Leviticus - Commentaries by William John Hocking, Editor

The Believer's Monthly Magazine: Volume 3, Notes on Lepers and Leprosy

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Law of Leprosy.

IN the law of leprosy in the “Priest’s guide-book” (Lev. 13; 14) certain signs or symptoms were to guide the priest in his diagnosis. His opinion priest in (as Jehovah’s expert) was sought in SEVEN abnormal conditions (Lev. 14:54-57): —

All manner of plague of leprosy;

Scall;

For the leprosy of a garment;

For a house;

For a rising;

For a scab;

For a bright spot.

Suppositional or representative cases of leprosy are given “to teach when it is unclean and when it is clean:”—

1. In Lev. 13:1-46	are 21 cases in	PERSONS;
2. In 13:47-59	5	GARMENTS;
3. In 14:33-48	2	HOUSES.

The signs or symptoms in the cases of leprosy in persons varied in number:—

9 cases (Nos. 3, 6, 7, 10, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21) have 1 symptom
4 (1, 5, 14, 17) 2
2 (4, 13) 3
2 (9, 12) 4
2 (8, 11) 6
2 (2, 15) 7

Of these twenty-one cases: —

11 were pronounced unclean;
10 clean.

The quality of the symptoms rather than the quantity was to be taken into account, for example: —

Case 21 had only ONE symptom, but was utterly unclean.

Cases 2 and 15 had each SEVEN symptoms, were seen THREE times by the priest, and were pronounced clean.

Actual Cases of Leprosy.

There are exactly twenty-one named or described cases of leprosy in the whole of the word of God, viz., nine in the Old Testament, and twelve in the New; corresponding with the number of hypothetical cases in Leviticus 13. They are: —

Old Testament

Moses	Exodus 4:6.
Miriam	Numbers 12:10.
Naaman	2 Kings 5:1.
Gehazi	2 Kings 5:27.
Four lepers of Samaria	2 Kings 7:3.
Uzziah	2 Chronicles 26:21.
	Total, NINE lepers.

New Testament.

An unnamed leper	Mark 1:40.
Simon	Mark 14:3.
Ten lepers	Luke 17:12.
	Total, TWELVE lepers.

Comparing the two groups of typical and actual cases we find they varied in intensity, thus: —

Moses' hand was temporarily leprous, but Uzziah was leprous in his forehead, and remained "a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house," being utterly unclean (Ex. 4:5; 2 Chron. 26:20; Lev. 13:44).

Again comparing the Old and New Testaments we find an emphatic contrast:—

The law in the person of the priest pronounced ELEVEN persons unclean (Lev. 13), but "the grace that is in Christ Jesus" removed this uncleanness from ELEVEN men (Mark 1:42; Luke 17:14).

Of the New Testament lepers only one is said to have returned to give thanks for his cleansing— "and he was a SAMARITAN."

Of the Old Testament lepers cleansed, only one is said to have given thanks—and he was Naaman the SYRIAN. J.C.M.

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