

מצרע

Metzora (*The Leprous One*) Vayikra/Leviticus 14:1-15:33

Last week we saw how **tzara'at/leprosy** was a **physical** manifestation of a **spiritual** fault. Once diagnosed by a **priest**, a **metzora**, or one who was affected by this **skin disorder** would be placed **outside of the camp** until he was declared to be **healed**. It is relevant that **Adam and Eve** were also placed **outside of the camp** as the **result** of an **inward attitude** that caused them **to eat of the forbidden fruit**. Every **descendent** of theirs has since been **clothed** with the problem of **corruptible flesh** (i.e. a **skin disorder**) which will eventually cause them to **die** and were it not for **Yeshua the Messiah**, be **unable to inherit the kingdom of יהוה** (Yahwey).

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of יהוה**; nor does perishable inherit imperishable. **51** Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed --⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and **we shall be changed**.⁵³ For this **corruptible must put on incorruption**, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

That may sound wonderful, but the truth is **we are not there yet**. Most of us have probably been taught that the Almighty is only concerned with **our soul**. Yet, in Vayikra, we are starting to see a **much broader interest**. These are the **four primary areas** of concern:

- **Individual**
- **Food**
- **Clothes**
- **Homes/dwellings**

A few weeks ago we studied the chapter that listed what יהוה has determined to be **food (clean)** for His people and what is **NOT food (unclean)**. Last week and this week we have been studying the effect of **tzara'at on individuals, his clothing (his works), and his house**. We can make sense of a **skin disorder**, but what does it mean to have the **plague of tzara'at** come upon **our clothing or our home**?

We have been really flooded with **details** in the last few chapters. I think the reason for it all can be summed up by this verse:

Vayikra 15:31 "You shall warn the Israelites of their uncleanness, lest by defiling my Dwelling, which is in their midst, **their uncleanness be the cause of their death**."

This verse is our **connection** with the **Garden of Eden** where יהוה walked with Adam and Eve. Their **sin** left them in a **spiritual state of uncleanness** (although uncleanness is not always the result of sin) which caused them to be **evicted from the Garden**. Later יהוה established the **Tabernacle** in the Wilderness as the place where He could once more **dwell with man**...at the time of **Solomon** He would **dwell with His people** in the **Temple in Jerusalem**. Hundreds of years later, He came to **dwell with individual man**. These were all **prophetic pictures** of the **Almighty's heavenly dwelling place** with man...a **return to the purity of Eden**.

Hebrews 8:5 They worship in a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See *that* you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of Yah." '

The march back to the **Garden of Eden** has not been without **huge detours**. We have not been **faithful** in following **His directions**. The **outbreak of tzara'at** (leprosy) reflected the **sad condition of inward man**. **Repentance and mercy** brought an Israelite **back into the camp**, but this **continued attitude** brought about the **eventual exile of all of Israel**. Into this picture stepped **Yeshua**.

Matthew 15:24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the **lost sheep of the house of Israel**."

The coming of **Yeshua** did not lower the **bar for holiness**. When we **accept Him** as our Adonai, we receive **His covering of holiness and cleanness**. The **Spirit** then becomes our **teacher** and our strength in working out **our holiness**. But we must understand **what יהוה requires of us** if we expect Him to once more **tabernacle among us as in the Garden**:

1 Peter 1:14 as obedient children, not **conforming yourselves to the former lusts**, *as* in your ignorance;¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, **you also be holy in all your conduct**,¹⁶ because it is written, "**Be holy, for I am holy**."

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, **the tabernacle of יהוה is with men, and He will dwell with them**, and they shall be His people. **יהוה Himself will be with them** and be their Elohim.

There is something very interesting I noticed in Vayikra. It was **extremely time consuming, emotionally draining and expensive** for a **metzora** (leper) to be declared **clean** once he had **recovered (by repenting)** from the **disorder of his flesh**. A few weeks ago we looked at the offerings for a **variety of unintentional sins**. One who sinned brought an **offering, or paid restitution**, but he did not spend **weeks outside of the safety and the fellowship of the camp**. He was **not required to change his appearance in a way that caused humiliation**. This should emphasize to us the **importance the Father places on the attitude of the heart**. The following verses reflect this:

Proverbs 6:16 These six **things יהוה hates**, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him:¹⁷ **A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,**¹⁸ **A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,**¹⁹ **A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.**

Yeshua also had words to say about this:

Matthew 15:18 "But those things which proceed **out of the mouth** come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹ "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Last week at our study our friend **Judith** whose mother is Jewish told us of a well known Talmudic story that demonstrates the power of **gossip**:

A certain man came to his priest, asking how he could rectify his having made **evil statements about another person**. The priest told the man to go home and bring his **pillow**, which he did. Then the priest told him to go up to the top of a mountain, rip it open, and **shake all the feathers to the wind**, which he did. Then the priest instructed him to go and **gather all the feathers back**. The man claimed that this was **impossible**. The priest said that such was the situation with the **evil words** he had spoken.

As we consider the **unclean metzora**, I think it is good to start with this verse:

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our **righteousnesses are like filthy rags**; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

The prophet wants us to know that all **human attempts at our own righteousness will make us like an unclean thing...like a metzora**. Many rabbi's teach that **acts of tzedaka (righteousness)** will somehow **atone for your sins**. But the prophet **Isaiah** tells the truth of the matter. **There's nothing we can do to bring about our own righteousness**. And Vayikra tells us the rest of the story. **It is the innocent blood of the lamb that atones for the sin** and shadows **the future Lamb** that will actually **take away all sin**:

Vayikra 14:21 "But if he *is* poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take **one male lamb** as a trespass offering to be waved, **to make atonement for him**....

Okay, let's back up a little bit and see what happens when the **metzora** feels that he has been **healed**. First of all, why do you think that their **tzara'at/leprosy has disappeared**? Consider what happened last week in our Torah reading. A leper was publically recognized as having a skin affliction...**an outward showing of sins of the heart**. Imagine your spouse making the suggestion that you should see the priest with that **scab on your leg**. How awful when the priest confirms your condition to be **tzara'at**. **Humiliating! Embarrassing!** You are **unclean!** Now everyone in the camp of Israel will know that you have a **heart problem of sin!** You must **exit the camp** with your **clothing ripped, your hair disheveled, and your hand covering your lip** as you cry out, "**unclean, unclean!**"

You are traumatized, but you decide to **fast and pray**. You have at least **seven days to examine your heart**.

Psalms 139:23 Search me, O Elohim, and **know my heart**; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴ and see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

You begin to remember those times when you **participated in “harmless” gossip** against a close friend. **Convicted and broken, you fall to your knees:**

Psalm 51:16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*; You do not delight in burnt offering.¹⁷ The sacrifices of Elohim *are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart* -- These, O Elohim, You will not despise.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore **humble yourselves** under the mighty hand of Elohim, that He may exalt you **in due time**,

A few days later you begin to examine your skin and see that the **healing has begun**. **You fall to your knees** once more in **thanksgiving**:

Psalm 119:62 At midnight **I will rise to give thanks to You, because of Your righteous judgments.**

Psalm 147:3 **He heals the brokenhearted** and binds up their wounds.

On the **7th day the priest comes to examine** your now **healed** up leg. **With love**, this servant of Elohim looks into your eyes and declares you to be **free of the tzara’at!** But before you **re-enter the camp**, there is a **ritual** that must be performed.

Vayikra 14:4 "then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed **two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop.**⁵ "And the priest shall command that **one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.**⁶ "As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and **dip them and the living bird in the blood** of the bird *that was killed* over the running water.⁷ "And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and **shall let the living bird loose in the open field.**

The killing of the bird is **not a sacrifice** since it is being performed **outside of the camp**. Also, **only those who are clean are able to offer blood sacrifices.**

This ritual seems very odd and **mysterious**. When this is the case, it is usually very **Messianic** in its meaning. Here are three different views:

1. The bird that must die represents **the death of the fleshly attitude of the leper**. The **earthen vessel** represents **the human body (2 Corinthians 4:7)** and the fact that **Yeshua’s blood** was shed in an **earthen vessel**. One thought is that the **scarlet** is actually **wool yarn** that came from a **lamb, dyed red**. This **lamb...I mean scarlet yarn** was used to tie the **hyssop** (symbol from the **Passover and Yeshua’s crucifixion**) on to the **cedar (tree/cross)**. The **living bird was dipped in the blood of the 1st bird over the running water**...better translated as **“living water”** (הַמַּיִם הַחַיִּים). The **living bird, covered with blood is let loose in the open field**. This is a picture of **the leper having died to himself and walking in newness of life**.
2. The **two birds** represent the **two comings of Yeshua**. **First He came** and walked among **“clay vessels”** into whom He poured out His Word (**living water**). Then **His “blood”** was

shed to make a way for **His second coming as King**. The **second bird is bloodied**, but not injured....**a picture of the resurrected Yeshua who still bears the scars that Thomas put his fingers into. His garments will be covered with blood when He returns to judge the earth:**

Isaiah 63:2 Why *is* Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and **in righteousness He judges and makes war.** ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood**, and His name is called The Word of Elohim. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

3. Do you think the **two birds** could be a picture of the **two houses of Israel**? We have **one bird that is slain**....this is **the bird from Judah (Yeshua)**. This bird was slain in **an earthen vessel (a body) over living water**. He died so that **his blood could cover the other bird** ...we'll call him **Ephraim**. The **blood-covered Ephraim** was then **set free in an open field – dispersed into the world**. The **bird**...probably a chirping little sparrow, **free now to tell the other birds**.

When we get to Numbers, we will see many of these same elements in the ritual of the **Red Heifer Sacrifice**, which once again had to do with **purification**.

One final thought on the “**living water**”. This term was **not new to 1st century Jews**. They would have immediately **equated it with purification from uncleanness**, being aware of these verses in Vayikra 14. The **Samaritan woman** at the well that **Yeshua** spoke with would have also had that thought in mind:

John 4:9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. ¹⁰ Yeshua answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of Adonai, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and **He would have given you living water.**"

Okay, so we have **Yeshua as the source of blood that makes holy and the source of water that cleanses**. We can find both of these **elements** as they relate to **Messiah** in **Zechariah**:

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on **Me whom they pierced**."

Zechariah 13:1 "In that day **a fountain shall be opened** for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **for sin and for uncleanness**."

- **Jeremiah 2:13** "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken **Me, the fountain of living waters**, *And* hewn themselves cisterns -- broken cisterns that can hold no water."

Now let's top off these thoughts with these verses:

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately **blood and water** came out.

1 John 5:6 This is **He who came by water and blood** – Yeshua the Messiah; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.⁷ For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth: **the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.**

Isn't that awesome?! **Water for cleansing and blood for making holy...both streaming from the side of Yeshua!** What a **testimony** this must have been for those who had "eyes to see" these concepts from **Vayikra!**

So now let's return to the picture of **you** as the former metzora, **returning to the camp** of the Israelites:

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

Well it's nice to be back inside the camp, but **you couldn't go home to your own tent yet**. You'd also be very obvious in the community with **your body entirely shaved**. Interestingly enough this is **the same look as one who had completed a Nazarite vow** (Num 6:19). Here you have two people, **both being brought back into the community for two entirely different reasons**. The **Nazarite has been completely devoted** to the Almighty during the time of his vow. **The metzora has had to learn devotion...definitely the hard way. Two ways of being drawn near ...a reverent choice, or by discipline.**

A week later you **repeat the process** and **prepare for the 8th day** when you will be allowed **back into the tabernacle** where **you will make your offerings**. Finally you will be **clean and holy!** All this had to be done for what may have been the sin of **gossip**, or a **bitter spirit**, or a **little lie**.

Vayikra 14:9 "But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows -- all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and **he shall be clean**.¹⁰ " And **on the eighth day** he shall take **two male lambs without blemish**, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil.

Your experience as a metzora is now over. You have **repented** and **been healed by the Master's touch**. I hope that you have been able to connect this with what Yeshua did. **He entered the leper colony of humanity and healed with a touch those who called out to Him in repentance.**

Acts 3:19 "**Repent therefore and be converted**, that your sins may be blotted out, so that **times of refreshing may come** from the presence of יהוה,

Let's switch directions and consider **tzara'at as it affects a house**:

Vayikra 14:33 And יהוה spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:³⁴ "**When you have come into the land of Canaan**, which I give you as a possession, and I put **the leprous plague in a house** in the land of your possession,³⁵ "and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, 'It seems to me that *there is* some plague in the house,'

Notice that this instruction pertains to **a house that they shall take possession of when they get to Canaan**. Also notice that **it is יהוה who puts the plague of tzara'at on the house**. Living in a **house** after being a **tent-dweller** would be quite a change! **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** are all mentioned in the faith chapter of Hebrews 11 as "**living in tents**":

Hebrews 11:9 By faith he (Abraham) dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, **dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob**, the heirs with him of the same promise;

It is much more difficult to **accumulate possessions** in a **tent**! When you dwell in a **tent**, it is also **essential that you live in community** where everyone can look out for each other. Can you see the temptations that begin to creep in when you **dwell in a house**?

A **house** can also be symbolic of **the people that make up the family or the community**. The very **first letter of Scripture** indicates יהוה's desire to have a **house**. The **letter bet (ב)** is a picture of a **house**. In the Hebrew Scriptures, this first letter is **enlarged** for emphasis:

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In Hebrew thought, a **house** consists of **one who takes a bride**. This concept develops itself all the way throughout Scripture until **its grand finale at the end of Revelation**. Other verses show us who **His chosen house** is, and what is now placed in the **hearts** of those who are His **house**:

Jeremiah 31:31 " Behold, the days are coming, says יהוה, when I will make a new covenant with **the house of Israel and with the house of Judah** --³² "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though **I was a husband to them**, says יהוה.³³ "But **this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days**, says יהוה: I will put **My Torah** in their **minds, and write it on their hearts**; and I will be their Elohim, and **they shall be My people**.

Isaiah 2:3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of יהוה, to the **house of the Elohim of Jacob**; He will **teach us His ways**, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the **Torah**, and the word of יהוה from Jerusalem.

The **Messiah is the cornerstone** of the **house/family** of our Heavenly Father:

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as **living stones**, are **being built up a spiritual house**, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to יהוה through Yeshua the Messiah.⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion **a chief cornerstone**, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

What happens when **the house is struck by tzara'at**?

Vayikra 14:37 "And he shall examine the plague; and indeed *if the plague is on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish, which appear to be deep in the wall,*³⁸ "then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days.³⁹ "And the priest shall come again on the seventh day and look; and indeed *if the plague has spread on the walls of the house,*⁴⁰ "then **the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which is the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city.**⁴¹ "And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside, all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour out in an unclean place outside the city.

Did you notice that this is **just like the tzara'at on a man that is "more than skin deep"**? The remedy is **for the priest to take away the stones and cast them into an unclean place outside the city.** In 1 Peter 2:5, up above, we are referred to as the **"living stones"**. It is a sobering thought that **we could be some of the stones bringing tzara'at to that spiritual house.** יהוה is in the process of **restoring His holy house, His bride.** There will be **no uncleanness** found there. **Not one spot of tzara'at.**

Ephesians 5:5 For this you know, that no fornicator, **unclean person**, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, **has any inheritance in the kingdom of Messiah and יהוה.**

Chapter 15 is probably no one's favorite chapter of the Torah. It discusses in detail all of the **discharges** from both male and female that cause **uncleanness.** As believers who have accepted the **good seed**, which is the **Word of Elohim/Yeshua**, it is interesting that **these emissions** mostly concern the **reproductive organs.** I also see that the chapter is arranged in a **chiastic structure (parallel statements, inverted order)** with **marital relations as its center.** In a chiastic structure, **the center is always the focal point.**

Introduction: discharge is unclean (V. 1-2)
Abnormal male discharge (V. 3-15)
Normal male discharge (V. 16-17)
<u>Marital relations</u> (V. 18)
Normal female discharge (V. 19-24)
Abnormal female discharge (V. 25-30)
Conclusion: keep separate from uncleanness (V. 31-33)

In the case of a **metzora**, the sinner's uncleanness and repentance is **public knowledge.** In these cases of chapter 15, the process back to purity seems to be much more **private.** I'm not sure what the Almighty is trying to tell us, but let's focus just a bit on the **center** of the **chiastic**:

Vayikra 15:18 'Also, when a woman lies with a man, and *there is* an emission of semen, they shall **bathe in water**, and be **unclean until evening.**

In Chapters 13 & 14 we saw how יהוה cares a great deal about what is in **the heart of His people.** He uses **tzara'at** to bring them to **repentance** that they might **again draw near to Him with a**

clean heart. Tzara'at can be on a **person's clothing** (his works) or in his **house** (made up of those with faith in Yeshua). All **tzara'at** is for the purpose of the **restoration of the entire house (House of Israel), i.e. His Bride. The earthly picture of marital union, however, only goes so far.** Because **man is mortal**, there is still **uncleanness in their physical union.** But Vayikra 15:18 **points to a spiritual union that is clean and holy.** Perhaps the following verses can shed some light. I've made some notes within them to help you see where I'm going with my thoughts:

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to Adonai.²³ For the **husband is head of the wife**, as also **Messiah is head of the assembly (Israel – who יהוה's people have always been known as); and He is the Savior of the body** (also think of body in a broader sense, as being **the body of Messiah**).²⁴ Therefore, just as **the assembly is subject to Messiah**, so *let the wives be* to their own husbands in everything.²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the assembly and gave Himself for her,²⁶ **that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word**,²⁷ **that He might present her to Himself a glorious assembly, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish**.²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ For no one ever hated **his own flesh**, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Adonai *does* the assembly.³⁰ **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.**³¹ **"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh** (His flesh which is without corruption)."³² **This is a great mystery**, but I speak concerning **Messiah and the assembly**.³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

Messiah and the assembly...this is the spiritual counterpart of Vayikra 15:18! A spiritual union that is holy and pure....made clean by the washing of water by the word! One more thought....Vayikra 15:8 says that we will be **unclean till evening.** What **evening** could that be referring to? Read these verses in **Zechariah** and see what you think:

Zechariah 14:3 Then יהוה will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.⁴ And **in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives**, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, *making* a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.⁵ Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **Thus יהוה my Elohim will come, and all the saints with You.**⁶ It shall come to pass in that day *that* there will be no light; The lights will diminish.⁷ **It shall be one day which is known to יהוה** -- Neither day nor night. **But at evening time it shall happen *that* it will be light.**⁸ And in that day it shall be *that* **living waters shall flow from Jerusalem**, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.⁹ And יהוה shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be -- "**יהוה is one," And His name one.**

Baruch HaShem, יהוה!

Shabbat Shalom,

Ardelle