Refreshed IN THE WORD
For thy word hath quickened me
PSALM 119:50

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 14

Jesus Meets the Excluded

Day 14 · Leviticus 13

Read Leviticus 13 with careful explanations, then see Jesus' compassion for a man asking to be made clean.

For personal reading and study with friends

King James Version · Complete Scripture passages

Read and share online

Read one section at a time. Take turns reading the verses aloud, discuss the questions, and choose one practical response. Every passage referenced in the teaching is included in full.

Let’s begin together

Father, open our understanding as we read Your Word. Help us hear Your instructions in their setting, see Jesus clearly, and respond with faith and love. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Leviticus 13 describes how priests examined skin conditions and damaged clothing. Torah means instruction. These rules belonged to Israel’s covenant life around God’s holy dwelling. We will read the whole chapter in portions, then meet a man who came to Jesus asking to be made clean.

Main truth: God calls for careful discernment, and Jesus shows compassion to a person living outside the community.

1. Look carefully before deciding

Leviticus 13:1-8

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying,

2 When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests:

3 And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean.

4 If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days:

5 And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin; then the priest shall shut him up seven days more:

6 And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague be somewhat dark, and the plague spread not in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean: it is but a scab: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

7 But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen of the priest again:

8 And if the priest see that, behold, the scab spreadeth in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a leprosy.

The priest examined the person instead of making a quick guess. Some cases required seven days of waiting and another examination. The word translated “leprosy” covers a wider set of conditions in this chapter than one modern disease. This is a passage about Israel’s ritual status, not a modern guide for diagnosing skin problems.

2. Follow the distinctions in the text

Leviticus 13:9-17

9 When the plague of leprosy is in a man, then he shall be brought unto the priest;

10 And the priest shall see him: and, behold, if the rising be white in the skin, and it have turned the hair white, and there be quick raw flesh in the rising;

11 It is an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not shut him up: for he is unclean.

12 And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh;

13 Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean.

14 But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean.

15 And the priest shall see the raw flesh, and pronounce him to be unclean: for the raw flesh is unclean: it is a leprosy.

16 Or if the raw flesh turn again, and be changed unto white, he shall come unto the priest;

17 And the priest shall see him: and, behold, if the plague be turned into white; then the priest shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: he is clean.

These instructions distinguish raw flesh from skin that has turned completely white. Some details surprise us. We should follow what the passage actually says instead of assuming that every mark meant the same thing. The priest declared a person clean or unclean; this section does not say that he cured the condition.

3. A healed sore still needed examination

Leviticus 13:18-23

18 The flesh also, in which, even in the skin thereof, was a boil, and is healed,

19 And in the place of the boil there be a white rising, or a bright spot, white, and somewhat reddish, and it be shewed to the priest;

20 And if, when the priest seeth it, behold, it be in sight lower than the skin, and the hair thereof be turned white; the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a plague of leprosy broken out of the boil.

21 But if the priest look on it, and, behold, there be no white hairs therein, and if it be not lower than the skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days:

22 And if it spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a plague.

23 But if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not, it is a burning boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

The next case concerns a mark where a boil had healed. The priest looked at its depth, hair, and spread. A scar and a spreading condition were not treated alike. Discernment means learning to tell the difference with care. We can apply that principle by listening and checking facts before placing a label on someone.

Leviticus 13:24-28

24 Or if there be any flesh, in the skin whereof there is a hot burning, and the quick flesh that burneth have a white bright spot, somewhat reddish, or white;

25 Then the priest shall look upon it: and, behold, if the hair in the bright spot be turned white, and it be in sight deeper than the skin; it is a leprosy broken out of the burning: wherefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is the plague of leprosy.

26 But if the priest look on it, and, behold, there be no white hair in the bright spot, and it be no lower than the other skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days:

27 And the priest shall look upon him the seventh day: and if it be spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is the plague of leprosy.

28 And if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not in the skin, but it be somewhat dark; it is a rising of the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him clean: for it is an inflammation of the burning.

Burn marks also required examination. The repeated waiting periods show that a first appearance did not settle every case. Patience was part of carrying out the instruction faithfully.

4. Different conditions required different decisions

Leviticus 13:29-37

29 If a man or woman have a plague upon the head or the beard;

30 Then the priest shall see the plague: and, behold, if it be in sight deeper than the skin; and there be in it a yellow thin hair; then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a dry scall, even a leprosy upon the head or beard.

31 And if the priest look on the plague of the scall, and, behold, it be not in sight deeper than the skin, and that there is no black hair in it; then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague of the scall seven days:

32 And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the plague: and, behold, if the scall spread not, and there be in it no yellow hair, and the scall be not in sight deeper than the skin;

33 He shall be shaven, but the scall shall he not shave; and the priest shall shut up him that hath the scall seven days more:

34 And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the scall: and, behold, if the scall be not spread in the skin, nor be in sight deeper than the skin; then the priest shall pronounce him clean: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

35 But if the scall spread much in the skin after his cleansing;

36 Then the priest shall look on him: and, behold, if the scall be spread in the skin, the priest shall not seek for yellow hair; he is unclean.

37 But if the scall be in his sight at a stay, and that there is black hair grown up therein; the scall is healed, he is clean: and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

Here the focus is the head or beard. The older word “scall” describes an affected patch. The priest checked whether it spread and whether healthy hair grew. The instructions included a way to recognize recovery and pronounce the person clean. Being examined did not automatically mean permanent exclusion.

Leviticus 13:38-44

38 If a man also or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots, even white bright spots;

39 Then the priest shall look: and, behold, if the bright spots in the skin of their flesh be darkish white; it is a freckled spot that groweth in the skin; he is clean.

40 And the man whose hair is fallen off his head, he is bald; yet is he clean.

41 And he that hath his hair fallen off from the part of his head toward his face, he is forehead bald: yet is he clean.

42 And if there be in the bald head, or bald forehead, a white reddish sore; it is a leprosy sprung up in his bald head, or his bald forehead.

43 Then the priest shall look upon it: and, behold, if the rising of the sore be white reddish in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, as the leprosy appeareth in the skin of the flesh;

44 He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head.

Some pale spots were declared clean, and ordinary baldness was also clean. A person’s appearance alone was not a reason to reject them. The text names particular signs that required attention. This reminds us to avoid turning difference into disgrace.

5. Understand the cost of living outside

Leviticus 13:45-46

45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.

46 All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

A person declared unclean had to signal that condition and live outside the camp while it continued. These were serious limits on ordinary community life. The chapter does not say that every affected person had committed a special sin. We should hear the hardship in these verses without using them to shame people who are ill.

6. Even clothing was examined

Leviticus 13:47-52

47 The garment also that the plague of leprosy is in, whether it be a woollen garment, or a linen garment;

48 Whether it be in the warp, or woof; of linen, or of woollen; whether in a skin, or in any thing made of skin;

49 And if the plague be greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin; it is a plague of leprosy, and shall be shewed unto the priest:

50 And the priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague seven days:

51 And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day: if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin; the plague is a fretting leprosy; it is unclean.

52 He shall therefore burn that garment, whether warp or woof, in woollen or in linen, or any thing of skin, wherein the plague is: for it is a fretting leprosy; it shall be burnt in the fire.

The same translated word also describes damage in wool, linen, or leather. “Warp” and “woof” are the threads running in different directions through woven cloth. This confirms that the chapter’s categories are not identical to our modern disease names. Spreading damage required the item to be destroyed.

Leviticus 13:53-59

53 And if the priest shall look, and, behold, the plague be not spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin;

54 Then the priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up seven days more:

55 And the priest shall look on the plague, after that it is washed: and, behold, if the plague have not changed his colour, and the plague be not spread; it is unclean; thou shalt burn it in the fire; it is fret inward, whether it be bare within or without.

56 And if the priest look, and, behold, the plague be somewhat dark after the washing of it; then he shall rend it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof:

57 And if it appear still in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin; it is a spreading plague: thou shalt burn that wherein the plague is with fire.

58 And the garment, either warp, or woof, or whatsoever thing of skin it be, which thou shalt wash, if the plague be departed from them, then it shall be washed the second time, and shall be clean.

59 This is the law of the plague of leprosy in a garment of woollen or linen, either in the warp, or woof, or any thing of skins, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean.

Other cases required washing, waiting, removing an affected part, and examining again. The closing verse states the purpose: determining what was clean or unclean. The whole chapter asks for careful attention, not careless fear.

7. Jesus met the person behind the condition

Mark 1:40-42

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

The man trusted Jesus' ability but asked about His willingness. Jesus responded with compassion, touch, and the words "I will; be thou clean." The condition left him. The priest could examine and pronounce; Jesus actually brought cleansing. The man was a person to be loved, not merely a problem to be avoided.

Mark 1:43-45

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

Jesus told him to show himself to the priest and bring what Moses commanded. Cleansing was connected with the recognized way back into community life. The man's widespread report also made Jesus' public travel harder. Gratitude should include listening to the One who helped us.

Talk it over with friends

1. Why did some cases require waiting and another examination?

2. Why should we avoid equating illness with personal guilt?

3. What do Jesus' words and actions reveal about His compassion?

Put it into practice

Slow down before labeling someone. Ask a sincere question, listen carefully, and separate what you know from what you assume.

Reach out kindly to someone who feels forgotten. Offer a conversation, prayer, or practical help without treating them as a project.

A verse to carry with you

Mark 1:41

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

Read this verse slowly. Tell a friend what it teaches you about Jesus and how you will respond.

Let’s pray together

Father, give us patient discernment and the compassion we see in Jesus. Forgive our quick judgments. Help us honor Your holiness and treat hurting people with dignity. Teach us to listen and obey as we give thanks for Your mercy. In Jesus’ name, amen.

I love you, my friends.

Scripture and sources

Scripture text was checked against the King James Version published by eBible.org. The complete verses are reproduced with their historical wording. Verse numbers and layout are adapted for reading; editorial footnotes are omitted. Tap any Scripture reference to view its source.

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