

# Learning About Sin by the Study of Leprosy

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When I say the word leprosy, what comes to your mind? If you're like me, it makes my skin crawl a little bit and you go, oh my what a horrible thing. Leprosy was noted in India and China since the earliest recorded history. It was a serious problem in Egypt from 2700 B.C. through 2400 B.C. Then leprosy became a global problem in the 7th century B.C.; our records tell us. It's been a plague of mankind for millennia. You would think that in our modern era, it might have been eradicated but in 2017 there were over 200,000 new cases of leprosy diagnosed in the world. Here in the United States, in the last five years there have been 1000 cases of leprosy diagnosed. Let me read from The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Volume 3, page 105, as they describe some of the characteristics of leprosy. I'm quoting now: *Beginning symptoms include vague pains in limbs and joints with intermittent fever. The incubation period can vary between a few months and thirty years.* Long incubation period. Somebody can carry that and not know it for a long time. *But when the eruptive stage occurs, the disease begins to assume its special character. In severe form, lepromatous leprosy [lepromatous means nodular] nodular leprosy, a hypo pigmented patch of skin [that means without pigment, so it's a white patch with no color] or numbness of skin, occurs first, although ulcers, nasal blockage and other symptoms may anticipate morbid skin changes. The nodules occur in the skin, mucus membranes and perhaps subcutaneous tissues. Sometimes the nodules ulcerate and discharge bacilli in large quantities. [Not a pretty sight] Many of the peripheral nerves are affected as are internal organs such as the spleen, liver, lymph nodes and adrenal glands. Lesions [this is the painful part] also occur in the nasal mucosa, the larynx and in the eyes.* So these lesions in your throat, up in your nasal passage and even in your eyes. It goes on to talk about, I'm quoting now: *The fetid smell of gangrenous ulcers, the thickening of nerves, contractures of joints, bone changes and the clawing of fingers.* All the joints start to contract in the latter stages.

It's interesting that in the Bible, God devotes two whole chapters to leprosy; Leviticus 13 and Leviticus 14. We know that leprosy was a serious problem in Egypt when Israel was captive there. The fact is, God devotes two chapters to leprosy but he doesn't devote two chapters to any other disease and there were a lot of other serious diseases. So that begs the question, why did God do that? Always in the back of my mind as I study the Bible, why did God do it this way or why didn't he do it that way? The question comes—why two chapters on leprosy—when He didn't do it for other diseases? Maybe there's something to this. Does God want the subject of leprosy to teach us something more than just about the disease itself and how it should be handled? And another question is, today what does leprosy have to do with the Days of Unleavened Bread?

As we all know, in our un-leavening process over the last weeks (some people start months in advance) our mind is naturally on sin. The question comes: Could there be

some connection between leprosy and sin? Is there something God wants us to learn? The subject today is:

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You wouldn't always think that the two would relate but we're going to find out that they do and the fact that God devotes two full chapters to the subject—maybe there's some lessons He wants us to learn about the relationship between leprosy and sin.

The first point that we want to make is:

**1. Leprosy begins with an insignificant beginning.**

Leprosy starts with an insignificant beginning. So let's go to Leviticus 13 and if you have a marker, you'll probably want to put it there because we will be coming back to chapter 13 and chapter 14. Leviticus 13:1.

**Leviticus 13:1** *And the Lord [YHVH, Jehovah] spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying,*

*2) When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, [a small swelling] a scab, or bright spot ... (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for bright also means white, meaning without pigment.

*2 continued) ... and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; (KJV)*

So we see that it begins as just a little small rising; a little white spot on the flesh. The last two sermons I've given talked about sin and the problem we have with sin and the nature of sin and all of that. So we know that similarly to leprosy, sin can begin very insignificantly; with a tiny little start. Let's go to James 1:13. Sin starts very small and as we know, it starts in the mind. It can begin with a single thought, as we've talked about before.

**James 1:13** *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

*14) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

*15) Then when lust hath conceived ... (KJV)*

The Greek for "conceived" can mean, *to seize or to capture or to catch*. So we could say that when lust has caught hold of somebody—captured somebody—it brings forth sin.

*15 continued) ... it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (KJV)*

Sin, as we've talked about before, begins with a single thought in our mind and if we don't stop it—if we don't banish it from our mind—it can catch hold and can lead to sin. We refer to this in times past with what Christ said in Matthew 5 (we won't turn there) but Christ said, *you've heard of old times that you shall not commit adultery, but I say unto you that if a man looks on a woman to lust after her, he's already committed adultery with her in his heart.* So Christ is saying sin begins in the mind and it can begin with a single thought; just a tiny little thought. If it is allowed to catch hold and it doesn't get pushed out of the mind, it can lead to sin. Now let's go to Hebrews 3:13; we covered this on the sermon regarding the deceitfulness of sin. This has application because of how sin starts insignificantly in the beginning and sometimes by its small start, we don't recognize it and get rid of it.

**Hebrews 3:13** [Paul says] *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened [hardened from what?] through the deceitfulness of sin.* (KJV)

So like the first sign of leprosy, sin can begin very small and because it's very small sometimes we can be deceived that's it no big deal or not so bad. It can begin to catch hold and deceive us, thinking everything is okay when it's not okay. Remember—we talked about it too—Satan in the Garden of Eden; sin began by him placing a small bit of doubt in Eve's mind. You're not going to die; when God said that, He knows that's not true; just planting a little bit of doubt. That caught hold—very insignificantly—and it began to build and build and build until finally with Satan's continued provocations—it looks good, it's fine, so let's take a bite and see what happens and maybe we'll be like God. It begins very, very small, just like leprosy. If we don't reject the thought, if we don't put it away, then it can begin to build. As we know in the end stages, leprosy can take over the whole body just like sin can. So that's the first point.

## **2. Leprosy requires the involvement of a priest.**

Let's go back to Leviticus 13 and read verse 2 again, with the idea of seeing what the involvement of the priest is.

**Leviticus 13:2** *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 [notice what happens] 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 [once this is determined] shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean.* (KJV)

We see that the priest is responsible for identifying the disease. Somebody thinks it's a problem, they go to the priest and have the priest look at it and if he determines that it's leprosy then he has the obligation of pronouncing it as leprosy and the man or woman that has it is made known of that fact (and as we're going to see) the whole community

is made known of that fact. In this same way, a minister who can counsel with somebody, who is available for that, is a great help when sin begins. When somebody is wrestling with sin or somebody is caught up with sin or somebody is concerned about whether they sinned or not, then as with leprosy, a minister is available—go talk. Let's go to Romans 7:7 and there's a fundamental principle that Paul gives us here. I read out of the King James unless otherwise noted but sometimes I'll transpose the English from the old English of they's and thou's just to not burden us.

**Romans 7:7** *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. [No the law's not sin] Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (KJV)*

Paul is saying the law helps us, it's there to help us identify sin. Similarly, a minister can help someone understand sin in the light of God's law. In years past people wonder, have I sinned—this is what I did. You go to God's word and you look it up and you talk about it and then you can make the determination—is this a problem or is it not? Are you worried about something unnecessarily or is this something you should be worried about? By the law comes the knowledge of sin, so a minister in that sense can be helpful. Just as the priest was helpful to somebody who might be worried about this spot on my arm—is it leprosy? Let's go to Acts 8:26, this is the account where an angel spoke to Philip. We don't know if a thought came into his head or if he heard a voice, we're not told, but God communicated to Philip.

**Acts 8:26** *And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. (KJV)*

Jerusalem is about 2500 feet, Gaza is on the sea coast so yes, you go downhill to Gaza, which is desert.

*27) And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, [he had great authority, he was a high minister of hers but his particular job was] who had the charge of all her treasure ... (KJV)*

How big a responsibility can you get as to be in charge of all the treasure of the queen.

*27 continued) ... and had come to Jerusalem for to worship ... (KJV)*

So we see here that this guy is no dummy; he's a very capable individual.

*28) Was returning, [from Jerusalem] and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

*29) Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. (KJV)*

Philip didn't walk, he ran there to him.

30) *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?* (KJV)

This very bright man, very smart man said:

31) *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?* (KJV)

The Greek can also mean, show the way. He said, I need some help in understanding this; can you show me the way, can you guide me through this.

31 continued) ... *And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.* (KJV)

So we see here that this very bright man was willing to get help from Philip in understanding scripture. I know it's fashionable in the church today to criticize the ministry and frankly much of it is justified, as we all know. I always try to remind myself that none of us would have the Holy Spirit today if a minister somewhere down the line hadn't laid hands on us—so there is a purpose.

We have another problem today that many brethren will just not allow a minister to do his job. I'm not saying they are doing it maliciously or purposefully—I'm not saying that at all—but many are reluctant to counsel and in part because they have been burned before. They've gone to counsel with a minister and he has rebuffed them or accused them or not treated them as they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect—so they had a bad experience. Then they are hesitant about that.

I also understand that many people just don't want to bother the minister. They feel he is so busy and my problem is so small and he has other bigger fish to fry so I'll just keep quiet about it; that's not right either because when we do that, we're not allowing the minister to do the job that God has called him to do. Please remember that ministers are there to serve, not be served. Ministers are there to help and the ultimate goal of a true minister is to see every church member—every brother and sister—with a crown of glory on their head at the end of the day. If we can help a little bit on that path, that is what God wants us to do; that is our joy and our pleasure.

We also have to remember that we are in the Laodicean era. What is the tag line (if you want to call it that; you have tag lines in advertising where you talk about Miller beer and it's the "King of beers"—that's the tag line) of the Laodicean era: "I have need of nothing". You find that in Revelation 3. The fact is that all of us need help from time to time—we just do. We aren't islands unto ourselves; we need help from time to time. Let's go to Hebrews 4:12; we learn about God's word here. I'm going to read this out of the New Living Translation. It's really a great translation of this particular verse.

**Hebrews 4:12** *For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our inner-most thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are. (NIV)*

It's an interesting translation, but it's true. If we read God's word, it opens our mind up to see—for example—how Christ would do something when He walked this earth and then it opens our minds up to see ourselves as we really are—hopefully— and we can compare how Christ handles a situation and how we just handled a given situation and look at the difference and say, oops—I need to make some changes. I should have done this rather than that. So God's word opens us up to our inner-most beings. It exposes us, who we really are, and then it gives us the opportunity—God's spirit does—to make changes. A minister, under this second point, can gently point the way. We've talked about it before; in the past the minister didn't point the way, he had a whip and a chair. He was kicking and prodding and pushing and that's not the way God operates. He doesn't operate that way with us, does He? God's not beating us up and He's not kicking us in the fanny and yelling and screaming at us—so to speak—so why would a minister do that to God's children? A minister should be patient and kind and gentle and forbearing and understanding, just as God is with us.

A minister can gently point the way to somebody that is lost; meaning confused, lost and don't understand so they come and ask, can you help me with this? Here's what I did or what I thought—can we talk about it? As a priest helped someone who might have had leprosy, determine whether or not they were leprous—a minister can help someone who is wrestling with sin and help guide them or show them the way—clear parallel there.

Let's go to a third one.

### **3. One who has leprosy is viewed as unclean.**

Let's go back to Leviticus 13:44—we're jumping down into the chapter. Once leprosy has been confirmed by the priest, now the priest pronounces the following. This is what he does once the disease has been confirmed in an individual.

**Leviticus 13:44** *He is a leprous man, [but notice this] he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head.*

*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. (KJV)*

That means that once that happened in this man—this individual—he went around shouting, unclean, unclean, and his head was bare and he had a covering then obviously the whole camp would know that this guy has leprosy. The modern world today views sin not as God does. The modern world today views sinners as sick—not unclean—but as sick. He's not a murderer, he just has troubles in his relationships with other people. That's how the world views it but God doesn't view it that way. As with

leprosy, a sinner is accounted by God as being utterly, totally, unclean. Let's go to Matthew 23:35; as we know, Matthew 23 is Christ's condemnation of those Pharisees who exalted themselves—set themselves above others—and were a stumbling block to the average Jew of the day. [Christ] He's not pulling any punches here

**Matthew 23:25** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter ... (KJV)*

He says, you look so good to all the people; you have this religious appearance—you pray on corners and you wear these robes and you have all these tassels and you have all this stuff to show your religion to the outside.

25 continued) ... *but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

26) *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (KJV)*

Christ is concerned by what's inside somebody. We read books by their cover, but Christ is saying, I don't—I know your heart, I know what's inside.

27) *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres,*

A sepulcher was built above ground of stone or masonry of some kind and they would white wash it and then identify who was inside. Particularly for the wealthy, it was a status symbol—rather than being buried underground and without a marker of any kind.

27 continued) ... *which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. (KJV)*

All the rottenness of the flesh—the smell and the goo and all of that.

28) *Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. [Sin—inside He says] (KJV)*

Christ is concerned with what's inside a person and He knew the Pharisees appeared outwardly, white-washed and clean like new born lambs, but inside they were full of sin and hypocrisy. They had spiritual leprosy inside them, even though the outside appeared just fine.

During the Days of Unleavened Bread, we need to have the same desire that David had. We've talked about David and Bathsheba and that whole thing—Jack talked about it in his sermon and it has come up several times—but we need to get to the point that David ultimately did after he was confronted by Nathan. Let's go to Psalm 51:10—this is what God wants from us. When sin has been identified—spiritual leprosy has been identified—this is what God wants us to do. After all the horrible things came out to the

whole nation and Psalm 51 was written by David as a Psalm of repentance, in verse 10 this is what David desired.

**Psalm 51:10** *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (KJV)*

What God wants is for us to see the uncleanness through His word, then we repent and then we ask God for more of His Holy Spirit and we get busy exercising the Spirit we already have to create in us a clean heart and a clean mind and a clean spirit.

Let's go to the fourth connection between Leprosy and sin.

#### **4. Leprosy leads to separation.**

Let's go back to Leviticus 13:46; once leprosy has been identified, then separation occurs.

**Leviticus 13:46** *All the days wherein the plague shall be in him [this person that has been identified as leprous] he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp [meaning outside the camp] shall his habitation be. (KJV)*

Quarantine is a biblical concept; when somebody had a disease, they were taken outside the camp so they wouldn't infect other people. With leprosy, you guarantee by the law of leprosy that this individual was taken outside the camp until the leprosy was cleared up. So there was a separation between the leper and the other people so they wouldn't be infected by this horrible disease. We know that sin leads to separation—let's go to Isaiah 59:1—that's the obvious scripture here. Let's use it relative to leprosy and then draw the analogy to sin.

**Isaiah 59:1** *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened [God doesn't abide by physical limitations by the length of an arm], that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (KJV)*

Here we get to the point, verse 2.

*2) But your iniquities have separated between you and your God [there's a separation now because of sin], and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (KJV)*

This tells us that when sin occurs, there's a separation. But you see, God doesn't move—God is where He has been all the time. When we are found with sin, we move away from God because we are not as close to God as we were before. How can we claim to be close to God when we have spiritual leprosy inside us? A separation occurs between us and God. It's interesting to note, we think about what happened yesterday prior to the Night to Be and what happened that afternoon and how Christ was taken



outside the walls of Jerusalem and He was crucified outside the camp. He bore our sins and therefore He died outside the camp, symbolically in the sense that He was removed from the city of Jerusalem because He bore our sins. Christ did not become sin, He was a sacrifice for sin. It's symbolic that He was actually crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem. Similarly, our uncleanness by our sins separates us from God. God is eternally pure, eternally clean and when we become unclean, we move away from God. There's a separation—a gulf—a distance between us and God because we are now unclean and viewed as unclean by God. There're ways to change that as we all know. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 5:1—as we know this is a situation where Paul wasn't present but he had had undoubtedly several reports of what was going on in Corinth where this young man was having an illicit affair with his step-mother. It was confirmed by enough people—Paul didn't have to travel back and directly confront it because he knew by the reports and the who gave the reports that this had to be true.

**1 Corinthians 5:1** *It is reported commonly [meaning by a bunch of people] that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.  
2) And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be ... (KJV)*

Might be what? Sit in a circle, hold hands, sing kumbaya and say, you're okay, everything is fine? No.

2 continued) ... *taken away from among you.*  
3) *For I verily, as absent in body [don't need to be there to judge this one], but present in spirit, have judged already [didn't take me long to come to this conclusion], as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,*  
4) *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, [can't state it more authoritatively]*  
5) *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (KJV)*

We see here this understanding and the link between leprosy and sin is the sinner, or the leper, had to be separated from the body so that the body would not come down with leprosy or the body would not not be encouraged to repeat the sin of the one that has just been cast out.

6) *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (KJV)*

I think we've had experience that a little leaven leavening a whole lump—I can remember, it's even more emphatic now that groups tend to be smaller, but the fact is that one bad apple can destroy the harmony in a group; just utterly destroy it. Somebody can walk in and within a matter of two or three Sabbaths, the whole mood in the congregation changes and not for the good. Then when that person leaves, peace

breaks out and everybody is happy and it's wonderful. That little leaven spreads throughout the group and changes the atmosphere and the attitude of the group. In a similar manner, it only takes a little leaven to pollute an individual. Let it start small, but hang on to it, let it get hold of you and then over time it grows and grows and pretty soon the individual can be polluted. Going on in verse 7.

*7) Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. [He obviously wrote this during the days of Unleavened Bread] For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: (KJV)*

For our behalf, for our benefit.

*8) Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (KJV)*

The underlying implication is that we have to change from the old leavened individual to the unleavened individual; the old sinful individual to a righteous individual; the old man, as Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4 refer to, to the new man. We do that with sincerity and with truth and a pure heart.

Let's go to 2 Corinthians now, chapter 6:14—another principle comes up between righteousness and unrighteousness, being leavened and being unleavened, between leprosy and somebody who doesn't have leprosy.

**2 Corinthians 6:14** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: (KJV)*

The yoke as it's described in the Greek is the common wooden yoke that you would tie two oxen together to plow or to haul or something like that—a big thing like this over the shoulders of the oxen.

14 continued) ... *for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?* [drawing a contrast here; how can the two coexist] *and what communion hath light with darkness?* [drawing the analogy with unrighteousness with darkness and light with righteousness]

15) *And what concord* [that means coming together] *hath Christ with Belial* [with a false god]? *or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel* [somebody who doesn't believe]?

16) *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? (KJV)*

It's amazing—yes idolatry was common back then, but it's just as common today. We're a little more sophisticated about it—but he's saying, as we're going to see, let's go on.

16 continued) ... *for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (KJV)

He's quoting Jeremiah 31:33, among others. He is saying, you're the temple of God because Christ and I live in you—He says, what are you going to a temple filled with idols (drawing an analogy). He said, what relationship does that have—you tell Me; figure it out, explain this to Me; how somebody with God's spirit dwelling in them can have association with those who practice idolatry—obviously we can't.

17) *Wherefore* [because this situation can't exist—meaning either the person is going to reject the idolatry or bow down before the idol] *come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean* [the word thing is added by the translator] *thing; and I will receive you* [he's quoting Isaiah 52:11] ... (KJV)

He says if you find yourself enmeshed with idolatry, come out of it and if you do that, I will receive you—I'll welcome you back. Paul is telling us that as with the leper being separated from the body, that we have to separate ourselves from the unclean—those who are pure of heart have no business getting ourselves in an environment where there is uncleanness and we might be infected by that. We see that sin, like leprosy, leads to separation. Our sins separate us from God and at the same time, we must separate ourselves from a sinful environment.

That leads us to the fifth point.

## **5. Leprosy is incurable without divine intervention.**

In leprosy's last stages—when it consumes the body—it is a horrible thing to behold because what happens is, the body just can't hold together; fingers start falling off, feet start falling off, lower arms fall off from upper arms and the body literally just rots to death, if you can imagine that—how horrible that is. Let's go to Numbers 12—we're going to see an account where Miriam and Aaron were talking amongst themselves (this obviously didn't happen overnight, it built up over a period of time) and they developed a root of bitterness towards Moses. They felt like they were on the same plane as Moses in God's eyes and they should be recognized accordingly. A common problem with human nature of pride and vanity.

**Numbers 12:1** *And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses* [they did that over time, they did it between themselves and maybe they did it with other people—probably so] *because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.*

2) *And they* [Miriam and Aaron] *said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.* (KJV)

Then the Bible goes on to say.

3) *(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)*

4) *And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam [this is God Almighty—He spoke suddenly to her, she heard something and he did unto Aaron, I'm sure they probably heard a voice], Come out ye three [Moses heard it too] unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. (KJV)*

I just bet you, Miriam and Aaron were thinking, at long last we're going to be exalted; at long last all our efforts are going to be recognized; at long last, Moses is going to understand that we should be right here beside him and he shouldn't elevate himself above us and God has finally heard our pleas.

5) *And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. (KJV)*

Moses was right there.

6) *And he said, Hear now my words: [They were, I'm sure, eager with anticipation] If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. [They were thinking, okay]*

7) *My servant Moses is not so [they were thinking, okay and now the narrative changes], who is faithful in all mine house.*

8) *With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? (KJV)*

Just to clarify, the Hebrew word for "similitude" means *a likeness or an image*—you don't have to see the exact object; a likeness or an image. You don't have to go any further than Acts 7 when Stephen was being stoned, he looked up to heaven and saw God and Christ standing right beside Him—that's a similitude; a likeness or an image. He cried out because he knew who he was talking to and he knew who he saw. God is saying to Miriam and Aaron, I even presented My similitude—My likeness—to Moses. What He was getting across was when did I do that with you and when have you heard Me?

9) *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed.*

10) *And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: (KJV)*

Apparently, this was over her whole body, it wasn't just one little patch on her forehead or something.

10 continued) ... *and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.*  
(KJV)

Remember what Christ said: Whoever exalts himself shall be abased and whoever abases himself shall be exalted—find that in Luke 14. Miriam and Aaron hatched this plan to exalt themselves and all of a sudden now, Miriam is abased. I can only conclude that Miriam was probably the ring leader because it seems to me that Aaron, if you look at his tendency, seems to be easily led. Remember he was convinced to make the golden calf and all of that. That could be why she was made leprous and Aaron wasn't—just food for thought, we don't know that for sure.

11) *And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us [they both sinned and what was laid upon was, in this case leprosy because of their sin but Miriam was on the receiving end of it], wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.* (KJV)

Aaron is saying (the lightbulb comes on) okay, we screwed up; got in a bad attitude, gotten a bad spirit, Satan was there provoking us, stirring the pot, we yielded and didn't shut it down and now look at what we have; please wave your magic wand and make everything okay.

12) *Let her not be as one dead [if nothing changes, it was only a matter of time before she would die], of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.*

13) *And Moses cried unto the Lord [unto God, unto Jehovah, unto YHVH—notice Moses was on the receiving end of the gossip, slander and rumors but he had the love and the character to cry out for his sister], saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.*

14) *And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? (KJV)*

We won't go into that, we don't have the time but a situation as such is when something happened, one would spit in the face of the other and that person would have to go out and be separated for seven days.

14 continued) ... *let her be shut out from the camp seven days [because she was leprous anyway] ... (KJV)*

God is saying, I'm going to send her out of the camp for seven days, implying that after seven days she would be healed and she would come back in the camp.

14 continued) ... *and after that let her be received in again.* (KJV)

God knowing that He was going to heal her after seven days.

15) *And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. (KJV)*

We see that as with leprosy, sin can only be cured so to speak (using the term cured) by divine intervention. It can only be dealt with by divine intervention; by God's power, His grace, His mercy and the sacrifice of our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. That's how sin can be washed away and sin can be cured. We obviously have to acknowledge the sin then repent of the sin and then Christ's blood washes it away. Let's go to Matthew 8:1—this is the account of Christ up in the mountains and He was coming and a great crowd of people were following him and He encounters a leper.

**Matthew 8:1** *When he [referring to Christ] was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.*

2) *And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (KJV)*

He had faith that God could do it, but he put in there if it be His will; may not be your will I hope it's Your will—I know you can make me clean.

3) *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (KJV)*

Divine intervention, divine miracle. Likewise, our sins can be cleansed by divine intervention. Let's go to John 1:7 and see that. I love John's writing because his contrasts are so clear and they are so simple and he writes in short, clear sentences for those of us that are the weak of the world; makes it easy to understand. It's a beautiful description.

**1 John 1:7** *But if we walk in the light, as he [that's referring to God in verse 5] is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (KJV)*

Very clear—when we walk in the light, meaning we exercise God's Holy Spirit, we look to God, we want to follow Him and be in His light that when we sin, we repent and then Christ's blood cleanses us, as a leper is cleansed from this horrible disease. We see as with leprosy; sin can only be cleansed with divine intervention.

Now to the sixth thing we can learn.

## **6. We're told in the Bible that leprosy is a state of living death.**

We just read in Numbers 12:12, when Aaron said to Miriam (he's crying out to God) let her not be as one dead because she was alive at that moment. He says, don't let her be as somebody who is dead because if God didn't intervene, she was a walking dead person. If we allow sin to live in our lives, we are already dead—we're walking dead too. You know what the end of sin is—what is the wages of sin—it's death. Romans

6:23. Let's go to Ephesians 2:1; we're told that principle, that if we allow the practice of sin to come and stay in us, we are dead while we are alive.

**Ephesians 2:1** *And you hath he [referring to God] quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; (KJV)*

We were dead before God quickened us; made us alive.

2) *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (KJV)*

In times past we followed the provocations of Satan but God has made us alive by Christ's sacrifice, by His blood, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and now we are alive. We are quickened; but before we were dead in trespasses and sins. Let's go to one brief verse in 1 Timothy 5:6; Paul is referring to a woman and notice her situation. Of course, this can apply to all of us. If this isn't a condemnation that applies to our time, where we have pleasure and abundance never before seen in the world—at least in the modern world—I don't know when.

**1 Timothy 5:6** *But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. (KJV)*

If our goal is pleasure—if our goal is, if it feels good do it; if that's our motivation and that's our practice, we're told here that anybody that does that, they are dead while they are alive—it's just a matter of time, just like leprosy. The only cure for sin is to become a new person and, in that sense, a leper who is head to toe with leprosy, they're only solution is a new person—meaning God's healing. Let's go to Ephesians 4:23. We have to become a new person to overcome spiritual leprosy.

**Ephesians 4:23** *And be renewed [meaning to make new] in the spirit of your mind; (KJV)*

He says you all need a new mind—and we do. Not the old carnal mind but a new mind.

24) *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

Not spiritual leprosy, not as the Pharisees who appeared righteous on the outside but were evil inside.

25) *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

26) *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

27) [Here's a key] *Neither give place to the devil. (KJV)*

Remember we talked about sin starting with a little thought; or it could be an emotion—an emotion of jealousy, rage—whatever it might be. He says don't give place to the devil; the Greek means opportunity—don't give the devil opportunity. Or it can mean room—don't let the devil have an apartment in your brain where he can do what he wants to do. The NLT and the NIV translate "place" as *a foothold*. When you mount a horse, you put one foot in a stirrup—that's a foothold. It's hard to get on a horse when you don't have a foothold, it's really embarrassing. But with a foothold you can get up on a horse; and with a foothold, Satan can get up on us—makes it a lot easier.

28) *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

29) *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (KJV)*

Everything we say should be uplifting to others; helpful to others; a service to others.

30) *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God ... (KJV)*

Because if we give place to the devil, if we give him a foothold, what are we doing? We're grieving God's spirit in us. How can we who have God's Spirit in us—God and Christ are dwelling in us (John 14 tells us)—if God and Christ are dwelling in us and then we give Satan a foothold inside us, what does that say? It tells us here; it grieves the Spirit of God because we're trying to be bipolar; we want God in us and Christ in us—but we're leaving a little room for Satan too. How can we do that? When we think about it, how illogical is that; how stupid is that? The human mind convinces the individual that it's okay—we can have a little bit of both. It's amazing what the mind can do.

30 continued) *... whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

31) *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (KJV)*

We've seen that in the last couple of years. ICBM's coming our way that were bitter and clamorous and anger.

32) *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV)*

How can we dare say, I'll never forgive you? What we're saying is, I don't want God to forgive me so in my stubbornness I'll not forgive you and God's not going to forgive me and while you're on the way being dropped into the lake of fire, looking back you wish you had made a different decision. I'm not pointing fingers at any individual, I'm just saying, if I was in the situation, I would look back and say I should have done it differently. As with leprosy, if we live in a pattern of sin, we are dead while we live. It was only a matter of time before the leper died if God didn't intervene and if we allow a pattern of sin in our lives, it's only a matter of time before we die also. But we have the



opportunity to become a new person and live forever in the process. Why wouldn't we grab hold of that? Why wouldn't we do that?

Seventh and last point.

## **7. Leprosy requires an atonement.**

Let's go to Leviticus 14 and we will begin in verse 18. Leprosy requires an atonement.

**Leviticus 14:18** *And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed [the leper]: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord.*

19) *And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering:* (KJV)

We see here in the case of leprosy; a priest makes an atonement on behalf of the leper. Christ has made an atonement for us and our sins. Let's go to Romans 5:8 and see that. We've all had an atonement made for us.

**Romans 5:8** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* (KJV)

What a concept; what an understanding, at this time we renew this in our minds that Christ died before we were ever called, before we were ever born, He gave His life for us when we were in the midst of our sins.

9) *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

10) *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* (KJV)

By His resurrection.

11) *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.* (KJV)

As the priest made atonement for the leper, Christ our High Priest makes atonement for us and for our spiritual sins.

Let's close now, let's wrap this up. What does leprosy have to do with the Days of Unleavened Bread? The law of leprosy, as we've read (and you can go over it in detail in your own study, in your own time) teaches us two lessons. The first one, the law of leprosy teaches us to differentiate between the clean and the unclean. The individual comes to the priest and he wants to know if he is clean or if he's unclean. Let's go to Leviticus 14:54.

**Leviticus 14:54** *This is the law for all manner of plague of leprosy [this is it], and scall,  
55) And for the leprosy of a garment, and of a house,  
56) And for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot:  
57) To teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean: this is the law of leprosy.  
(KJV)*

Very clear; teaches us to differentiate between the clean and the unclean. There's obviously a spiritual application here. Let's go to Galatians 5 and see that application very quickly. Galatians 5 teaches us the difference between spiritual cleanness and spiritual uncleanness. I'm going to read this out of the New King James, we'll begin in verse 17. Think of this in terms of leprosy and not being leprous and contrast that with what we read here, being sinful or not sinful.

**Galatians 5:17** *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another ... (KJV)*

Just as somebody who has leprosy versus somebody that is with leprosy.

17 continued) ... *so that you do not do the things that you wish.*  
18) *But if you are led [this is the key] by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* [Meaning not under the condemnation of the law].  
19) *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are [we know what those are, all kinds of stuff]: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,  
20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,  
21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, [here's the key] that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

We can do any of these things, in body or mind and if we repent and acknowledge and repent, Christ's blood washes it away. If we practice it, that is something totally different. We're saying to God, I'd rather do this than what You want me to do.

22) *But the fruit of the Spirit [notice the very first one] is love [meaning putting God first and loving our neighbor as ourselves], joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
23) gentleness [which God is with us], self-control. Against such there is no law. (KJV)*

God is saying, which would you rather be? You look at it this way, which would we rather be? Of course we want to separate ourselves from the unclean and bring forth the fruits of God's Spirit. At this time, what we do prior to Passover and it continues on (should continue on), we look into our hearts to see, am I exhibiting the fruits of the Holy Spirit or am I exhibiting the works of the flesh in my day to day life. Here's how we deal

with spiritual leprosy. We just read in verse 18, those who are led by the Spirit, you're not under the law—you're not condemned. Then in Romans 8:12, it says the same thing; you can use that as a reference—verses 12, 13 and 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Then, if we're the sons of God we'll be clean evermore—for eternity. That's the first lesson; it teaches us to differentiate between the clean and unclean.

The law of leprosy also teaches us that, as humans view leprosy, that's how God views our sins—think about that. I've never seen leprosy firsthand but if you saw a leprous person and the smell and the stench and the ugliness and the evil of it; if we saw that, we would cringe. We would be more repulsed than we are right now if we could see it firsthand with our own eyes and smell it with our own nose. The point is, that's how God views our sins. God looks on us and He doesn't want to see that in us—spiritual leprosy in us. So, if we view it that way and we understand that leprosy represents sin and cleanliness from leprosy represents righteousness and if we could see a leper and think, this is how God views my sins, would we want God to see leprosy inside us? Stinking, rotting, falling apart—all of that—would we want that? Of course not. God wants us to get to the place—in this second law of leprosy—where we view our sins as spiritual leprosy. That we have leprosy inside us if we allow sins to live inside us. Because of that, we will do whatever it takes to get rid of that spiritual leprosy.

If we had the disease of leprosy, we would say to God, I'll do whatever you want just get rid of it. When we sin, we have leprosy inside us and we have to say to God, God whatever you want, I will do; meaning I will get rid of this. I will get rid of these thought patterns or behavior or whatever it might be. The point is, as we begin the Days of Unleavened Bread (we're just starting today), let's learn the laws of leprosy and how they apply to us and our sins and let's make the law of leprosy part of our spiritual character where we want God to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and we want to be clean and pure in His sight.