

BIBLE BRIEFING

LEVITICUS

Chapters 12 & 13

“Jesus Christ, Physician”

Introduction

When Jesus explained why He came into the world, He pictured himself as a doctor and people as his patients. He said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17).

Jesus Christ is sometimes called "the Great Physician." He healed all sorts of diseases and disabilities. He made the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the blind to see.

His greatest miracle of healing - a miracle he still does today - is that He takes sinful people whose prognosis is certain death, and He conquers their sin, cures them of the evil that is destroying them, and gives them eternal life.

We're going to discuss some wilderness doctoring as we look at Leviticus 12 & 13. Chapter 12 will deal with purification after childbirth; Chapter 13 presents us with the problem of leprosy.

These issues were real medical concerns for the camp of Israel; but they primarily served and serve as spiritual illustrations of the deeper disease of sin.

Chapter 12

In chapter eleven the external character of sin was emphasized - we live in a world surrounded by sin. This chapter begins to place the emphasis on the internal character of sin. Not only do we become sinners by contact, but we are sinners at conception.

The very nature that we inherit is a fallen, sinful nature. David said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive

me” (Psalm 51:5). The world thinks of innocence, virtue, and goodness in the picture of a young mother holding a sweet, cuddly baby in her arms. But God paints a different picture, an opposite portrait, in this chapter. There’s the young mother holding the precious baby, but he’s not a picture of innocence and sinlessness. He is a picture of uncleanness and sin. That mother brought into the world a sinner. That’s all she could bring into the world because she is a sinner - and papa’s a sinner too.

The mother is unclean because she has brought a sinner into the world. Eve thought she had brought the Savior into the world when Cain was born, but she had brought into the world only a sinner - the first murderer. Now this Levitical ritual is to remind women that they were bringing into the world the same kind of a baby that Eve had brought into the world. They cannot do good. They can only sin.

Leviticus 12:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
Leviticus 12:2 “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean.
Leviticus 12:3 And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Being born an Israelite did not include him in the covenant until the baby was circumcised. Each Israelite was first of all a son of Adam and was born outside the covenant. Natural birth does not bring a man into a right relationship with God. Natural birth separates a man from God.

It is interesting to note that Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day. Then Jesus was brought to the temple when the days of Mary’s purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished (Luke 2:21–23). Mary was a sinner even though she brought the sinless Savior into the world. His birth did not save her. Only her new birth by accepting Jesus as her own Savior could save her.

Leviticus 12:4 She shall then continue in the blood of *her* purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

Leviticus 12:5 ‘But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purification sixty-six days.

In giving birth, the mother experiences bleeding as well as the secretion of other bodily fluids. This made her ceremonially unclean. She was not personally unclean; but she needed purification before she could return to the rituals of their religion.

Why twice the time for girls? *No one knows!* It may be to illustrate the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the sense that not only was another sinner born, but one who would give birth to more sinners!

Grace brings us to a new day. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:27–29).

Circumcision is another one of those things that has hygienic value, but is really a matter more of obedience. It had and has a spiritual application – the cutting away of the fleshly heart. It symbolized the putting off of the old life.

Leviticus 12:4 She shall then continue in the blood of *her* purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

Leviticus 12:5 ‘But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purification sixty-six days.

Leviticus 12:6 ‘When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Leviticus 12:7 Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This *is* the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

Leviticus 12:8 ‘And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.’”

The burnt offering meant total dedication to God as the mother returned to her daily life; the sin offering was for the defilement that occurred during birth.

The mother brought a burnt offering and a sin offering to God and the priest offered it for her. She had to have a sacrifice. A mother must trust the Lord Jesus Christ. With that in mind, she is prepared to raise her child as a sinner who needs to accept Christ.

Chapter 13

The filthiness and repulsiveness of sin are represented in leprosy. The leper who trudged down a hot, dusty, oriental road crying out, "*Unclean! Unclean!*" was a reminder to the Israelite that he, too, was a moral leper who needed supernatural cleansing.

This chapter and the following do not contain a cure for leprosy. This should be carefully noted. It gives instructions to the priest on how a case of leprosy is to be determined, and the measures to be taken to prevent it spreading in the camp. After it had been cleansed, there was a ritual to be followed. It is not a cure that is presented here. The main objective was to teach great spiritual truths in connection with the cleansing of leprosy as a type of sin.

This is not a scientific treatise on the detection, prevention, and cure of leprosy. There is *no* attempt to give a medical diagnosis of the disease. It has direct and definite spiritual lessons for us today.

Diagnosing a new case of leprosy:

Leviticus 13:1 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:

Leviticus 13:2 "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body *like* a leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests.

Three symptoms are identified here: a rising or boil, a scab or small tumor, a bright spot. These are symptoms of leprosy, but the person having such a symptom need not necessarily be a leper. The first step was to bring the patient with a symptom to Aaron or one of the priests.

Just so, any manifestation of sin, either small or great, should be brought immediately to our Great High Priest, Who is also the Great

Physician. We are to pray about everything. That includes every manifestation of sin.

Leviticus 13:3 The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears *to be* deeper than the skin of his body, it *is* a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean.

The man or woman was carefully watched over a period of time. If a lesion on the skin began to disappear, the person was dismissed. If the hair turned white, it was becoming dead and showed that the disease was beneath the skin. Then the priest would pronounce the person unclean.

The priest was to look on the leper and pronounce him unclean. Just so, the Great Physician looks on the human family and pronounces it unclean.

Leprosy is like sin in so many ways. Let me give you a quick review of how it is like sin, then look a little more closely.

It begins as nothing; it is painless in its first stages; it has a very slow growth; it often remits for awhile, then it returns; it numbs the senses - one cannot feel in the afflicted area; it causes decay and deformity; it gives a person a repulsive appearance. In fact, Rabbis considered the leper as one already dead!

1. It begins in a small way, “a rising, a scab, a bright spot.” Finally it delivers a death-dealing blow. No drunkard ever became an alcoholic by taking one drink, but no man ever became an alcoholic who did not take the first drink. All sins start small.
2. Leprosy not only progresses slowly from a small beginning, but it progresses surely. From a little beginning, it advances surely and steadily to a tragic crisis. This is the way God says sin is. “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:15).
3. Leprosy is a living death. A leper was treated as a dead man. The wages of sin is death. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that

soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”
(Galatians 6:7–8).

4. Like leprosy, sin destroys the whole man. Both are corrosive in their effect, working slowly and surely, until finally they break out bringing death. No man ever went wrong overnight. Leprosy did not kill in a day - it is not like a heart attack.
5. The leper’s life was a walking death. Just so, the sinner is also dead even while he lives. Paul writes, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world ...” (Ephesians. 2:1–2).
6. Leprosy does not produce sharp and unbearable pain as some other diseases. Leprosy keeps the man sad and restless. Likewise, sin produces a restlessness and sadness in man that is evident in our culture. Sin brings a person to the point of not having any feeling, just as Paul said, “Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:19). They lapse into a state of sad contentment. They can reach the state of having a “...conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2).
7. Finally, leprosy and sin separate from God. It seemed cruel that the leper was not only shut out from society, but also from the sanctuary. It must be remembered that God is holy, the Author of righteousness and cleanliness. Therefore, leprosy is a fitting symbol of sin that separates from God. “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). In the New Jerusalem, the unforgiven and unwashed sinner is shut out from the presence of God according to Revelation 21:27 and 22:15.

Leviticus 13:4 But if the bright spot *is* white on the skin of his body, and does not appear *to be* deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the sore seven days.

In this verse we see that there was no haste in making the judgment. Likewise, God is slow to anger in His relationship with us. God is very patient and He grants every opportunity to the sinner.

The priest shut up the man for seven days. He thought it was leprosy, but he was patient with him. Just so, God has shut up the world in

quarantine for the disease of sin. “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all” (Romans 11:32). “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Galatians 3:22). “Concluded” means *to shut up together*.

Leviticus 13:5 And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore appears to be as it was, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days.

Leviticus 13:6 Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore has faded, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it *is only* a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean.

Leviticus 13:7 But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again.

Leviticus 13:8 And *if* the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* leprosy.

There are some folk who make a profession of being converted. They can stand inspection for a while but finally the awful disease of sin will break out in its frightful symptoms and it is obvious they are unclean.

John speaks of this in 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

Diagnosing an old case of leprosy:

Leviticus 13:9 “When the leprous sore is on a person, then he shall be brought to the priest.

Leviticus 13:10 And the priest shall examine *him*; and indeed *if* the swelling on the skin *is* white, and it has turned the hair white, and *there is* a spot of raw flesh in the swelling,

Leviticus 13:11 it *is* an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he *is* unclean.

No doubt! There are hardened sinners of whom you have no doubt their spiritual condition.

Leviticus 13:12 “And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of *the one who has* the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks,

Leviticus 13:13 then the priest shall consider; and indeed *if* the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. It has all turned white. He *is* clean.

Leviticus 13:14 But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean.
Leviticus 13:15 And the priest shall examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean; *for* the raw flesh *is* unclean. It *is* leprosy.
Leviticus 13:16 Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest.
Leviticus 13:17 And the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. He *is* clean.

Although the entire body is covered, it does not necessarily follow that the case is hopeless. The remarkable statement here is that if the flesh has turned white, the patient is declared clean. This seems to indicate that no sinner is hopeless.

Diagnosing leprosy from a boil or burn:

Leviticus 13:18 "If the body develops a boil in the skin, and it is healed,
Leviticus 13:19 and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest;
Leviticus 13:20 and *if*, when the priest sees it, it indeed *appears* deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore which has broken out of the boil.
Leviticus 13:21 But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in it, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days;
Leviticus 13:22 and if it should at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore.
Leviticus 13:23 But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread, it *is* the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

There is always the danger of old sins spreading and becoming malignant. Often a new convert speaks of deliverance from some evil habit and then years later that old sore may break out again. It does happen. The person who has had such an experience may have been unsaved all along, or he may have been genuinely saved but the old flesh is reappearing. A careful inspection should be made.

Leviticus 13:24 "Or if the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, 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 indeed *if* the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it *is* leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore.

Leviticus 13:26 But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in the bright spot, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days.

Leviticus 13:27 And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore.

Leviticus 13:28 But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it *is* a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it *is* the scar from the burn.

The flesh must be kept under close observation, for it can break out in the most alarming manner. “I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Romans 6:19). “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away” (1Corinthians 9:27).

Diagnosing leprosy in the head or beard:

Leviticus 13:29 “If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard,
Leviticus 13:30 then the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears deeper than the skin, *and there is* in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a scaly leprosy of the head or beard.

Like leprosy, sin can break out in unlikely places.

Leviticus 13:31 But if the priest examines the scaly sore, and indeed it does not appear deeper than the skin, and *there is* no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale seven days.

Leviticus 13:32 And on the seventh day the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear deeper than the skin,

Leviticus 13:33 he shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale another seven days.

Leviticus 13:34 On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear 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 scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing,

Leviticus 13:36 then the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He *is* unclean.

Leviticus 13:37 But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He *is* clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

Leviticus 13:38 “If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, *specifically* white bright spots,

Leviticus 13:39 then the priest shall look; and indeed *if* the bright spots on the skin of the body *are* dull white, it *is* a white spot *that* grows on the skin. He *is* clean.

Leviticus 13:40 “As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he *is* bald, *but* he *is* clean.

Leviticus 13:41 He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he *is* bald on the forehead, *but* he *is* clean.

Leviticus 13:42 And if there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white sore, it *is* leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead.

Leviticus 13:43 Then the priest shall examine it; and indeed *if* the swelling of the sore *is* reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, as the appearance of leprosy on the skin of the body,

Leviticus 13:44 he is a leprous man. He *is* unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his sore *is* on his head.

Again – Careful examination and patience...

Disposing of a leper’s garments:

Leviticus 13:45 “Now the leper on whom the sore *is*, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’

The garments of a leper were to be torn. He was to cover his upper lip and go about crying, “*Unclean, unclean.*” He was capable of transmitting the disease by contact. The sinner spreads his sin wherever he goes! His disease is contagious and he infects others.

Leviticus 13:46 He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He *is* unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling *shall be* outside the camp.

No partying in Hell with your friends...

Leprosy included things like mold and mildew:

Leviticus 13:47 “Also, if a garment has a leprous plague in it, *whether it is* a woolen garment or a linen garment,

Leviticus 13:48 *whether it is* in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather,

Leviticus 13:49 and if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest.

Leviticus 13:50 The priest shall examine the plague and isolate *that which has* the plague seven days.

Leviticus 13:51 And 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, in the leather *or* in anything made of leather, the plague *is* an active leprosy. It *is* unclean.

Leviticus 13:52 He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, for it *is* an active leprosy; *the garment* shall be burned in the fire.

Leviticus 13:53 “But if the priest examines *it*, and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather,

Leviticus 13:54 then the priest shall command that they wash *the thing* in which *is* the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days.

Leviticus 13:55 Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed *if* the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it *is* unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, *whether* the damage *is* outside or inside.

Leviticus 13:56 If the priest examines *it*, and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather.

Leviticus 13:57 But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a spreading *plague*; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague.

Leviticus 13:58 And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean.

Leviticus 13:59 “This *is* the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean.”

The quality of the garment made no difference. The best garments were just as infected as the cheap garments. There is a great lesson for us to learn through this. The righteousness of man is filthy rags in God’s sight. Anything a sinner does or touches is contaminated by his sin.

Conclusion

In Jesus’ day, Jewish custom said that you should not even greet a leper, and you had to stay six feet away from a leper. One Rabbi

bragged that he would not even buy an egg on a street where he saw a leper, and another boasted that he threw rocks at lepers to keep them far from him.

But Jesus was different! He loved lepers; He touched them and healed them when they had no hope at all (Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 17:11-19).

Let's read just the first three verses of Chapter 14.

Leviticus 14:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
Leviticus 14:2 "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest.
Leviticus 14:3 And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine *him*...

The priest went out to him! There is a wonderful parallel here to the person and work of our High Priest and Great Physician. He came forth from heaven's glory to this sin-cursed earth where man was suffering from the leprosy of sin.

There is a great deal of emphasis placed on this. The second chapter of Hebrews tells about this: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:9–10, 14, 16–17). He came out of heaven's glory, down to this earth.

The Priest had to come to the leper! "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under

the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4–5).

We need to emphasize that Jesus still goes all the way to the sinner to heal his plague of sin. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

God has declared that the heart of man is vile, and so it is God who must pronounce a man clean. He alone can cleanse. “... and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).