

## THE LEPROSY OF SELF . . .

Leprosy is treated in Leviticus 13 as a type both of sin and self. One word prominent in the chapter is "flesh," or, "the flesh." This is the word so often used in the Scriptures for "self." Let it be remembered and noted that the Lord is, in this chapter, speaking more about the life of self, or the self-life, than about the disease known as leprosy. This chapter was not written for the medical doctor, but for the Christian teacher: it was the priest to whom the leper was always to go for the diagnosis of symptoms of leprosy, which are also symptoms of the self-life.

Concerning the self-life, Wm. Law, one of the great writers on the subject, says: "Self is the only root, or rather the sum total of all sin. . . . Self is the whole evil of the fallen nature. . . . Self is the root, the tree, and the branches of all the evils of our fallen nature." There are seven phases of this self noted in the seven paragraphs of the chapter mentioned.

1. Lev. 13:1-8. First is mentioned a bright spot in the skin (vs. 2, 4). Beware of it! It may be leprosy. It may be the manifestation of self.

The "brightness" in itself was not, and is not, leprosy, nor a manifestation of self; but it must be watched. And the next verse reads: "And the priest shall look on him the seventh day; and, behold, if the plague in his sight is at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin, then the priest shall shut him up seven days more," (v. 5). The priest had to keep his eye on that bright spot, to see whether or not it developed further. It might not be leprosy; but it might be.

If the bright spot was deeper than the skin, then it was a symptom of leprosy. "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 the flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean," (v. 3). What does that mean? Are you inwardly conscious of yourself, that you are bright and clever? If this is in your inner consciousness and mind, it is self. Note what is said about Satan in this connection. "Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness," (Ezek. 28:17). And so, brightness can be a plague of leprosy. That was the thing that captivated Adam and Eve—the desire to be bright. It was presented to them as "a tree to be desired, to make one wise," (Gen. 3:6). So, let us beware of the "bright" spot.

The spot was leprosy, if it had spread in the skin: "But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin . . . then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is leprosy," (vs. 7, 8). This means that if your brightness proclaims itself or advertises itself, then it is a phase of self—and self is sinful.

2. Lev. 13:9-17. The outstanding words in this paragraph are "quick raw flesh." "And the priest shall see him: and, behold, if . . . there be quick raw flesh in the rising . . . but when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean. And the priest shall see the raw flesh, and pronounce him to be unclean: for the raw flesh is unclean: it is leprosy," (vs. 10, 14, 15). Touchiness is "quick raw flesh." Are you touchy? Are you easily hurt or offended? Look out! This, too, is a symptom of self. We have an illustration of this in Matt. 17:24—18:1. Christ had bestowed a favor on the Apostle Peter by paying his taxes. Im-

mediately after, the disciples said to the Savior, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They were touchy about the fact that Peter had been favored by the Lord, and they had not been. Furthermore, in Matt. 20:20-24, the disciples were touchy about two others of their company who had asked a special favor, and they did not like it. They showed "quick raw flesh." Quick raw flesh is a type of hurt feelings and unforgiveness. Beware, for it is the leprosy of self!

3. Lev. 13:18-23. A boil is the subject of this paragraph. "The flesh also, in which, even in the skin thereof, was a boil, and is healed, and in the place of the boil there be a white rising . . . 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," (vs. 1-20). This indicates: (a) swellings; being puffed up with pride. It is a phase of the self-life. It was in the church at Corinth (II Cor. 12:20). Among other things, Paul mentioned that there were swellings prevalent. "I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would . . . lest there be . . . swellings." Then we see this illustrated in the life of Haman. "Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart; . . . and Haman told tidings of his children, and all the things wherewith the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow I am invited unto her also with the king," (Esther 5:9, 11, 12). How he was puffed up with the spirit of pride!

A boil indicates (b) a touch of self-importance. This is a phase of the self-life; it is a swelling of the mind and of the spirit.

4. Lev. 13:24-28. "Or if there be any flesh, in the skin whereof there is a hot burning . . . 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," (vs. 24, 25).

All of us know that heart burning means hot anger. Beware of that hasty word! Beware of that hot temper! But remember this: all anger may not be a manifestation of self-life. Here are illustrations of hot burning where it was not a manifestation of self, and some where it was. "And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and straved it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it," (Exod. 2:19, 20). Also, in Exod. 2:10, we have Jehovah himself hot with anger, but it was not the anger of self: "Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation."

In Numbers 25 we have the story of the fearful sin of the Israelites at Baal-peor. And Phinehas, against this crime, went out and slew two of the people. God said of him: "Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was

zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy." While Phinehas had hot anger, it was not a manifestation of self, but was holy jealousy.

"And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts," (Mark 3:5). In this instance of the Savior, there was hot anger, but it was not a manifestation of self. You remember what your Bible says: "Be ye angry, and sin not," (Eph. 4:26). Weymouth puts it this way—"If angry, beware of sinning." So you see, there may be hot anger that is not a manifestation of self.

But I want to give you some examples of it where it was a demonstration of the self-life: "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them," (Num. 20:10). That hot anger in Moses cost him the land of Canaan. In Psalm 106:32, 33, we are reminded again of that hot anger that was an evidence of self: "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." It was this evidence of the self-life that proved so costly.

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## JESUS CHRIST THE SAME

How these glorious words stand out like a very Rock of Ages! How they encourage us to take Him in His fulness just as they used to take Him on the shores of Galilee for their sicknesses and sorrows, when Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Men talk of the age of miracles having passed, but we are in the same age that Jesus Himself was in, for His last promise was, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Jesus is the same today as yesterday. This is not only true of His yesterday, but also of your yesterday. Can you look back and think of some precious promise He gave you once and enable you to anchor your faith to it? It is still there the same today. Can you recall some past revelation or experience of His love? Why should it be but a memory? It is your privilege, as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord so also to walk in Him. Let us rest in Him who changes not.

—A. B. Simpson.

## I KNOW THAT IT DOES

A preacher was speaking from the text, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." He was stopped by an atheist who asked, "How can blood cleanse away sin?" For a moment the preacher was silent; then he asked the infidel, "How can water quench thirst?" "I do not know," replied the infidel, "but I know that it does." "Neither do I know how the blood of Jesus cleanseth away sin," answered the preacher, "but I know that it does."

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