cured of leprosy.
 - a) There is no verse that says, “Take this pill and your leprosy will go away”.
 - b) There is no verse that says, “Pray this prayer and your leprosy will go away”.
 - c) Why? The implied idea is that only God can cure leprosy. That is an underlying assumption of this chapter. Leprosy is a model of “sin”. Only God can restore us of sins.
 - d) As I mentioned in the last lesson, it is interesting that the first recorded miracle in the New Testament is Jesus actually curing someone of leprosy! (Ref. Matthew 8:2-3). It ties to the word-picture that only God can cure leprosy.
3. So, if only God can cure leprosy, and there are 56 verses in chapter about leprosy, what’s up? ☺
 - a) I am so glad you asked that question! ☺ The focus of this chapter is on the restoration of our relationship with God.
 - b) Think of it this way: Leprosy is a word picture of sin. Chapter 13 deals with those who are symbolically clean isolating those who have leprosy. The “clean” are being separated from the “unclean”. In Chapter 14, the “unclean” are made “clean” again.
4. My main objective in writing these bible study lessons is to teach and inspire people to have a closer relationship with God. I’ve often nicknamed my studies, “I believe in Jesus, now what?”
 - a) A nickname for this lesson can be, “I believe in Jesus, now what happens to me?”
 - i) That’s a good summary of most of Leviticus 14. It’s a lesson on a person “cleansed of their disease” and how they are now anointed by God.
 - ii) The last part of Chapter 14, along with Chapter 15 get back to the main theme of Chapters 11-15, which deal with our “everyday” relationship with God. It is about living a life that is pleasing to God in all that we do. These chapters constantly use the term “clean and unclean”, which teach us about daily (regular) obedience to God. Issues such as food, sickness, health issues, living habits are the main themes of these chapters, but the underlying issue is obedience to God.
 - b) Getting back to “now what happens to me”, this is the main idea of Chapter 14.
 - i) Most of Chapter 14 deals with a person cured of leprosy. That cured person then goes through a cleansing ritual that was similar to the ritual the high priest went through when they were being prepared for service.
 - ii) Leviticus Chapters 8-11 dealt with the preparation-for-service of the Israelite priests. Those chapters were about how a priest was to be trained for service and what were his actual daily functions. What is interesting is that a person cured of leprosy is going to get a similar ritual treatment as a priest here in Chapter 14.
 - iii) The idea is if God has cured someone of leprosy, He must have something special planned for them. If God took the time and trouble to cure someone of the horrible disease of leprosy, then God wants that person to be a special, living witness for Him and be used by Him. (You can see where I’m going with this! ☺)
 - iv) How is that different from the born again Christian? God has miraculously “cured” us of the horrible disease of sin. It is a done-deal on the cross. OK, now what? Now we are called out to live a life obedient to God. That is why most of Chapter 14 deals with rituals similar to those received by the priests in earlier chapters. We too, as “newly cleaned” believers, and we are called into service.

- c) On a related note, a person cleaned of leprosy is “anointed” in this chapter.
 - i) The word “anointed” simply means that God has picked out that person “from the crowd” to be used by God. The priests are anointed. Civil leaders were anointed. For example the prophet Samuel anointed King Saul and King David before each of them took their turn as king. (References: 1 Samuel 10:1, 16:1, and 16:13.)
 - ii) The word “Messiah” means “anointed one”. It refers to the future promised King of Israel that would rule forever. A requirement for Christians is to understand that Jesus is that promised Messiah. A title for Jesus is the “anointed one” of God.
 - iii) The only other group that is “anointed” in the bible is ex-lepers. That describes most of Chapter 14. These ex-lepers are called by God into service after they are “cleaned”. That is also a good model of our new role as believers in God. Those are the word-pictures we are going to deal with in these lessons.
- 5. Chapter 14, Verse 1: The LORD said to Moses,
 - a) One of the interesting bits of trivia in Leviticus is how some sections start with “The LORD spoke to Moses” and others start with the “LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron”.
 - i) Moses is the civil leader of Israel. Aaron is the spiritual leader of Israel.
 - b) Why just Moses here? Someone who is a leper is ex-communicated from the Israelites. They are isolated (quarantined) for the protection of the group. If all of a sudden, a person is healed of leprosy, the priest is “not the first” to be aware of it as that leper is isolated. Therefore, this set of laws is primarily given to the civil leader.
 - i) As a word-picture, the “people” must keep an eye out for a leper that is healed and help them bring them back in the community. Just as someone who is all-of-sudden cleansed of their sins (hint hint ☺) must now be brought back in the congregation “by” the congregation.
- 6. Verse 2: "These are the regulations for the diseased person at the time of his ceremonial cleansing, when he is brought to the priest:
 - a) So what do you do with a person who is now clean of leprosy? Bring him or her to the priest. That is the idea of this verse.
 - b) Suppose you meet someone or help someone who wants to commit their lives to Christ? We “bring them to the priest”. In that time era, it means to bring them to the High Priest to examine them, verify the disease is gone and begin the ceremonial cleaning process.
 - c) As I’ve stated all through these Leviticus lessons, all Christians are called to be priests. Not in the formal-profession status, but in the fact we are all called to serve one another.
 - i) Here in Leviticus, we have a person miraculously cured of leprosy. Absolutely no details are given how they are cured. It is just a plain old miracle. From that point, the “priests” (that’s you and me folks) are to help that person draw closer to God. All Christians are called to work as a team to help each other grow and mature in our relationship with God.
 - ii) On a related note, Billy Graham, the famous evangelist once commented that the average person who commits their life to Jesus has been in contact with about twenty different Christians prior to their conversion. He meant that it’s not just God using Billy Graham to change a person. Many are involved in the process.
 - a) We bring “ex-lepers” to us-priests. That may mean encouraging them to come to church. That may mean praying with them. That may mean helping them show their gratitude to God for their forgiveness of sins.
- 7. Verse 3: The priest is to go outside the camp and examine him.
 - a) This is one of my favorite sentences in the chapter. The priest, who hears about a leper being cured, is not to sit in the tabernacle and wait for the ex-leper to show up. The priest is to go find the ex-leper and examine him or her. They are to go to the ex-leper.
 - b) The job of the priest is to examine the ex-leper and verify the disease is gone. Part of the priests’ job is to protect the Israelites from disease and the priest must make sure it’s gone.

- c) Notice how much God wants “cleansed” people back in the group. The High Priest does not say to an ex-leper, “Hey you ex-communicated leper, I said you’re out and I meant it.” Instead, the priest goes out of his way, outside of the camp to go check the person with the main intent of bringing him or her back “in” with the other Israelites.
 - d) Some of you can see this wonderful word-picture already. I’ll explain it anyway. ☺
 - i) If we as priests “discover” someone near to us has now been miraculously cured by God of their sins, we are to go examine them. That does not mean we do an inventory of their lives. It means we go examine if their commitment is true. We then work with them to bring them among the other believers.
 - ii) It is a picture of believers going “outside the camp” (e.g., outside our church or our homes) to seek out other “cleansed” people and bring them into our camp.
8. Verse 3 (cont.): If the person has been healed of his infectious skin disease,⁴ the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the one to be cleansed.
- a) For the next twenty or so verses, comes a ritual for bringing the person back in among the Israelites. Remember the person has already been physically cleaned of leprosy. This chapter deals with the “ceremonial” cleansing after they have been physically cleaned.
 - b) One can read this whole section as one big set of “thank-you’s” to God.
 - i) God has saved you and I from eternal death. He has miraculously cleansed us of our sins. What does God want in return? Gratitude. A life of obedience to God is based on gratitude. That gratitude is our motivation for serving God. We love God not because we are “forced to”, but because we are grateful for what He has done for us. That is the word-picture coming across in this chapter.
 - ii) The next several verses show that the ex-leper is now clean and is welcome back among the Israelites. Verse 4 lists the materials needed for this ritual. We’ll discuss those materials in a moment.
9. Verse 5: Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot.⁶ He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water.⁷ Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields.
- a) Let me describe the ritual being performed here:
 - i) The priest starts with two “clean” birds. Clean birds are those not on a specified list in Leviticus 11:13-19. These are probably doves or pigeons. One is killed over fresh water, (i.e., water from a spring or river, as opposed to a well.) The water and the blood from the bird are collected in a clay pot.
 - ii) One bird is now dead and one is now alive. The live bird is dipped in the pot that has blood of the dead bird. The other ingredients are also dipped in this same water and blood concoction. Those other ingredients are cedar wood, scarlet (red) yarn and hyssop, which is a branch of a small bush.
 - iii) Some of this water and blood combined with the other ingredients are now sprinkled on the ex-leper.
 - iv) The priest is then to pronounce that ex-leper “clean”.
 - v) The final step is to release the live bird out into the open field.
 - b) OK, John, I get all that. What’s going on? ☺
 - i) The ex-leper was for all intents and purposes “dead”. Leprosy is a deadly disease. Now the person is miraculously cured. They are alive again. That alone is a word picture of how sin separates us from God and is an incurable deadly disease. Only by the gracious miracle of God are we “restored” to become part of a family of people that go to heaven.

- ii) Now think of the two birds as being symbolic of us.
 - a) One bird is killed. This is symbolic of the death of our old life.
 - b) That blood of the dead bird is transferred onto the body of the live bird.
 - c) The second bird is “set free”. It is a model of our new life.
 - iii) Let’s talk about the other “ingredients” in this mixture:
 - a) The water to be used is “living” water. It is water from a spring or river. It is another word-picture of our new life.
 - b) The cedar wood is a bit trickier. Commentators debate over this one. Most believe it is because the cedar tree is the largest of that region. Cedar wood was the most valuable of the tree-family for building wood. Cedar trees and cedar wood are commonly used to represents “power” in the bible.
 - (1) The idea here is the “power” of God at work for our healing.
 - c) Another ingredient is a scarlet yarn. Scarlet is a red color. Scarlet or red is the color of blood. It is symbolic of how the “blood” ties the old life to the new life. Yarn is used to tie things together. This is about the “red tie” from our old life to our new life. For the Christian, it is symbolic of Jesus blood being “tied” to our new life as a Christian believer.
 - d) Finally, we have “hyssop”. This is one of the smallest of bushes that grew in that region. It is in contrast to the “mighty” cedar tree that is used.
 - (1) Just as Cedar represents the mighty power of God at work, so the “lowly” hyssop branch is used.
 - (2) Think of the picture of we were “nothing” in our sins. We were as small and useless as a hyssop branch. By the power of God, we are now alive again.
 - (3) Hyssop is tied with “symbolic cleansing” all through the bible. Psalm 51:7a says, “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean”.
 - c) Let’s tie this all together: If I were a person who was just miraculously cleansed of leprosy, I would want to be grateful to God. I would want to join society again. Here is this priest dipping blood on me. I watch all of these ingredients put together. Maybe I understand what all of this means and maybe I don’t. All I know is when I watch the live bird go free, I think of myself as also being “free” of the sins. I understand that I was “like the dead bird”, and now I am like the live bird. I understand that somehow “blood” was used to make me alive again. One can see that as a set of word-pictures tying to what Jesus did on the cross for us.
10. Verse 8: "The person to be cleansed must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe with water; then he will be ceremonially clean. After this he may come into the camp, but he must stay outside his tent for seven days. ⁹ On the seventh day he must shave off all his hair; he must shave his head, his beard, his eyebrows and the rest of his hair. He must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water, and he will be clean.
- a) OK, hold the happiness, we’re not done yet. ☺
 - b) Before the ex-leper can go back to their old life, there is still more rituals to be performed.
 - c) The ex-leper must wash their clothing and shave all of their hair. Yes, that means everything and I don’t have to elaborate. That also includes their eyebrows. They must stay outside of their tent for seven days.
 - i) The idea is to show the “world” that they no longer have any leprosy sores. Remember that leprosy is a skin disease. That is why they are to stay outside of their tent. They don’t have to go naked, but they do have to shave everywhere.
 - ii) Finally, on day 7, they must bathe and shave everywhere again to be “clean”.
 - d) OK, what’s going on? When you think of a human with no hair anywhere, it is that of a baby. (OK, some are born with hair, but it goes away.)
 - i) Just like a “new baby”, so is a former leper now clean of their sins.

- ii) You can see the word-picture. The person is “permanently and miraculously” cleaned of their leprosy. It is a word picture of being cleansed from sin. It is as if they are “born-again” (hint hint ☺). Just like a baby with no hair, so this person “starts over” with a life free of the disease of leprosy (again, symbolic of “sin”).
 - iii) See, and you thought another chapter on leprosy would be depressing! ☺
- 11. Verse 10: "On the eighth day he must bring two male lambs and one ewe lamb a year old, each without defect, along with three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and one log of oil. ¹¹ The priest who pronounces him clean shall present both the one to be cleansed and his offerings before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
 - a) You know, it's just not possible to get through a Leviticus lesson without at least one visit to our old friend, the barbeque pit. ☺ It's time for more animal sacrifices.
 - b) Verse 10 is a “grain” or “meal” offering. To recall from Chapter 2, this is when someone brings a bread-like offering. The idea of the grain offering is for the person who has already been healed by God, and now wants to commit their lives to God. It would be a like a Christian saying, “I believe Jesus died for my sins. Now, in gratitude, I want to want to spend the rest of my life serving God. I want to make a regular commitment to prayer, God’s word, serving others etc. By giving some “bread” to God, it is the idea of making a commitment.
 - c) Now let's get back to the ex-leper: If they choose, they could still live in the leper colony. They could still choose to be outside of the believing society. If they want to be among those committed to serving God, they must also make a new commitment. That is the person of this grain offering here in these verses.
 - d) Which leads us back to these verses: The ritual is similar to that as described in Chapter 2. It is a “cleansed” ex-leper making a commitment offering to God.
- 12. Verse 12: "Then the priest is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil; he shall wave them before the LORD as a wave offering.
 - a) Besides the grain offering, the ex-leper is also to offer a lamb as a “guilt” offering. This goes back to Leviticus Chapter 5. The idea is to cleanse themselves from unintentional sins. Yes, the person has been healed. The “sin-disease” is still inerrant to all people, even though we are cleaned. (The same way a Christian still sins today. We still sin, even though we are forgiven.) The idea of this sacrifice is to cover sins that we are not even aware of at that moment.
 - b) Also mentioned is a “wave offering”. This was mentioned in Chapters 7 and 8. The idea is the priest waves a piece of the meat offering back and forth between the altar and himself. It is the priest associating the offering between the person and God. This is about identification. It is to say in effect, “I identify with this offering. I understand that this offering is made on my behalf. It symbolically connects God and man.
 - c) The big-picture idea is that in order for the ex-leper to be restored into society, the priest cannot just say to the ex-leper, “You’re healed? Terrific, come on back!” The priest must first verify they are healed for the protection of society. The priest must then help the ex-leper go through much of the same rituals as described in the early chapters of Leviticus.
 - i) Remember that my subtitle for this lesson is, “I believe in Jesus, now what happens to me?” That is the word-pictures coming through in these verses. Yes, we are healed from our sins, but there is much more to it. God still wants a commitment from us based on gratitude. That is the idea of the grain offering. God still wants us to realize there is sin in our lives we have to deal with. That is the idea of the “guilt offering”. Finally, God just wants to spend time with us and “connect” with us. That is the word picture of the wave offering.
 - ii) Christianity is single moment, life-changing experience when we first commit our lives. It is also a lifetime of gratitude and service symbolized by these offerings.

13. Verse 13: He is to slaughter the lamb in the holy place where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest; it is most holy. ¹⁴ The priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ¹⁵ The priest shall then take some of the log of oil, pour it in the palm of his own left hand, ¹⁶ dip his right forefinger into the oil in his palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of it before the LORD seven times. ¹⁷ The priest is to put some of the oil remaining in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt offering. ¹⁸ The rest of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed and make atonement for him before the LORD.
- a) In this paragraph, we have the “anointing” of the ex-leper.
 - b) This paragraph is very similar one in Chapter 8 of Leviticus. In that chapter, we had the ritual of the high priest being prepared for service. In Chapter 8, the priest had blood put on his right ear, right thumb and big toe. It symbolized that “blood” was used to symbolize what the priest hears, what he touches and where he walks. The right side is considered the dominant side and represents “power”.
 - c) I’m not going to go into great detail about this paragraph, because almost all of it is a repeat of “Chapter 8”. The symbolism is identical.
 - d) This ritual is called an “anointing”. That means a person is separated for a purpose. The priests were separated or “anointed” from among all the Israelites to be priests. Here we have an “average ex-leper” being anointed in a similar fashion to that of the high priest! One can see the symbolism of how God has miraculously cleansed us of our sins and now calls us to life of priest-like servitude based on gratitude for what He has done.
 - e) The same ritual for “preparing” the priest is used to “prepare” the ex-leper. It is almost as if an ex-leper is being prepared like a priest. For the Jewish nation, only a direct descendant of Aaron could be a priest. In the New Testament, all Christians are called to be priests. Here in Leviticus is a person “healed” of their disease. They are now anointed like priests. It is symbolic of Christian “priests” now being called to duty.
 - i) “But you (all Christians) are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1st Peter 2:9a, NIV)
14. Verse 19: “Then the priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. After that, the priest shall slaughter the burnt offering ²⁰ and offer it on the altar, together with the grain offering, and make atonement for him, and he will be clean.
- a) For the ex-leper to be ceremonial clean, the high priest must perform several sacrifices on their behalf. Let’s quickly review these sacrifices as described in the early chapters:
 - i) First, we have the sin offering. This goes back to Chapter 4 of Leviticus. This is about the realization that even though that person was a leper, they were also a “sinner” and need forgiveness of their sins. This ties the word-picture of leprosy to sin itself.
 - ii) Next comes the burnt offering. This goes back to Chapter 1. It is given when a person first commits their lives to God. An offering is 100% burnt up to symbolize how one gives their “all” to God. An “ex-leper” is committing their lives to God.
 - iii) Next comes the grain offering. In the burnt offering, one is saying they are fully committed to serving God. The grain offering is one step further by saying in effect, “Not only am I dedicated to serving God, but I trust that God will provide for me day by day. I am giving God part of my earnings to show my gratitude and show that I trust God for providing for me today and tomorrow.”
 - b) Remember a big purpose of Leviticus is to show the role of the priests. We as Christians are all “priests”. Does that mean we help new believers barbeque? No. ☺ It does mean we encourage others to draw closer to God with a regular “commitment” to God.

15. Verse 21: "If, however, he is poor and cannot afford these, he must take one male lamb as a guilt offering to be waved to make atonement for him, together with a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, a log of oil,²² and two doves or two young pigeons, which he can afford, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.
- a) If you have been reading along through all of these Leviticus lessons, you should know by now that God makes provisions for those who cannot afford more expensive animals. God says in effect, "If you are too poor to afford a lamb, I'll take a bird. On the other hand, if you can afford a lamb, don't be cheap and bring me only a bird."
 - b) That is the message of these two verses. The idea is if one cannot afford the lambs needed to perform these rituals, one can catch two doves or pigeons.
 - i) Let's face it; it's hard to be rich being a leper. The lepers lived off the welfare of society. Unless a leper had a wealthy relative who could give them one of the more expensive animals. That is a reason why this "bird" provision is made.
 - c) The underlying message is that God wants a restored relationship so bad, He is willing to "bend His own rules" in order to make it happen. God is not so much interested in what animal we bring in so much that we make the effort to restore our relationship with God.
16. Verse 23: "On the eighth day he must bring them for his cleansing to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, before the LORD.²⁴ The priest is to take the lamb for the guilt offering, together with the log of oil, and wave them before the LORD as a wave offering.²⁵ He shall slaughter the lamb for the guilt offering and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.²⁶ The priest is to pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand,²⁷ and with his right forefinger sprinkle some of the oil from his palm seven times before the LORD.²⁸ Some of the oil in his palm he is to put on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering--on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.²⁹ The rest of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD.³⁰ Then he shall sacrifice the doves or the young pigeons, which the person can afford,³¹ one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, together with the grain offering. In this way the priest will make atonement before the LORD on behalf of the one to be cleansed."³² These are the regulations for anyone who has an infectious skin disease and who cannot afford the regular offerings for his cleansing.
- a) In Verses 23-32, we have the same ritual repeated with only a few changes. The first time this ritual was stated, three lambs were required (See Verse 10). Here, only one lamb is required and two birds (doves) are substituted for the remaining sacrifices. There is not much else new here in these verses, except that the "cheaper" provisions are being made. There is no mention of cedar wood or scarlet yarn here. Again, this is about making provisions for someone who can't afford all the materials.
 - b) God is saying in effect, "If you are too poor to afford all the materials needed to restore you to society, you still have to go through the same rituals, only with cheaper materials."
 - c) Notice the "poor" ex-leper is still anointed (separated) the same way a "wealthier" ex-leper is anointed. God is not interested in our monetary status in life when we come to Him for forgiveness. The ritual is the same.
 - d) So why repeat all of these verses? Why didn't the text just say, "If you can't afford some lambs, I'll take doves instead and the remainder of the ritual is the same"? Why bother repeating all the details? I believe the idea is to emphasize that just because you can't afford all the prescribed ingredients doesn't mean God don't love you just as much.
 - i) What God is trying to get across here is that He is "going out of His way" to emphasize how much He wants a renewed relationship. If God has gone to all the trouble of healing someone of a horrible disease, then God wants a renewed relationship. He's not going to let something like monetary status prevent a person from restoring a relationship with God.

- ii) The same applies to Christians. Don't let one's financial status or any other excuse affect one's relationship with God! If one has accepted Jesus' payment for their sins, then they are just as miraculously cured as someone with leprosy was. That's the word-picture in play here. At that point, don't let something as trivial as one's monetary status prevent us from developing a relationship with God.
- 17. Verse 33: The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ³⁴ "When you enter the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your possession, and I put a spreading mildew in a house in that land,
 - a) Now in Verse 33 we change topics. We are still dealing with disease, but now it is warning against future diseases.
 - b) From Verse 33, through the end of Chapter 15, we're back to the issue of how to be "clean" before God. We are finished talking about the restoration of the ex-leper. The topic changes to dealing with diseases in a building structure (i.e. a house).
 - c) Before we get into the specifics of this verse, let's step back and take in the big picture:
 - i) We just had 32 wonderful verses about restoration. Now the topic changes to "mildew in a house". What's going on?
 - ii) Remember the overriding topic of Chapters 11-15 deal with our relationship with God in everyday life. The issues include what we eat and health issues. We had an interruption of that theme to deal with restoration from leprosy.
 - iii) A big word-picture idea to get across here is, "Once one is restored, the battle is not over". There is no "happily ever after" until we get to heaven. Yes, the ex-leper is cleansed. Yes, the ex-leper is forgiven. That person still has the sin nature and sin is all around them. He (or she) still has to deal with those issues. That is the idea behind the remainder of this chapter and all of Chapter 15.
 - d) Which leads us to Verse 33: Remember the Israelites are still wandering in the desert. It's only been a relatively short time since they got out of Egypt. The Israelites spend forty years in the desert, and most of that time is still in front of them.
 - i) With that said, God is promising them in Verse 34 they will enter the "Promised Land", which is called Canaan here and we call it Israel.
 - ii) Notice the text does not say "if" you (the Israelites collectively) enter the Promised Land. It says "when". God is making an unconditional promise. Most of the Israelites who heard this promise did not get to enter the Promised Land, but their descendants did. The point is God kept His unconditional promise.
 - iii) Now comes the bad news: God is also promising that when they enter this land, there will be mildew in some of the houses that already exist in that land. The remainder of this chapter deals with how to remove that mildew.
 - e) OK, so what's the big deal about mildew? Can't you get some Lysol and remove it? ☺
No. That household product didn't exist at that time.
 - i) Some translations use leprosy instead of mildew. The Hebrew term "leprosy" is a broader term than we think of it today. The idea is that this disease exists in "Canaan" (a.k.a., Israel) and the Israelites are going to have to deal with it.
 - ii) Mold or mildew can harm the body and can eventually kill you if it is not removed. God is giving this text as a protection to His people.
 - f) Onto the theological question: If God is "so good", why would he put this disease there in the first place? After all, the text says God put the disease there.
 - i) God put it there in the sense that God created all things. He allows all things to exist, even sin. It is God's way of saying, "I want you to stick close to me for your own good and your own protection. I'm setting up consequences if you don't."
 - ii) Another idea to discuss is the word-picture of the "Promised Land". Many people wrongly get the idea that the Promised Land represents heaven. If that is true, why is there leprosy in the Promised Land? Why did the Israelites have so many troubles through the centuries once they entered this "chosen" land?

- iii) My word-picture for the “Promised Land” is that it represents the full, rich life based on trust (faith) relationship in Jesus Christ. Even when we have that relationship, there is still sin and there are still battles we have to face. When we do get to heaven, there are no more battles. That is why I never liked the comparison of the Promised Land (Israel) to heaven itself.
 - iv) Which leads back to leprosy or mold in the land of Israel: Sin exists and it exists in the most ideal of places. That is because people are the “carrier” of this disease. The remainder of this chapter deals with sin in the land the Israelites will enter.
 - v) In summary, the rest of this chapter is God saying in effect, “I have wonderful plans for your future. However, there are still battles to be fought and things to be on your guard against. Here is one of those things you will face even once you enter the Promised Land.”
18. Verse 35: the owner of the house must go and tell the priest, ‘I have seen something that looks like mildew in my house.’³⁶ The priest is to order the house to be emptied before he goes in to examine the mildew, so that nothing in the house will be pronounced unclean. After this the priest is to go in and inspect the house.³⁷ He is to examine the mildew on the walls, and if it has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall,³⁸ the priest shall go out the doorway of the house and close it up for seven days.
- a) Let me summarize these verses: An Israelite has moved into their new three-bedroom home in the suburbs in Israel. ☺ All of a sudden, they notice a greenish-red spot on the wall. The owner says, “Hey, the real estate broker never mentioned this!” ☺ (Ok, I added that part.) The homeowner calls the priest to come examine the spot. The priest examines the spot to see if it is deeper than the surface of the wall. The priest then requires that everyone move out for seven days.
 - b) So now we discover another role of the high priest is a building inspector. ☺ Back in Verse 33, the text said, “The Lord spoke to Moses AND Aaron”.
 - i) Moses is the civil leader, and therefore is in charge of telling the people this ordinance. Aaron, as the religious leader, must be aware of his priestly duties. Part of his duties will be to check houses if there is an issue of mold.
 - c) Let me add more verses, and then we will discuss the meaning and the application.
19. Verse 39: On the seventh day the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls,⁴⁰ he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town.⁴¹ He must have all the inside walls of the house scraped and the material that is scraped off dumped into an unclean place outside the town.⁴² Then they are to take other stones to replace these and take new clay and plaster the house.
- a) Let me summarize the verses. When the priest suspects there is mildew or mold growing on the walls, the first thing he does is empty (quarantine) the house for seven days. If it is mold, that mold will grow since mold is a living substance.
 - b) After seven days comes the second inspection by the priest. If it is mold, then that section of the wall must be removed. The homes in that area were made of stone with plaster and clay. The bad area is to be removed and replaced.
 - c) OK, unto the more important question: Why is this text here? Does God want us to be building inspectors and mold removers? ☺
 - i) First and foremost, this is about protection. God wants to protect His people from what is dangerous to their health. If God loves us, then He cares for our daily lives as well.
 - ii) This text is one of many small proofs to the argument that God does care for us. There are skeptics that believe, “if there is a god, he doesn’t care what happens to us. He just made us and left us to ourselves”. If that is true, why does God go out of His way here to warn us about harmful diseases?

- iii) This is another example of God saying in effect, “Because of the existence of sin, the world is a rotten place. Sin has affected all of nature. I as God love you, care for you, and want the best for you. Follow my rules for the sake of your own happiness and your own health.”
- d) There is an underlying word-picture I also want to discuss: But first, it is time for a quick lesson in studying the original Hebrew language.
 - i) Each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is also a word picture. Learning those word pictures helps to learn the meaning of words. The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is roughly an “A”. It is pronounced “aleph”. Because the “a” is the first letter it is symbolic as a “leader”. The next letter, roughly a “b”, is called “beth”. The word picture associated with the symbol for a “b” is that of a house. The shape of the letter “b” looks a like a “sideways” little house.
 - a) Most Christians are aware that the Hebrew word for “father” is “Abba”. It is an intimate word that can be better translated “daddy”. It is based on the two letters “aleph” and “beth”. The Hebrew word for father is based on the two Hebrew letters: “a” and “b” or “ah- bah”.
 - b) The letter “a” means “leader”. The letter “b” means house. Who is the leader of the house? The father! That is how the word “ah-bah” is formed.
 - ii) Gee John, that’s neat. What does that have to do with Leviticus and mold? ☺ Glad you asked! The house is symbolic of one’s “family”. It is a common nickname to refer to one’s “house” as one’s possession, including one’s family. It would be like “dad” introducing the wife and children as one’s “house”.
 - a) Does that mean the wife and children can get mold? No. ☺ You’re missing the point. Remember from the last lesson I talked about how leprosy is a word-picture of sin. Remember that mold is a “subset” of the term leprosy as it is used in Leviticus. The term “leprosy” is wider in scope than how we think of it today.
 - b) In the last chapter, the reddish green spots on the skin were a sign of leprosy. Here we are reading of red and green spots on the walls of a home. We know today that is called mold or mildew. Back then, it was a sign of the danger of leprosy.
 - c) And your point is? Beware of the danger of “sin in the house”!
 - (1) The word-picture of leprosy on the skin is symbolic of the danger of “sin growing within us”. The skin is symbolic of the “flesh”, or our old human life. Leprosy “in the house” is external sin dangers, or more specifically, the danger of “sin in the home”.
 - iii) Don’t get me wrong: The primary purpose of this text is to warn the Israelites of the danger of mold in the house and how it can cause danger to one’s health. That is the direct meaning of the text.
 - a) The underlying message is a word-picture of the danger of “sin in the home”. For the Israelite, it could mean, buying a home, and discovering some idols to a previous god left in that house. The idea is to remove what could be sinful “before it grows”.
 - b) An example today would be if one of the children are involved in some sort of sinful practice. One must separate the love for the child with the sinful action itself. The idea is the sin itself, as much as possible is to be removed from the “house”.
 - iv) The bigger picture of Leviticus Chapters 11-15 is to keep us ceremonially “clean” in every aspect of our daily lives. That means to live as sin-free as possible. It is to watch out for sin on the “inside” (as symbolic by skin leprosy) and watch out for “outside” influences of sin (as symbolic by house-leprosy).

- e) "Mold inspection" is simply another way to keep one's focus upon God himself.
 - i) Remember the food issues of a few chapters back. If the Israelites were only to eat certain animals and eat them a certain way, it kept them God-focused every time they looked at a menu at a restaurant or a grocery store. (OK, they didn't have those things, but you get the idea. ☺) With the mold-at-home issue, a religious Jew had to be God-focused even when living in their home. They had to be aware of what is dangerous to their health and more importantly, be God-focused as what is not pleasing to Him. This mold-inspection is another way to keep our focus upon God Himself and obedience to His laws.
 - f) Finally, let's talk about our Christian role as priests. Does this mean we as Christians need to go to other Christian homes, bring Lysol and check for mold? Not exactly. ☺
 - i) In Leviticus 14, the priest does not come to the home until the priest is asked to come by the homeowner. The priest intercedes when he is asked to help.
 - ii) One of our roles as Christians is to monitor behavior of others. The bigger picture is God desires Christians to work as a group to help each other grow closer to God. That means accountability. We don't have to go digging for possible sins, just watch people's behavior. Like the priests, we are only to come when asked!
 - iii) If the situation arises where sin has to be confronted, it should be done in a humble and loving matter and follow the "Matthew 18 model". That is, approach the person one on one, if that doesn't work, then take witnesses. If that doesn't work, then tell the "church", and if that doesn't work the person is to be excommunicated. Remember this model is strictly for people who refuse to acknowledge or want to deal with that sin.
 - g) OK, time to finish the mold inspection. I know the suspense is killing you. ☺
20. Verse 43: "If the mildew reappears in the house after the stones have been torn out and the house scraped and plastered, ⁴⁴ the priest is to go and examine it and, if the mildew has spread in the house, it is a destructive mildew; the house is unclean. ⁴⁵ It must be torn down--its stones, timbers and all the plaster--and taken out of the town to an unclean place.
- a) Let's get back to our moldy house example, somewhere in Israel. Let's say there were some reddish green spots on the walls. The priest inspected it, and ordered the contaminated section to be replaced. Now it is sometime later, and more reddish-green spots appear. The priest now has the power to order the entire house to be torn down.
 - b) This reminds me a little of the modern day "health inspector". There are government officials who have the power to close say, a restaurant if the place is so unhealthy it is dangerous to the public. A modern building inspector has the power to have a home or building closed if there is a risk of say, the building collapsing. These are modern equivalents of the power of the High Priest. The priest could order a house to be torn down if the mold still exists after the initial repair and replacement effort has failed.
 - c) Like the modern day building inspector or health inspector, the priest is ordering the house to be torn down for the good of the occupants as well as the good of the community. This is about health and safety to all around the community.
 - d) Remember there was no homeowners insurance in those days. To have one's house be torn down was a much more expensive and serious issue than modern society.
21. Verse 46: "Anyone who goes into the house while it is closed up will be unclean till evening. ⁴⁷ Anyone who sleeps or eats in the house must wash his clothes.
- a) Notice that it is not a death penalty to step into a moldy house. The penalty is simply to wash up and that person is "unclean" until evening. To be "unclean" means they cannot come to public worship and has to be isolated. Mold in the house is not a disease that immediately causes incurable disease. It is a danger, but not a quick danger.

- b) Going back to my word-picture of “sin in the house”, how is one to deal with it? By isolating the “sin”. That is a word-picture in play by one who comes in contact with this “moldy house”. That person is to be isolated and “washed” of their sin. In Christian terms, that means confession of one’s sin as wrong with a desire to change.
22. Verse 48: "But if the priest comes to examine it and the mildew has not spread after the house has been plastered, he shall pronounce the house clean, because the mildew is gone.
- a) Remember that if mold is found, the house is quarantined for seven days. Let’s suppose the seven days are up, the moldy stones and plaster were removed. Now, seven days later, there is no more sign of mold in the house. The priest is to call the house “clean”.
23. Verse 49: To purify the house he is to take two birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop.⁵⁰ He shall kill one of the birds over fresh water in a clay pot.⁵¹ Then he is to take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn and the live bird, dip them into the blood of the dead bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle the house seven times.⁵² He shall purify the house with the bird's blood, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet yarn.⁵³ Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields outside the town. In this way he will make atonement for the house, and it will be clean."
- a) These verses repeat the ritual performed for the cleansing of the ex-leper. If you recall from earlier in this chapter, when a person was miraculously cured of leprosy, the priest performed a ritual with two birds and a few other items. One bird was killed and the other was set free. It was a ceremony to show the ex-leper they were now free of leprosy. The living bird was set free to show the ex-leper how they too are “set free”.
 - b) OK, now we have a house “miraculously” cured of leprosy and it’s subset-mold. The same ritual is performed as before, with a few exceptions.
 - i) There is no sin sacrifice. A physical house structure cannot sin nor are the owners of the house blamed for the sin.
 - c) Now let’s go back to our word-picture of “sin in the house”. Only God can remove sins. God has “removed” the sin from the house. The prayers have been answered. It is time to show gratitude to God and show everyone in the neighborhood how God has cleansed this house by performing this gratitude-ritual.
 - d) Let’s go back to the opening theme of this lesson. It is about “restoration”. When a person is healed of leprosy, a big restoration-ritual is performed. When a house is “healed” of leprosy (mold) a big-restoration-ritual is performed.
 - i) What does God desire of us? Gratitude. God saved us from our sins. What does God desire in return? Gratitude. That is our motivation for a life of obedience.
 - ii) God takes it one step further and protects our “house”. That includes our family. When the sins of our family are forgiven, God demands gratitude.
 - iii) When it comes to raising children, it is important to verbally instruct them right from wrong and actually teach them about God. I’m also convinced that children watch and model the action of their parents. If you want your children to go to church over their lifetime, don’t just drop them off, go yourself. Children can tell early in life if their parents are sincere about their faith.
 - iv) Now think of that issue of raising children and “sin in the house”:
 - a) We started with God “removing” the sin of the sinner (i.e., the leper). The next thing to be cleaned is the house around the sinner! When God cleans us up, we start to affect the world around us. God starts with cleaning the sin within us and then cleaning the sin around us! That is the word-picture of Chapter 14.

- v) My subtitle for Chapter 14 was, “I believe in Jesus, now what happens to me?”
 - a) What happens is when one becomes born-again, one’s sins is forgiven. It is as if all the “leprosy” within us is removed. In gratitude to that miracle, God asks us to show gratitude. The priests around us help us to show gratitude. The next thing that happens is the sin “around us” (think of the “house” as a picture of what’s around us) is then inspected.
 - b) In summary, Chapter 14 is a nice model of what happens to the Christian as he or she grows in relationship with God. Sin is removed from the person and sin is removed from the “house” around them.
- vi) And you thought mold removal is not relevant to your life. Shame on you! ☺
- 24. Verse 54: These are the regulations for any infectious skin disease, for an itch, ⁵⁵ for mildew in clothing or in a house, ⁵⁶ and for a swelling, a rash or a bright spot, ⁵⁷ to determine when something is clean or unclean. These are the regulations for infectious skin diseases and mildew.
 - a) The chapter ends with the same pattern we have seen in Leviticus: “Wrap up comments”.
 - i) It is God saying in effect, “That ends my discussion on mold and that is all I have to say on this matter”.
 - ii) If that is all God has to say on this matter, who am I to argue? ☺
- 25. Let’s Pray: Heavenly Father, First of all, we thank you for removing the sin from our lives, past, present and future. It doesn’t mean we are perfect, but that we are perfectly forgiven. Help us to live in gratitude for that forgiveness. Next, help us to be aware of the sin in our lives and the sin in our household so that we can and do deal with that sin. Help us to remove the “mold” around us that is not pleasing to You. Help us to live in obedience to You and live a life that is pleasing to You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.