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LEVITICUS 13:1 The LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

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Laws relative to the leprosy. It is to be known by a rising in the flesh, a scab, or a bright spot, Lev 13:1, Lev 13:2. When the priest sees these signs he shall pronounce the man unclean, infected with the leprosy, and unfit for society, Lev 13:3. Dubious or equivocal signs of this disorder, and how the person is to be treated in whom they appear, Lev 13:4-8. In what state of this disorder the priest may pronounce a man clean or unclean, Lev 13:9-13. Of the raw flesh, the sign of the unclean leprosy, Lev 13:14, Lev 13:15. Of the white flesh, the sign of the leprosy called clean, Lev 13:16, Lev 13:17. Of the leprosy which succeeds a boil, Lev 13:18-20. Equivocal marks relative to this kind of leprosy, Lev 13:21, Lev 13:22. Of the burning boil, Lev 13:23. Of the leprosy arising out of the burning boil, Lev 13:24, Lev 13:25. Equivocal marks relative to this kind of leprosy, Lev 13:26-28. Of the plague on the head or in the beard, Lev 13:29. Of the scall, and how it is to be treated, Lev 13:30-37. Of the plague of the bright white spots, Lev 13:38, Lev 13:39. Of the bald head, Lev 13:40, Lev 13:41. Of the white reddish sore in the bald head, Lev 13:42-44. The leper shall rend his clothes, put a patch on his upper lip, and cry unclean, Lev 13:45. He shall be obliged to avoid society, and live by himself without the camp, Lev 13:46. Of the garments infected by the leprosy, and the signs of this infection, Lev 13:47-52. Equivocal marks relative to this infection, and how the garment is to be treated, by washing or by burning, Lev 13:53-58. Conclusion relative to the foregoing particulars, Lev 13:59.

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LEVITICUS 13:2 "When a man shall have a rising in his body's skin, or a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes in the skin of his body the plague of leprosy, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of his sons, the priests:

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#### Verse 2

The plague of leprosy - This dreadful disorder has its name leprosy, from the Greek λεπτα, from λεπις, a scale, because in this disease the body was often covered with thin white scales, so as to give it the appearance of snow. Hence it is said of the hand of Moses, Exo 4:6, that it was leprous as snow; and of Miriam, Num 12:10, that she became leprous, as white as snow; and of Gehazi, 2Kgs 5:27, that, being judicially struck with the disease of Naaman, he went out from Elisha's presence a leper as white as snow. See Clarke's note on Exo 4:6. In Hebrew this disease is termed צרעת tsaraath, from צרע mor tsara, to smite or strike; but the root in Arabic signifies to cast down or prostrate, and in Ethiopian, to cause to cease, because, says Stockius, "it prostrates the strength of man, and obliges him to cease from all work and labor." There were three signs by which the leprosy was known.

1. A bright spot.
2. A rising (enamelling) of the surface.
3. A scab; the enamelled place producing a variety of layers, or stratum super stratum, of these scales.

The account given by Mr. Maundrell of the appearance of several persons whom he saw infected with this disorder in Palestine, will serve to show, in the clearest light, its horrible nature and

tendency. "When I was in the Holy Land," says he, in his letter to the Rev. Mr. Osborn, Fellow of Exeter College, "I saw several that labored under Gehazi's distemper; particularly at Sichem, (now Naplosu), there were no less than ten that came begging to us at one time. Their manner is to come with small buckets in their hands, to receive the alms of the charitable; their touch being still held infectious, or at least unclean. The distemper, as I saw it on them, was quite different from what I have seen it in England; for it not only defiles the whole surface of the body with a foul scurf, but also deforms the joints of the body, particularly those of the wrists and ankles, making them swell with a gouty scrofulous substance, very loathsome to look on. I thought their legs like those of old battered horses, such as are often seen in drays in England. The whole distemper, indeed, as it there appeared, was so noisome, that it might well pass for the utmost corruption of the human body on this side the grave. And certainly the inspired penman could not have found out a fitter emblem, whereby to express the uncleanness and odiousness of vice." - Maundrell's Travels. Letters at the end. The reader will do well to collate this account with that given from Dr. Mead; see the note on Exo 4:6 (note).

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LEVITICUS 13:3 and the priest shall examine the plague in the skin of the body: and if the hair in the plague has turned white, and the appearance of the plague is deeper than the body's skin, it is the plague of leprosy; and the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean.

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#### Verse 3

The priest shall - pronounce him unclean - וְטָמַא אֹתוֹ *vetimme otho*; literally, shall pollute him, i. e., in the Hebrew idiom, shall declare or pronounce him polluted; and in Lev 13:23, it is said, the priest shall pronounce him clean, וְטָהַר אֹתוֹ *vetiharo hacohen*, the priest shall cleanse him, i. e., declare him clean. In this phrase we have the proper meaning of Mat 16:19 : Whatsoever ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. By which our Lord intimates that the disciples, from having the keys, i. e., the true knowledge of the doctrine, of the kingdom of heaven, should, from particular evidences, be at all times able to distinguish between the clean and the unclean, the sincere and the hypocrite; and pronounce a judgment as infallible as the priest did in the case of the leprosy, from the tokens already specified. And as this binding and loosing, or pronouncing fit or unfit for fellowship with the members of Christ, must in the case of the disciples be always according to the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, the sentence should be considered as proceeding immediately from thence, and consequently as Divinely ratified. The priest polluted or cleansed, i. e., declared the man clean or unclean, according to signs well known and infallible. The disciples or ministers of Christ bind or loose, declare to be fit or unfit for Church fellowship, according to unequivocal evidences of innocence or guilt. In the former case, the priest declared the person fit or unfit for civil society; in the latter, the ministers of Christ declare the person against whom the suspicion of guilt is laid, fit or unfit for continued association with the Church of God. The office was the same in both, a declaration of the truth, not from any power that they possessed of cleansing or polluting, of binding or of loosing, but by the knowledge they gained from the infallible signs and evidences produced on the respective cases.

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LEVITICUS 13:4 If the bright spot is white in the skin of his body, and its appearance isn't deeper than the skin, and its hair hasn't turned white, then the priest shall isolate the infected person for seven days.

LEVITICUS 13:5 The priest shall examine him on the seventh day, and, behold, if in his eyes the plague is arrested, and the plague hasn't spread in the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days.

LEVITICUS 13:6 The priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and behold, if the plague has faded, and the plague hasn't spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. It is a scab. He shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

LEVITICUS 13:7 But if the scab spreads on the skin, after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall show himself to the priest again.

LEVITICUS 13:8 The priest shall examine him; and behold, if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is leprosy.

LEVITICUS 13:9 "When the plague of leprosy is in a man, then he shall be brought to the priest;

LEVITICUS 13:10 and the priest shall examine him. Behold, if there is a white rising in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and there is raw flesh in the rising,

LEVITICUS 13:11 it is a chronic leprosy in the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. He shall not isolate him, for he is already unclean.

LEVITICUS 13:12 "If the leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the infected person from his head even to his feet, as far as it appears to the priest;

LEVITICUS 13:13 then the priest shall examine him; and, behold, if the leprosy has covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean of the plague. It has all turned white: he is clean.

### Verse 13

If the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean - Why is it that the partial leper was pronounced unclean, and the person totally covered with the disease clean? This was probably owing to a different species or stage of the disease; the partial disease was contagious, the total not contagious. That there are two different species or degrees of the same disease described here, is sufficiently evident. In one, the body was all covered with a white enamelled scurf; in the other, there was a quick raw flesh in the risings. On this account the one might be deemed unclean, i. e., contagious, the other not; for contact with the quick raw flesh would be more likely to communicate the disease than the touch of the hard dry scurf. The ichor proceeding from the former, when brought into contact with the flesh of another, would soon be taken into the constitution by means of the absorbent vessels; but where the whole surface was perfectly dry, the absorbent vessels of another person coming in contact with the diseased man could imbibe nothing, and therefore there was comparatively no danger of infection. Hence that species or stage of the disease that exhibited the quick raw rising was capable of conveying the infection for the reasons already assigned, when the other was not. Dr. Mead thus accounts for the circumstance mentioned in the text. See on Lev 13:18 (note). As the leprosy infected bodies, clothes, and even the walls of houses, is it not rational to suppose that it was occasioned by a species of animalcula or vermin burrowing under the skin? Of this opinion there are some learned supporters.

LEVITICUS 13:14 But whenever raw flesh appears in him, he shall be unclean.

LEVITICUS 13:15 The priest shall examine the raw flesh, and pronounce him unclean: the raw flesh is unclean. It is leprosy.

LEVITICUS 13:16 Or if the raw flesh turns again, and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest;

LEVITICUS 13:17 and the priest shall examine him; and, behold, if the plague has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean of the plague. He is clean.

LEVITICUS 13:18 "When the body has a boil on its skin, and it has healed,

#### Verse 18

In the skin thereof, was a boil - Scheuchzer supposes this and the following verse to speak of phlegmonic, erysipelalous, gangrenous, and phagedenic ulcers, all of which were subjected to the examination of the priest, to see whether they were infectious, or whether the leprosy might not take its origin from them. A person with any sore or disposition to contagion was more likely to catch the infection by contact with the diseased person, than he was whose skin was whole and sound, and his habit good.

LEVITICUS 13:19 and in the place of the boil there is a white rising, or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest;

LEVITICUS 13:20 and the priest shall examine it; and behold, if its appearance is lower than the skin, and its hair has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is the plague of leprosy. It has broken out in the boil.

LEVITICUS 13:21 But if the priest examines it, and behold, there are no white hairs in it, and it isn't deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall isolate him seven days.

LEVITICUS 13:22 If it spreads in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a plague.

LEVITICUS 13:23 But if the bright spot stays in its place, and hasn't spread, it is the scar from the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

LEVITICUS 13:24 "Or when the body has a burn from fire on its skin, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white,

LEVITICUS 13:25 then the priest shall examine it; and behold, if the hair in the bright spot has turned white, and its appearance is deeper than the skin; it is leprosy. It has broken out in the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is the plague of leprosy.

LEVITICUS 13:26 But if the priest examines it, and behold, there is no white hair in the bright spot, and it isn't lower than the skin, but is faded; then the priest shall isolate him seven days.

LEVITICUS 13:27 The priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is the plague of leprosy.

LEVITICUS 13:28 If the bright spot stays in its place, and hasn't spread in the skin, but is faded, it is the swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him clean; for it is the scar from the burn.

LEVITICUS 13:29 "When a man or woman has a plague on the head or on the beard,

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Verse 29

A plague upon the head or the beard - This refers to a disease in which, according to the Jews, the hair either on the head or the chin dropped out by the roots.

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LEVITICUS 13:30 then the priest shall examine the plague; and behold, if its appearance is deeper than the skin, and the hair in it is yellow and thin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is an itch, it is leprosy of the head or of the beard.

LEVITICUS 13:31 If the priest examines the plague of itching, and behold, its appearance isn't deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate the person infected with itching seven days.

LEVITICUS 13:32 On the seventh day the priest shall examine the plague; and behold, if the itch hasn't spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the appearance of the itch isn't deeper than the skin,

LEVITICUS 13:33 then he shall be shaved, but he shall not shave the itch; and the priest shall shut him up who has the itch seven more days.

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Verse 33

The scall shall he not shave - Lest the place should be irritated and inflamed, and assume in consequence other appearances besides those of a leprous infection; in which case the priest might not be able to form an accurate judgment.

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LEVITICUS 13:34 On the seventh day, the priest shall examine the itch; and behold, if the itch hasn't spread in the skin, and its appearance isn't deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

LEVITICUS 13:35 But if the itch spreads in the skin after his cleansing,

LEVITICUS 13:36 then the priest shall examine him; and behold, if the itch has spread in the skin, the priest shall not look for the yellow hair; he is unclean.

LEVITICUS 13:37 But if in his eyes the itch is arrested, and black hair has grown in it; the itch is healed, he is clean. The priest shall pronounce him clean.

LEVITICUS 13:38 "When a man or a woman has bright spots in the skin of the body, even white bright spots;

LEVITICUS 13:39 then the priest shall examine them; and behold, if the bright spots on the skin of their body are a dull white, it is a harmless rash, it has broken out in the skin; he is clean.

LEVITICUS 13:40 "If a man's hair has fallen from his head, he is bald. He is clean.

LEVITICUS 13:41 If his hair has fallen off from the front part of his head, he is forehead bald. He is clean.

LEVITICUS 13:42 But if there is in the bald head, or the bald forehead, a reddish-white plague; it is leprosy breaking out in his bald head, or his bald forehead.

LEVITICUS 13:43 Then the priest shall examine him; and, behold, if the rising of the plague is reddish-white in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, like the appearance of leprosy in the skin of the flesh,

LEVITICUS 13:44 he is a leprous man. He is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean. His plague is on his head.

LEVITICUS 13:45 "The leper in whom the plague is shall wear torn clothes, and the hair of his head shall hang loose. He shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'

#### Verse 45

His clothes shall be rent, etc. - The leprous person is required to be as one that mourned for the dead, or for some great and public calamity. He was to have his clothes rent in token of extreme sorrow; his head was to be made bare, the ordinary bonnet or turban being omitted; and he was to have a covering upon his upper lip, his jaws being tied up With a linen cloth, after the same manner in which the Jews bind up the dead, which custom is still observed among the Jews in Barbary on funeral occasions: a custom which, from Eze 24:17, we learn had prevailed very anciently among the Jews in Palestine. He was also to cry, Unclean, unclean, in order to prevent any person from coming near him, lest the contagion might be thus communicated and diffused through society; and hence the Targumist render it, Be not ye made unclean! Be not ye made unclean! A caution to others not to come near him.

LEVITICUS 13:46 All the days in which the plague is in him he shall be unclean. He is unclean. He shall dwell alone. Outside of the camp shall be his dwelling.

LEVITICUS 13:47 "The garment also that the plague of leprosy is in, whether it is a woollen garment, or a linen garment;

#### Verse 47

The garment also - The whole account here seems to intimate that the garment was fretted by this contagion; and hence it is likely that it was occasioned by a species of small animals, which we know to be the cause of the itch; these, by breeding in the garments, must necessarily multiply their kind, and fret the garments, i. e., corrode a portion of the finer parts, after the manner of moths, for their nourishment. See Lev 13:52 (note).

LEVITICUS 13:48 whether it is in warp, or woof; of linen, or of wool; whether in a skin, or in anything made of skin;

LEVITICUS 13:49 if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, or in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything made of skin; it is the plague of leprosy, and shall be shown to the priest.

LEVITICUS 13:50 The priest shall examine the plague, and isolate the plague seven days.

LEVITICUS 13:51 He shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in the skin, whatever use the skin is used for, the plague is a destructive mildew. It is unclean.

LEVITICUS 13:52 He shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of skin, in which the plague is: for it is a destructive mildew. It shall be burned in the fire.

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Verse 52

He shall therefore burn that garment - There being scarcely any means of radically curing the infection. It is well known that the garments infected by the psora, or itch animal, have been known to communicate the disease even six or seven years after the first infection. This has been also experienced by the sorters of rags at some paper mills.

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LEVITICUS 13:53 "If the priest examines it, and behold, the plague hasn't spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin;

LEVITICUS 13:54 then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which the plague is, and he shall isolate it seven more days.

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Verse 54

He shall shut it up seven days more - To give time for the spreading of the contagion, if it did exist there; that there might be the most unequivocal marks and proofs that the garment was or was not infected.

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LEVITICUS 13:55 Then the priest shall examine it, after the plague is washed; and behold, if the plague hasn't changed its colour, and the plague hasn't spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire. It is a mildewed spot, whether the bareness is inside or outside.

LEVITICUS 13:56 If the priest looks, and behold, the plague has faded after it is washed, then he shall tear it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof:

LEVITICUS 13:57 and if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin, it is spreading. You shall burn with fire that in which the plague is.

LEVITICUS 13:58 The garment, either the warp, or the woof, or whatever thing of skin it is, which you shall wash, if the plague has departed from them, then it shall be washed the second time, and it will be clean."

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Verse 58

It shall be washed the second time - According to the Jews the first washing was to put away the plague, the second to cleanse it. Both among Jews and Gentiles the leprosy has been considered as a most expressive emblem of sin, the properties and circumstances of the one pointing out those of the other. The similitude or parallel has been usually run in the following manner: -

1. The leprosy began with a spot, a simple hidden infection being the cause.
2. This spot was very conspicuous, and argued the source whence it proceeded.
3. It was of a diffusive nature, soon spreading over the whole body.
4. It communicated its infectious nature, not only to the whole of the person's body, but also to his clothes and habitation.
5. It rendered the infected person loathsome, unfit for and dangerous to society because of its infectious nature.
6. The person infected was obliged to be separated from society, both religious and civil; to dwell by himself without the camp or city, and hold commerce with none.
7. He was obliged to proclaim his own uncleanness, publicly acknowledge his defilement, and, sensible of his plague, continue humbled and abased before God and man.

How expressive all these are of the nature of sin and the state of a sinner, a spiritual mind will at once perceive.

1. The original infection or corruption of nature is the grand hidden cause, source, and spring of all transgression.
2. Iniquity is a seed that has its growth, gradual increase, and perfection. As the various powers of the mind are developed, so it diffuses itself, infecting every passion and appetite through their whole extent and operation.
3. As it spreads in the mind, so it diffuses itself through the life; every action partaking of its influence, till the whole conduct becomes a tissue of transgression, because every imagination of the thoughts of a sinner's heart is only evil continually, Genesis 6. This is the natural state of man.
4. As a sinner is infected, so is he infectious; by his precept and example he spreads the infernal contagion wherever he goes; joining with the multitude to do evil, strengthening and being strengthened in the ways of sin and death, and becoming especially a snare and a curse to his own household.
5. That a sinner is abominable in the sight of God and of all good men, that he is unfit for the society of the righteous, and that he cannot, as such, be admitted into the kingdom of God, needs no proof.
6. It is owing to the universality of the evil that sinners are not expelled from society as the most dangerous of all monsters, and obliged to live without having any commerce with their fellow creatures. Ten lepers could associate together, because partaking of the same infection: and civil society is generally maintained, because composed of a leprous community.
7. He that wishes to be saved from his sins must humble himself before God and man, sensible of his own sore and the plague of his heart; confess his transgressions; look to God for a cure, from whom alone it can be received; and bring that Sacrifice by which alone the guilt can be taken away, and his soul be purified from all unrighteousness. See the conclusion of the following chapter at Lev 14:53 (note).

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LEVITICUS 13:59 This is the law of the plague of mildew in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp, or the woof, or in anything of skin, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean.



