Isaiah - Commentaries by George Christopher Willis

The Law of the Leper, Leviticus 14:21-53: Chapter 14 - My Leanness, My Leanness

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Leviticus 14:21-53; Isaiah 24:16

We have finished considering this most exquisite section of God's holy Word. And yet almost every time one reads it, one seems to see some fresh ray of glory and beauty shining from it, so that we can never truly speak of having "finished considering" any portion of that Word.

Perhaps we wonder how much, or how little, God's people of old saw wrapped up in this precious portion, and how highly they valued it. Should we not rather ask, how much do we comprehend of the glories and the excellencies and the worth of our own precious Savior, who has been revealed to us in such a different measure to those in days of old? And this brings us to the next section of our chapter.

“And if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil; and two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering. And he shall bring them on the eighth day for his cleansing unto the priest," etc. Lev. 14:21-23.

How often we are "poor"! Our apprehension of Christ is often so poor! But yet, if we do trust in His precious blood, we have pardon and cleansing. Thank God, it is not my estimation of His worth, but God's estimation, that is so important. Instead of the lambs for the sin offering and burnt offering, I can, perhaps, only afford pigeons: but my acceptance and my cleansing are not affected thereby. None who come in that precious name of Jesus are ever turned away. Our faith may be terribly small, our appreciation of His worth utterly insignificant: but if we come in that name, the One to whom we come knows His true worth and value, and we are accepted in Him. Keenly as we may feel our poverty, never let that keep us away from God. Come as we are, in that worthy name, and all will be well.

“For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.... And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 10:14, 17.

“Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30.

Notice how the Spirit of God, in Lev. 14:23-32, delights to recount again in all its fullness and detail the wondrous picture over which we have just been pondering. And that picture is worth repeating! It is as if He Himself would never weary of gazing on those sights that He has, in infinite grace, just been revealing to us. May we never weary of those sights either, but may we ponder them, feed on them, delight in them, and make them our own. It is no accident that two long chapters in the Bible are devoted to leprosy and its cleansing: May the Lord give us to learn more and more of the depth and fullness of these wondrous pictures, and ever value them more and more highly as, by His Spirit, we ever see new beauties and glories in them. Like their Author they are infinite.

Lord, "open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Psa. 119:18.

Leviticus 14:33-53 tells us of leprosy in a house, and its cleansing. This would apply when Israel reached the land of Canaan. This speaks of sin in an assembly of God's people. It is a most solemn and most important subject, and one that every Christian person should seriously consider. It goes beyond the scope of this little book, but we would earnestly commend our readers to read and ponder with prayer this portion of God's Word.

The Seven Feasts of Jehovah: Leviticus 23, Present Interval, The

“God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name." (Acts 15:14)

"Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom. 11:25)

You will remember that the Feasts of the Passover, Unleavened Bread, and First-Fruits, all come within one week. They began on the fourteenth day of the first month, and lasted seven days. Fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits, came the Feast of Pentecost early in the third month.

After the Feast of Pentecost there was a long interval of time in which there was no feast. From about the beginning of the third month till the beginning of the seventh month, for nearly four months, there was no new call from God to come to Him.

What were the people doing during this long period? They were reaping their fields, gathering together their sheaves.

This long interval of time tells us of the present day. What is the Lord doing during the present time? He is reaping His fields, gathering His grain from this world to take it to Himself. You remember the Lord Jesus said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24).

The Lord Jesus was this corn of wheat. He has died, and risen again, the Firstfruits, and now He brings forth much fruit. So we may see that those four months without a feast correspond to the present time when the Lord is gathering in His harvest, those He has redeemed, from out of the world. We never read in the Bible that all the world will be converted, but instead, we read that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse

and worse." (2 Tim. 3:13). The Church is composed of those who are called out of this wicked world.

But right in the midst of the feasts of Jehovah, between the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets, we get what seems to be an interruption, a parenthesis. In Lev. 23:22, we read, "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the Lord, your God." And so when the Israelite farmer had cut the last grain in his harvest fields, what do we see? We see sheaves waiting to be gathered to the barn, but we see also, standing in the corners of the fields, good grain, and lying on the ground we see handfuls of grain that have been dropped, but not gathered up.

The Lord Jesus, Himself, tells us that "the field is the world," (Matt. 13:38), and although spoken of in a parable, we believe it is also true of this type. "The corners of the fields" tell of the distant parts "the uttermost part of the earth," (Acts 1:8), to which the Lord had sent His servants just before He returned to Heaven, but alas most of those "corners of the fields" are still in the darkness of heathenism. Do not think for one moment that this gives you or me an excuse not to go to these "uttermost parts" where the Lord has sent us. Simple obedience requires us to go. Was this good grain in the field to be wasted? No, surely the Lord would not allow this to be lost He, who said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," (John 6:12), would not lose this good grain. This remnant was left for the poor and for the stranger. And does not this little remnant of good grain left in the fields from which the sheaves have been cut tell us of another remnant? We believe it does.

The word "remnant" means "that which remains." In our daily conversation we use it of many different things. In the Bible, the Spirit of God uses it very often to describe the faithful godly portion of a people, more especially of the Jewish people, or of the nation of Israel, after the greater part of the nation had turned away from God. The prophets in the Bible make it perfectly clear that there will be such a remnant. Isaiah says, (Isa. 1:9), "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." In Isa. 10:21-22, we again read of the remnant, and in these verses, it is evidently the remnant of a future day. "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return." The reader may also compare the following scriptures: Isa. 11:11; Joel 2:32; 3:1-2; Mic. 4:7. See also Rom. 11. We believe these Scriptures tell us of a remnant of Israel who will be saved on this earth after the church has been called away to be with Christ.

The Scriptures also speak of the remnant of other nations as Syria, Ashdod, the Philistines, etc., but in nearly every case "the remnant" refers to Israel, and very often of Israel in a future day. It is very important for the Christian who wishes to understand the Bible, to clearly understand this truth of "the remnant." For those who are interested, we commend to them the book by W. Trotter "Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects." In Papers 16 and 17, they will find this subject taken up most fully.

We believe this remnant of good grain left in the fields for the poor after the sheaves had been gathered in, tells us in type, of this remnant of Israel. Poor and despised in the eyes of man, but precious in the eyes of God. Notice how often in the Psalms God speaks of "the poor." Often they refer to the remnant of Israel.

But this little remnant of good grain was left not only for the poor, but also for the stranger. Who would "the stranger" tell us of? We believe the stranger tells us of a remnant of Gentiles who also are to be saved, after the Church has been taken to be with Christ. We believe this remnant is referred to in Rev. 7:9, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

We believe this Gentile remnant is seen again in Matt. 25:31-46. There we see several different persons, or companies. We see the King, the King's "brethren," and "all nations" which He separates "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." You will note that what decides the fate of the nations, is the way they have treated the King's "brethren." We believe these to be the godly remnant of the Jews. The Bible tells us that "the sheep" are from all nations that is the Gentiles. So in this parable we see the remnant of Jews and Gentiles, of which we have been speaking.

Please do not think this means that the Scriptures teaches that any man may be saved who goes on in his sins, rejecting Christ, and His offer of salvation through the Cross. The Bible is quite clear about this. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

No, the Bible is perfectly clear. There is full, free salvation now to the worst sinner, Jew or Gentile, who accepts God's offer of mercy through Christ. But there is damnation, and eternal punishment, for those who despise or refuse this offer now. Indeed it is not necessary to even despise or refuse it by any outward mark. You may admire it, and fully intend one day to accept it but it is the Word of God which asks that solemn question "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

Do not let teachers of this present day deceive you into hell. Do not believe them when they tell you there is a second chance after death, or although you may be left behind at the Lord's coming, that you may then turn and escape. No, then "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

We know that the devil has his servants who preach "the gospel of the second chance." But be warned, this is the devil's gospel not the gospel of God. God says, "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2). How terrible for many who will cry "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer. 8:20).

Please be quite clear. Because the grace of God tells us of a remnant of both Jews and Gentiles, spared and saved (though many suffer death), after the Church is taken away, this is no reason for you, or any man, to put off accepting Christ and His great salvation one moment longer.

We will now leave that grain standing in the corners of the fields of Israel, and turn our eyes to the sheaves, cut and ready to be gathered into the barns.

We have suggested that the long period of about four months from the Feast of Weeks to the Feast of Trumpets tells of the present long period more than 2000 years, while the Lord has been gathering His own from every tribe and nation to form the Church. The day will come when He gathers the sheaves home to the barn. (Matt. 13:30). We call that day the "Harvest Home." It is a day of joy, when the precious fruits of the earth, for which we have worked and waited through weary months, are at last brought Home. And that great Harvest day is coming, coming quickly, when the Lord of Harvest Himself is coming to get His precious grain. "The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

This is the time of the Harvest, when the Lord gathers His own to Himself, to take them to His Father's House. True, there is more grain in the corners of the fields and left on the ground to be gleaned which doubtless will form a further part of the harvest, but this grand ingathering when the Lord takes the Church, dead and living, to Himself, this is the great beginning of His Harvest.

Note that a definite time is given for all the Feasts of Jehovah, but for this ingathering of the sheaves, no definite date is given at all. As far as this chapter reads, it might have taken place at any time after the Feast of Pentecost. And so in the New Testament, the saints were always expected to be waiting and watching for the Lord from Heaven. No definite time was set for His return, but the Thessalonians "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from Heaven." (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

Paul could speak of himself and say "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." Paul did not look for death, He looked for the Lord from Heaven. "We may not die, but rise and meet the Lord, Oh, the bright glory these few words afford, Changed instantly, the twinkling of an eye, And see Thee face to face, our Lord, for aye.

Some shall not die, but rise and meet their Lord, Oh, precious promise, faithful, true and good, Although we do not know the day or hour, We know that He Himself shall come in power.” There are men who tell us that many things must happen before the Lord comes back, but the Bible does not tell us this. The clear and simple teaching of the Scripture is that we may expect the Lord to come for us at any moment.

We have wondered whether our Lord's words in John 4:35, referred to these four months. "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." His eye looked down the centuries to the great day of Harvest Home, when all His own would be caught up to be forever with Himself, but meanwhile as He looked around on the fields He saw the grain ripe, and over-ripe, waiting to be reaped or lost.

Beloved fellow-Christian, have you lifted up your eyes in answer to His Own command? Are the fields less "white" than in His day? As we await, just expecting the shout to call us Home to Himself, may the Lord of the harvest stir our hearts to seek and reap some of that whitened grain, e'er it be lost.

The Harvest is great.

Luke 10:22

The fields are white

to Harvest.

John 4:35

The Harvest of the earth

Is dried.

(Rev. 14:15 New Trans.)

The Harvest is past.

Jeremiah 8:20.

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