
LEVITICUS 14:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Introduction to the sacrifices and ceremonies to be used in cleansing the leper, Lev 14:1-3. Two living birds, cedar-wood, scarlet, and hyssop, to be brought for him who was to be cleansed, Lev 14:4. One of the birds to be killed, Lev 14:5; and the living bird, with the cedar-wood, scarlet, and hyssop, to be dipped in the blood, and to be sprinkled on him who had been infected with the leprosy, Lev 14:6, Lev 14:7; after which he must wash his clothes, shave his head, eye brows, beard, etc., bathe himself, tarry abroad seven days, Lev 14:8, Lev 14:9; on the eighth day he must bring two he-lambs, one ewe lamb, a tenth deal of flour, and a log of oil, Lev 14:10; which the priest was to present as a trespass-offering, wave-offering, and sin-offering before the Lord, Lev 14:11-13. Afterwards he was to sprinkle both the blood and oil on the person to be cleansed, Lev 14:14-18. The atonement made by these offerings, Lev 14:19, Lev 14:20. If the person were poor, one lamb, with the flour and oil, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, were only required, Lev 14:21, Lev 14:22. These to be presented, and the blood and oil applied as before, Lev 14:23-32. Laws and ordinances relative to houses infected by the leprosy, vv. 33-48. An atonement to be made in order to cleanse the house, similar to that made for the healed leper, Lev 14:49-53. A summary of this and the preceding chapter, relative to leprous persons, garments, and houses, Lev 14:54-56. The end for which these different laws were given, Lev 14:57.

LEVITICUS 14:2 "This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest,

LEVITICUS 14:3 and the priest shall go out of the camp. The priest shall examine him, and behold, if the plague of leprosy is healed in the leper,

Verse 3

The priest shall go forth out of the camp - As the leper was separated from the people, and obliged, because of his uncleanness, to dwell without the camp, and could not be admitted till the priest had declared that he was clean; hence it was necessary that the priest should go out and inspect him, and, if healed, offer for him the sacrifices required, in order to his re-admission to the camp. As the priest alone had authority to declare a person clean or unclean, it was necessary that the healed person should show himself to the priest, that he might make a declaration that he was clean and fit for civil and religious society, without which, in no case, could he be admitted; hence, when Christ cleansed the lepers, Mat 8:2-4, he commanded them to go and show themselves to the priest, etc.

LEVITICUS 14:4 then the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two living clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop.

Verse 4

Two birds alive and clean, etc. - Whether these birds were sparrows, or turtledoves, or pigeons, we know not; probably any kind of clean bird, or bird proper to be eaten, might be used on this occasion, though it is more likely that turtle-doves or pigeons were employed, because these appear to have been the only birds offered in sacrifice. Of the cedarwood, hyssop, clean bird, and scarlet wool or fillet, were made an aspergillum, or instrument to sprinkle with. The cedar-wood served for the handle, the hyssop and living bird were attached to it by means of the scarlet wool or crimson fillet. The bird was so bound to this handle as that its tail should be downwards, in order to be dipped into the blood of the bird that had been killed. The whole of this made an instrument for the sprinkling of this blood, and when this business was done, the living bird was let loose, and permitted to go whithersoever it would. In this ceremony, according to some rabbins, "the living bird signified that the dead flesh of the leper was restored to soundness; the cedar-wood, which is not easily corrupted, that he was healed of his putrefaction; the scarlet thread, wool, or fillet, that he was restored to his good complexion; and the hyssop, which was purgative and odoriferous, that the disease was completely removed, and the bad scent that accompanied it entirely gone." Ainsworth, Dodd, and others, have given many of these rabbinical conceits. Of all these purifications, and their accompanying circumstances, we may safely say, because authorized by the New Testament so to do, that they pointed out the purification of the soul through the atonement and Spirit of Christ; but to run analogies between the type and the thing typified is difficult, and precarious. The general meaning and design we sufficiently understand; the particulars are not readily ascertainable, and consequently of little importance; had they been otherwise, they would have been pointed out.

LEVITICUS 14:5 The priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water.

Verse 5

Over running water - Literally, living, that is, spring water. The meaning appears to be this: Some water (about a quarter of a log, an eggshell and a half full, according to the rabbins) was taken from a spring, and put into a clean earthen vessel, and they killed the bird over this water, that the blood might drop into it; and in this blood and water mixed, they dipped the instrument before described, and sprinkled it seven times upon the person who was to be cleansed. The living or spring water was chosen because it was purer than what was taken from pits or wells, the latter being often in a putrid or corrupt state; for in a ceremony of purifying or cleansing, every thing must be as pure and perfect as possible.

LEVITICUS 14:6 As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.

LEVITICUS 14:7 He shall sprinkle on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird go into the open field.

Verse 7

Shall let the living bird loose - The Jews teach that wild birds were employed on this occasion, no tame or domestic animal was used. Mr. Ainsworth piously conjectures that the living and dead birds were intended to represent the death and resurrection of Christ, by which an atonement was made to purify the soul from its spiritual leprosy. The bird let loose bears a near analogy to the scapegoat. See Leviticus 16.

LEVITICUS 14:8 "He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and bathe himself in water; and he shall be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, but shall dwell outside his tent seven days.

Verse 8

And shave off all his hair - That the water by which he was to be washed should reach every part of his body, that he might be cleansed from whatever defilement might remain on any part of the surface of his body. The Egyptian priests shaved the whole body every third day, to prevent all manner of defilement.

LEVITICUS 14:9 It shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his body in water, then he shall be clean.

LEVITICUS 14:10 "On the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without defect, and one ewe lamb a year old without defect, and three tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil.

Verse 10

Two he-lambs - One for a trespass-offering, Lev 14:12, the other for a burnt-offering, Lev 14:19, Lev 14:20.

One ewe-lamb - This was for a sin-offering Lev 14:19. Three tenth deals - Three parts of an ephah, or three omers; See all these measures explained in Exo 16:16 (note). The three tenth deals of flour were for a minchah, meat or gratitude-offering, Lev 14:20. The sin-offering was for his impurity; the trespass-offering for his transgression; and the gratitude-offering for his gracious cleansing. These constituted the offering which each was ordered to bring to the priest; see Mat 8:4.

LEVITICUS 14:11 The priest who cleanses him shall set the man who is to be cleansed, and those things, before the LORD, at the door of the Tent of Meeting.

LEVITICUS 14:12 "The priest shall take one of the male lambs, and offer him for a trespass offering, with the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the LORD.

Verse 12

Wave-offering - See Exo 29:27, and Leviticus 7, where the reader will find an ample account of all the various offerings and sacrifices used among the Jews.

LEVITICUS 14:13 He shall kill the male lamb in the place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the place of the sanctuary; for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering. It is most holy.

LEVITICUS 14:14 The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

Verse 14

Upon the tip of the right ear, etc. - See Clarke's note on Exo 29:20.

LEVITICUS 14:15 The priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand.

LEVITICUS 14:16 The priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 14:17 The priest shall put some of the rest of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering.

LEVITICUS 14:18 The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 14:19 "The priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed because of his uncleanness: and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering;

LEVITICUS 14:20 and the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meal offering on the altar. The priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

LEVITICUS 14:21 "If he is poor, and can't afford so much, then he shall take one male lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, and one tenth of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal offering, and a log of oil;

Verse 21

And if he be poor - he shall take one lamb - There could be no cleansing without a sacrifice. On this ground the apostle has properly observed that all things under the law are purged with blood; and that without shedding of blood there is no remission. Even if the person be poor, he must provide one lamb; this could not be dispensed with: - so every soul to whom the word of Divine revelation comes, must bring that Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. There is no redemption but in his blood.

LEVITICUS 14:22 and two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering.

LEVITICUS 14:23 "On the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, to the door of the Tent of Meeting, before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 14:24 The priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 14:25 He shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering. The priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

LEVITICUS 14:26 The priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand;

LEVITICUS 14:27 and the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 14:28 Then the priest shall put some of the oil that is in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering.

LEVITICUS 14:29 The rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD.

LEVITICUS 14:30 He shall offer one of the turtledoves, or of the young pigeons, such as he is able to afford,

LEVITICUS 14:31 even such as he is able to afford, the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, with the meal offering. The priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before the LORD."

LEVITICUS 14:32 This is the law for him in whom is the plague of leprosy, who is not able to afford the sacrifice for his cleansing.

LEVITICUS 14:33 The LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

LEVITICUS 14:34 "When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put a spreading mildew in a house in the land of your possession,

Verse 34

When ye be come into the land - and I put the plague of leprosy - It was probably from this text that the leprosy has been generally considered to be a disease inflicted immediately by God himself; but it is well known that in Scripture God is frequently represented as doing what, in the course of his providence, he only permits or suffers to be done. It is supposed that the infection of the house, as well as of the person and the garments, proceeded from animalcula. See Clarke's note on Lev 13:47, and Lev 13:52 (note).

LEVITICUS 14:35 then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, 'There seems to me to be some sort of plague in the house.'

LEVITICUS 14:36 The priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes in to examine the plague, that all that is in the house not be made unclean. Afterward the priest shall go in to inspect the house.

LEVITICUS 14:37 He shall examine the plague; and behold, if the plague is in the walls of the house with hollow streaks, greenish or reddish, and it appears to be deeper than the wall;

LEVITICUS 14:38 then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days.

LEVITICUS 14:39 The priest shall come again on the seventh day, and look. If the plague has spread in the walls of the house,

LEVITICUS 14:40 then the priest shall command that they take out the stones in which is the plague, and cast them into an unclean place outside of the city:

LEVITICUS 14:41 and he shall cause the inside of the house to be scraped all over, and they shall pour out the mortar, that they scraped off, outside of the city into an unclean place.

LEVITICUS 14:42 They shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house.

LEVITICUS 14:43 "If the plague comes again, and breaks out in the house, after he has taken out the stones, and after he has scraped the house, and after it was plastered;

LEVITICUS 14:44 then the priest shall come in and look; and behold, if the plague has spread in the house, it is a destructive mildew in the house. It is unclean.

LEVITICUS 14:45 He shall break down the house, its stones, and its timber, and all the house's mortar. He shall carry them out of the city into an unclean place.

Verse 45

He shall break down the house - "On the suspicion of a house being infected, the priest examined it, and ordered it to be shut up seven days; if he found the plague, or signs of the plague, (hollow streaks, greenish or reddish), were not spread, he commanded it to be shut up seven days more. On the thirteenth day he revisited it; and if he found the infected place dim, or gone away, he took out that part of the wall, carried it out to an unclean place, mended the wall, and caused the whole house to be new plastered. It was then shut up a third seven days, and he came on the nineteenth, and if he found that the plague was broken out anew, he ordered the house to be pulled down." See Ainsworth. From all this may we not learn a lesson of instruction? If the means made use of by God and his ministers for the conversion of a sinner be, through his willful obstinacy, rendered of no avail; if by his evil practices he trample under foot the blood of the covenant wherewith he might have been sanctified, and do despite to the Spirit of God; then God will pull down his house - dislodge his soul from its earthly tabernacle, consign the house, the body, to corruption, and the spirit to the perdition of ungodly men. Reader, see well how it stands with thy soul. God is not mocked: what a man soweth, that shall he reap.

LEVITICUS 14:46 "Moreover he who goes into the house while it is shut up shall be unclean until the evening.

LEVITICUS 14:47 He who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes; and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes.

LEVITICUS 14:48 "If the priest shall come in, and examine it, and behold, the plague hasn't spread in the house, after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed.

LEVITICUS 14:49 To cleanse the house he shall take two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop.

LEVITICUS 14:50 He shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water.

LEVITICUS 14:51 He shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times.

LEVITICUS 14:52 He shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, with the living bird, with the cedar wood, with the hyssop, and with the scarlet;

LEVITICUS 14:53 but he shall let the living bird go out of the city into the open field. So shall he make atonement for the house; and it shall be clean."

Verse 53

He shall let go the living bird - This might as well be called the scape-bird; as the goat, in Leviticus 16, is called the scape-goat. The rites are similar in both cases, and probably had nearly the same meaning. We have already taken occasion to observe (see the end of the preceding chapter at Lev 13:58 (note)) that the leprosy was strongly emblematical of sin; to which we may add here: -

1. That the leprosy was a disease generally acknowledged to be incurable by any human means; and therefore the Jews did not attempt to cure it. What is directed to be done here was not in order to cure the leper, but to declare him cured and fit for society. In like manner the contagion of sin, its guilt and its power, can only be removed by the hand of God; all means, without his especial influence, can be of no avail.
2. The body must be sprinkled and washed, and a sacrifice offered for the sin of the soul, before the leper could be declared to be clean. To cleanse the spiritual leper, the Lamb of God must be slain, and the sprinkling of his blood be applied. Without the shedding of this blood there is no remission.
3. When the leper was cleansed, he was obliged to show himself to the priest, whose province it was to pronounce him clean, and declare him fit for intercourse with civil and religious society. When a sinner is converted from the error of his ways, it is the business, as it is the prerogative, of the ministers of Christ, after having duly acquainted themselves with every circumstance, to declare the person converted from sin to holiness, to unite him with the people of God, and admit him to all the ordinances which belong to the faithful.
4. When the leper was cleansed, he was obliged by the law to offer a gift unto the Lord for his healing, as a proof of his gratitude, and an evidence of his obedience. When a sinner is restored to the Divine favor, he should offer continually the sacrifice of a grateful heart, and, in willing obedience, show forth the virtues of Him who has called him from darkness and wretchedness to marvelous light and happiness.

Reader, such was the leprosy, its destructive nature and consequences, and the means of removing it; such is the spiritual evil represented by it, such its consequences, and such the means by which alone it can be removed. The disease of sin, inflicted by the devil, can only be cured by the power of God.

1. Art thou a leper? Do the spots of this spiritual infection begin to appear on thee?
2. Art thou young, and only entering into the ways of the world and sin? Stop! bad habits are more easily conquered to-day than they will be tomorrow.
3. Art thou stricken in years, and rooted in transgression? How kind is thy Maker to have preserved thee alive so long! Turn from thy transgressions, humble thy soul before him, confess thine iniquity and implore forgiveness. Seek, and thou shalt find. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!
4. Hast thou been cleansed, and hast not returned to give glory to God? hast not continued in the truth, serving thy Maker and Savior with a loving and obedient heart? How cutting is that word, Were there not Ten cleansed? but where are the Nine? Thou art probably one of them. Be confounded at thy ingratitude, and distressed for thy backsliding; and apply a second time for the healing efficacy of the great Atonement. Turn, thou backslider; for he is married unto thee, and will heal thy backslidings, and will love thee freely. Amen. So be it, Lord Jesus!

LEVITICUS 14:54 This is the law for any plague of leprosy, and for an itch,

LEVITICUS 14:55 and for the destructive mildew of a garment, and for a house,

LEVITICUS 14:56 and for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot;

LEVITICUS 14:57 to teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean. This is the law of leprosy.
