

Restoring my Soul

A five day devotional guide

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Contents

WEEK 1

Monday	You have come to Mount Zion
Tuesday	The Day of Atonement
Wednesday	Nothing unclean shall go there
Thursday	The stone cut without hands
Friday	Blameless

WEEK 2

Monday	He establishes a clean place
Tuesday	Rivers of water
Wednesday	The throne of grace
Thursday	The highway of holiness
Friday	Conviction, confession, disclosure, apology, restitution

WEEK 3

Monday	Without spot, stain or wrinkle
Tuesday	A stain in the garment
Wednesday	Without wrinkle
Thursday	The waters of purification
Friday	Offering in uncleanness

WEEK 4

Monday	Leprosy
Tuesday	The leprous garment
Wednesday	Houses marked with leprosy
Thursday	The damage of leprosy
Friday	The testimony of our conscience

WEEK 5

Monday	Madness
Tuesday	Anger
Wednesday	Immorality
Thursday	Anxiety
Friday	Dissent

You have come to Mount Zion

The prophet Isaiah described the church in the days ahead by saying, 'The mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it'. The mountain of the Lord is the holy hill of Zion. This is the symbolic sanctuary and dwelling place of the Lord and His people. The psalmist exhorts us to be 'children of Zion' because only those who learn and appropriate the culture of the Lord's house will dwell there with Him. The prophet Ezekiel defined this culture when he wrote, 'This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most *holy*'. The book of Revelation warns us that nothing unclean shall ever come into the house of God.

The writer to the Hebrews referred to the mountain of the Lord saying, 'You have not come to a mountain that can be touched, but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem'. Mount Zion is not the New Jerusalem, the administration of the new heavens and the new earth. It is the heavenly Jerusalem, the place of the throne of the Son in this present heavens and earth. Christ our great High Priest has entered the holy place made without hands, heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us. Not every believer who calls upon the name of the Lord will be permitted in Mount Zion. When the mountain of the Lord's house is raised 'above the hills' or the kingdoms of this present world, only those who are clean, holy and righteous will dwell in Zion forever.

References:

Isa 2:2-3 Psa 2:6
Eze 43:12 Rev 21:2, 12
Heb 12:22 Psa 37:29
Heb 9:24

Further Study: Hebrews 9**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 30

The Day of Atonement

The book of Hebrews informs us that Christ will *appear* a second time without reference to sin. This will be the day of His appearing within His temple. He will appear to all those who have been cleansed by the washing of the water of the word and are eagerly waiting for Him. The Lord showed the prophet Ezekiel a vision of His glory appearing in the temple of God. Ezekiel wrote, 'The glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. Behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house and He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet".'

In the book of Revelation, we likewise see the glory of the Lord, and His voice 'like the sound of many waters'. This is the sound of rejoicing and testimony coming from the 'redeemed of the Lord'. They are the great multitude coming to the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

While the propitiatory work and the shedding of blood associated with the Day of Atonement have been fulfilled by Christ's death at Calvary, the book of Hebrews reveals that the censor of incense remains behind the veil. This signifies that the work of the Day of Atonement is continuing. The temple is being cleansed and a great multitude of priests are coming before the throne of grace. When the Lord appears a second time and concludes the Day of Atonement, the church will inherit the perfections of Christ and be clothed with light. The psalmist Asaph wrote, 'Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth'.

References:

Heb 9:28

Eze 43:2-7

Isa 51:11

Heb 4:16

Rev 1:15

Rev 7:14

Further Study:

Psalm 50

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

Nothing unclean shall go there

The psalmist asked, 'Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart.' When the Lord appears in His temple for a second time, without reference to sin, the sanctuary will be shut for those who are unclean. The prophet Ezekiel wrote, 'This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut'. This was the gate facing east, the doorway into the house of the Lord. Ezekiel was highlighting that God will no longer allow His people to profane the sanctuary by accommodating uncleanness. The Lord said, 'Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel, when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it ... They made My covenant void'.

A believer renders the covenant of God void when they refuse the washing of the water by the word. We cannot be sanctified without being washed. The journey of a Christian's life is the process of sanctification to their name, their place, their work and, finally, their inheritance. Without sanctification there is no inheritance laid up in heaven for a believer. Instead, the Lord will say, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!'

The Scripture very plainly states that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Ezekiel's prophetic words apply today more than ever. There is an epidemic across the Christian church in which the doctrine of the Scripture is being changed to accommodate the morality of the world. A day is fast approaching when the Lord will declare, 'Enough of all your abominations'. And He will refuse access for those who profane His sanctuary.

References:

Psa 24:3-4 Eze 44:2
Mat 7:23 1Co 6:9-10
Eph 5:26 1Th 4:3-4
Gal 5:21

Further Study:

Micah 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

The stone cut without hands

Christians who have undergone the process of cleansing and sanctification will be the saints who judge the world. They will blamelessly invoke the righteousness of Jesus Christ upon the world because they are without the burden of the guilt of sin. The prophet Daniel foresaw this when he interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue that would be crushed by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands. The various elements of the statue represent world kingdoms, and the stone represents the kingdom of God. He prophesied, 'The stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth'. This reminds us of the prophet Isaiah's words concerning the mountain of the house of the Lord being established in the last days over all the hills, or kingdoms, of the earth.

Jesus spoke of the temple of His body saying, 'Destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands'. Furthermore, the apostle Paul wrote about the circumcision made without hands that believers experience in Christ. If we desire to be part of the stone cut without hands, we must be washed, sanctified and justified. If we are sanctified to the culture of the word, then we are included in the chaste virgin that Paul desired to present as a bride to Christ. The prophet Zechariah wrote, 'It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured'. The Lord Himself is our precious cornerstone laid in Zion. This stone is 'heavy' because the church is being built on that cornerstone, as a temple of living stones. Those who endeavour to bring their uncleanness into the Lord's house and, therefore, lift the stone that is already laid in Zion, will suffer judgement. Finally, the stone cut without hands will break the power of the kingdoms of this world.

References:

1Co 6:2 Dan 2:31-35
Isa 2:2 Mar 14:58
Col 2:11 Zec 12:3
1Pe 2:5 2Co 11:2

Further Study: Ephesians 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 3

Blameless

The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Colossae about being presented before Him holy, blameless and beyond reproach. We can only be 'blameless before Him' by the cleansing process of the water of the word. The word 'blameless' means 'without condemnation'. It means the guilt of sin is not attributable to us. We recall the woman caught in adultery who was brought before Jesus. After stooping down and writing in the ground, Jesus said to the woman, 'Where are they? Did no one condemn you?' He did not absolve her; rather, He delivered her to a process of washing. This is the glorious hope of the gospel. Like this woman caught in sin, we too can be delivered to a position above reproach, no longer weighed down with the burden of our guilt.

The book of Hebrews says of Jesus Christ, 'It was fitting for us to have such a High Priest, holy, *innocent*, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens'. If we recognise and embrace the necessity of cleansing, then these words extrapolate to us. We are, likewise, exhorted to prove ourselves to be blameless, innocent and above reproach. This is not merely our hope in the day of resurrection. There is a cleansing and healing process available in Christ to make us whole here and now. There are many believers who faithfully attend churches but are without confidence to approach the throne of grace. This is because the testimony of their conscience is not clear before God. Only the process of cleansing will produce the testimony of a blameless conscience. This is the meaning of the apostle Peter's words, 'Baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience'.

References:

Eph 5:26-27 Col 1:22
Joh 8:3-11 Heb 7:26
1Pe 3:21 2Pe 3:14

Further Study: Philippians 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 4

He establishes a clean place

When Jesus Christ was crucified at Calvary, outside Jerusalem, He was fulfilling the offering of the red heifer outside the camp. The book of Numbers accounts that the red heifer was brought outside the camp, slaughtered and then burned. Next, a clean person would gather the ashes and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place. The congregation of the sons of Israel would keep the water for the removal of impurity and the purification of sin. The significant observation we make in this chapter is that cleanness for God's people was derived through a process. It was never an instantaneous position.

Jesus' crucifixion activated a process of recovery. The atoning work of Christ is available for unsaved, unbelieving and unclean people who are living in what the prophet Ezekiel calls the 'wilderness of the peoples'. When a person hears the gospel for the first time, the word of the cross is meeting them in their uncleanness. They are in an unclean place. When the word of the cross is proclaimed, that place is sanctified as a 'clean place'. Jesus sends the word of the cross, to activate the waters of purification, into all the earth. He does this through His messengers. As disciple messengers, we are called to go outside the camp bearing His reproach. And as we begin speaking to those who are dead in their trespasses and sin, we are drawing them to the process of washing. They receive the illumination that mercy and grace are available to them if they join the death of Christ and they draw near for cleansing. The offering of Jesus Christ 'once for all', fulfilled every Old Testament offering. We note it is the offering of the red heifer and the application of the waters of purification that saves an unbeliever from their sinful life. It is not firstly the sin offering.

References:

Heb 13:12 Num 19:3, 9
Eze 20:35 Heb 10:10
Tit 3:5 Joh 19:34

Further Study:

Isaiah 53

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 7

Rivers of water

When the gospel of sonship is proclaimed to the hearts of men, they can be washed from their uncleanness by the waters of purification. The apostle Paul spoke of these waters of regeneration that enable a person to 'live'. Before we receive these waters, we are described by the prophet Zechariah as 'prisoners in the *waterless* pit'. Jesus said, 'When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through *waterless* places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, "I will return to my house from which I came".'

In the first case, Jesus was describing the need for the waters of purification to remove uncleanness from our lives. An unclean spirit will always look to reside in 'waterless places'. These 'waterless places' represent any elements of our life and culture that we refuse to submit to the cleansing process of the word. The prophet Ezekiel likened these places to 'swamps and marshes that will not become fresh'. In the second case, Jesus was emphasising the need for structural change in our lives, once we have been cleansed to prevent the uncleanness from returning. If the unclean spirit is allowed to return with seven others, then our 'latter condition' will be worse than our initial condition.

There is no need for any 'waterless places' in our lives. The prophet Ezekiel beheld living water flowing from the altar toward the east and 'down into Arabah'. Arabah means 'the wilderness'. The water then flows into the sea, causing every living creature to live. This vision describes the word flowing out from the throne of grace. The 'sea' represents all the nations of the world. There is sufficient water flowing, like a river, to cause every person to 'live'. It cleanses every person who allows the water to reach the depths of the waterless places of their heart.

References:

Tit 3:5 Zec 9:11
Luk 11:24 Jer 17:7-8
Psa 46:4 Rev 22:1
Joe 3:18

Further Study:

Ezekiel 47

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 8

The throne of grace

The Lord desires to wash us with water so we can testify of a Christian life spent bringing forth fruit by the grace of God. The apostle Paul testified, 'By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which was toward me has not been without fruit'. At the first level, we are saved by grace in an unclean place, because 'where sin abounds, grace all the more'. Many can testify to a grace that first touched their heart and enabled them to hear, receive and be convicted by the gospel. In this way, grace enables us to perceive the kingdom of God as it draws near to us in the day of visitation.

However, from this day forth, we are exhorted to draw near to God behind the veil, in order to obtain mercy and grace. There will be no grace enabling our sonship if we remain in the clean place. We must proceed to the altar to make offering, participate in the daily washing of the word in the laver and receive incense to make our prayer effective. Grace, at the second level, is not flowing out from the sanctuary to those who call upon the name of the Lord but refuse to engage the cleansing process of the waters of purification. Grace is available at the throne of grace! And grace is available for those who are sanctified by cleansing to their priesthood and, therefore, possess authority to draw near to God. This is the meaning of the Scripture, 'If anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in Him'. We have no capacity to serve God and present acceptable offering unless we first come to the throne of grace. If there are believers who have not seen fruit in their Christian life beyond the day of their salvation, they have not yet received the waters of regeneration and drawn near to God in the sanctuary.

References:

1Co 15:10 Rom 5:20
Luk 10:11 Heb 10:38
Eph 5:26 Tit 3:5

Further Study:

Hebrews 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 9

The highway of holiness

When we consider the tabernacle of Moses and all the intricate details governing how the priests were to draw near to the presence of God, we recognise that the temple is a pathway. It is the complete pathway from outside the camp, from an unclean place, through a clean place, all the way to the mercy seat. The prophet Isaiah called this pathway the 'highway of holiness'. He said, 'Waters will break forth in the wilderness and steams in the Arabah. The scorched land will become a pool ... A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it.' In the first case, the Highway of Holiness takes a person outside the camp, not in. It is the pathway out because all of their uncleanness must be processed by the waters of purification before they can come in. When the apostle Paul exhorted the Roman believers to present their bodies a living sacrifice, he was commending them to be washed outside the camp, before they made offering.

When John sees the vision of the New Jerusalem, he notes, 'I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple'. The absence of a temple signifies there is no longer a pathway of approach. Earlier in the book of Revelation, we read, 'Measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple.' We note that the altar is in the Most Holy Place, not the outer court. A day is coming when the Lord will bring the altar back inside from the clean place outside the gate. In that day, there will no longer be a highway of sanctification for those who are unclean.

References:

Rom 12:1 Isa 40:3-4
Rev 11:1-2 Heb 12:14
Joh 14:6 Heb 10:18-22

Further Study:

Isaiah 35

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

Conviction, confession, disclosure, apology, restitution

The healing of a person's soul involves several practical steps. The first of these steps is conviction. When the word is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit is working to bring conviction to our hearts. This is not firstly the imputation of guilt, but rather, the proclamation of our name. When we perceive the truth of our name, we comprehend how we must walk forward to fulfil our name. Many Christians have historically stalled at this point and become shipwrecked in their faith. This is because they believed that somehow the blood of Jesus, mixed with their conviction, would effect change in their life. Illumination alone will not bear the fruit of cleansing. Confession is the second step. Confession is critical because fellowship is the context where we walk in the light. If conviction leads us to the light, then confession is the evidence that we own our sin. The process of cleansing by the waters of purification begins when we own our sin and enter into a dialogue with a clean person.

After confession, we must move to disclosure. We read in the book of Acts, 'Many came confessing and disclosing their deeds'. This will determine whether we are healed from the potential recurring nature of our sin, or simply clean from the specific incident of our sin. This is the meaning of the proverb, 'As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly'. We could ask the practical question: how can someone who is watching over our soul help us be restored from besetting sin, if we do not disclose the circumstances that gave opportunity for that sin? Our willingness to make disclosure reflects the genuineness of our mourning. The fourth step, apology, closes the cycle of mourning. It is the acknowledgement of not only our sin, but the consequences. Finally, apology will lead to restitution because we are accountable for the consequences and damage of our sin.

References:

Joh 16:8 1Jn 1:7
Act 19:18 Pro 26:11
Eze 16:63 Pro 28:13
Lev 5:15-16 Luk 19:8

Further Study:

Acts 19

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

Without spot, stain or wrinkle

The Lord Jesus Christ will present the church to Himself as a bride clothed in clean, white, priestly garments. These garments will be 'without spot, stain or wrinkle'. This is not a judicial position we derive from believing in Jesus. To be without spot, stain or wrinkle is the consequence of proactively engaging the process of cleansing. There are many who confess the name of Jesus, but remain unclean and without authority to approach the throne of grace because of their failure to be washed by the water of the word.

A spot, which is commonly translated 'blemish', refers to some kind of uncleanness that we have touched in the course of our priesthood in the temple or sonship in the world. If our priestly garment becomes unclean, then it needs to be washed outside the camp. For this reason, it is incumbent that we wash our hands and feet daily in the water of the laver, to ensure that our garment is not marked in any way. The priests were instructed to wash their hands and feet before they entered the sanctuary to minister before the Lord, and before they approached the altar of sacrifice. We recall the words of Jesus to Simon Peter, 'He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean'.

We fulfil this daily washing by remaining devotional, applying the word proclaimed at the communion table across the course of every week, and continually discussing the word and its implications for us with our families and brethren. A worthy Christian household will be discussing the word daily. Godly parents will be inducting their children into a culture and habit of appropriating the laver by initiating conversations about the word, and about the uncleanness their children encounter in the world day to day.

References:

Eph 5:27
Joh 13:10
Col 1:22, 28

Exo 30:18-21
2Co 11:2
Joh 15:3

Further Study: Ezekiel 36

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 14

A stain in the garment

The apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to keep the commandment without *stain* or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Scripturally, our priestly garment will become stained whenever we fail to remove a spot or a blemish. A stain will be a longstanding, deep-seated and culturally accommodated aberration. It is a corruption that has been incorporated into a believer's ongoing behaviour and work. The apostle James defined pure and *undefiled* religion in the sight of God as keeping oneself unstained by the world. Someone with a stain in their priestly garment will have elements of their culture that are according to the world.

We could think quite practically of a piece of clothing that becomes marked or dirty with a spot. In most cases, that blemish can be removed quickly and easily by washing. If, however, the spot is neglected for a period of time, the piece of clothing will become stained. The washing of the water of the laver will not purify a person from this type of defilement. They must go outside the camp with a clean person and undertake the cleansing process of the waters of purification. This has significant ramifications for the Christian who has long-standing sin that they have not confessed and processed.

The passing of time does not heal sins committed in the past. If our conscience is no longer provoking us on a matter, that does not equal resolution in the eyes of the Lord. We recall the words of the apostle Paul, 'I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord'. In the mercy of God, He will send the Holy Spirit to provoke us and convict us of stains in our garment. In this way, the person who is lame can be healed and properly connected again to the body of Christ.

References:

ITi 6:14 Jas 1:27
ITi 4:2 Heb 12:12-13
Pro 30:12 Jud 1:23

Further Study: Jeremiah 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 15

Without wrinkle

If a believer covers a stain by folding their priestly garment over on itself, they will develop a permanent wrinkle. The Lord desires to present to Himself the church without spot, stain or wrinkle. The Greek word that is translated 'wrinkle' means to 'shrive' and 'fold or draw together'. It is derived from a word that means to rescue or deliver oneself. According to the Scripture, a wrinkle represents a deeply scarred mark. Repentance from this type of damage is critical, because it highlights a cultural 'fold' that has resulted from acutely engrained aberrant behaviour.

By drawing together our priestly garment to cover a stain, our capacity to fulfil our priesthood will 'shrive'. The righteous works written on our garment will not be realised and we will render ourselves unable to bring forth the fruit of our sonship. If a person is pursuing the pleasures of sin or spending their time on worldly preoccupations, they will not fulfil everything written in the Lamb's book of life concerning their name. Finally, if a person perpetuates these ungodly behaviours, their priestly garment will tear along the fold. This becomes the judgement of the hidden, unprocessed stain, and signifies a fracture in a person's work.

If a person deliberately conceals a stain by folding their garment over on itself, it will indicate a belief that they can straddle a corrupted culture in their home by continuing to serve God. This is the action of establishing a 'righteousness of our own' and failing to subject ourselves to the righteousness of God. The psalmist reminds us that this pathway will result in the judgement of God. The Lord will say, 'These things you have done and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.'

References:

Eph 5:27 2Pe 3:14
2Co 11:2 Rom 10:3
Psa 50:21-22 1Ti 6:13-14

Further Study:

Colossians 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 16

The waters of purification

When a person's priestly garment is stained, they cannot process their own uncleanness. The daily washing of the water of the word in the laver will not cleanse them. We read in the book of Numbers that an unblemished red heifer was burnt together with hyssop, cedar wood and scarlet material. The ashes were then mixed with flowing water in a clean place outside the camp and kept as 'water for purification'. These waters of cleansing were used to cleanse a person who had been healed from leprosy and to cleanse a person who had touched something dead and become unclean. The Lord has pronounced a judgement on this world and the complete destruction of all flesh. When we sully ourselves with the things of this world, we become unclean.

We read in the book of Numbers that an unclean person was required to present themselves and be sprinkled with the waters of purification by a clean person. This was a seven-day process in a clean place outside the camp. Any unclean person who did not purify himself in this way was cut off from the midst of the assembly. They had defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. We will invoke the judgement of God upon our uncleanness if we do not present ourselves for cleansing to receive the waters of purification.

In the account of Jesus cleansing a leper, He said, 'Go, show yourself to the priest'. Jesus had healed the man from the infection of leprosy, but commanded him to engage the process of cleansing. He needed to be sprinkled seven times with the waters of purification outside the camp in a clean place. The priest could then pronounce him clean. The blood of Christ is effective for the cleansing of our conscience from dead works. However, unless we engage the full process of purification, we will not be cleansed, restored or possess a clear conscience.

References:

Exo 40:30-31 Tit 3:5
Eze 5:11 Heb 9:14
Heb 10:2, 22 Luk 5:13-14

Further Study: Numbers 19

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 17

Offering in uncleanness

King David implored the Lord saying, 'Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow'. The background to David's prayer was his grievous sin involving the adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah the Hittite. He recognised that he could not approach the sanctuary in his corrupted state. Instead, he needed to present himself to a priest for washing and restoration, after which the priest would proclaim him clean. The pertinent point to note is that a person cannot present their body as a living sacrifice, believing that they will sanctify themselves by their own offering. Their offering is unacceptable before God while there remain areas of uncleanness in their life. The evidence of this will be the person who faithfully makes offering, but does not see fruit abounding in their life.

The book of Haggai clearly shows that a person cannot continue making offering in their uncleanness. Haggai said to the people, 'Ask now the priests for a ruling ... If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean? And the priests answered, "It will become unclean".' Haggai is showing that an unclean person's offering is unclean. If they proceed to the altar with a defiled offering, they will invoke the judgement of the altar upon themselves. This is the meaning of the apostle Paul's words, that he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Paul warned the Corinthians that their repetitive partaking of the communion in uncleanness was the reason some were weak, sick and dead. As we draw nearer to God and proceed further up the mountain of the Lord, it is paramount that our offering and culture are in conformity with the altar.

References:

Psa 51:7 2Sa 12:9
IKi 15:5 Rom 12:1
1Co 11:27-30 Lev 10:3

Further Study:

Haggai 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

Leprosy

The most severe type of uncleanness the Bible nominates is leprosy. For an Israelite in the Old Testament, leprosy was the symbol of the judgement of God upon uncleanness. If they touched a dead body, they had to be purified. If they did not deal with their uncleanness, the Lord stretched forth His hand and they were stricken with leprosy. They were considered the 'living dead' because they had been delivered to the corruption of their flesh. They were dead in sin. Before the nation of Israel entered the promised land, the Lord warned them about the infliction of God should they choose to forsake His will. Moses wrote, 'The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, *from which you cannot be healed*'. Leprosy is the symbol of the wasting, debilitating affliction of God upon a person as the consequence of their sin.

King David recognised that he was a leper because of his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah the Hittite. He was able to testify of the destructive nature of his condition. He said, 'While I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away'. His unprocessed sin was the measure of his uncleanness. We recall the account of the leper who came to Jesus saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean'. We note he did not ask to be healed, because he knew the underpinning issue of his leprosy was his uncleanness. If we become preoccupied with worldly pastimes, the comfort and achievements of our families and businesses, or creating opportunities for our children to be successful in this world, we will become unclean. And if this uncleanness is not addressed, the Lord will invoke the judgement of leprosy upon us. Like Moses, we must consider the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the temporal treasures of the world.

References:

Deu 28:27 Heb 11:24-26
Luk 5:13 2Ch 26:16-21
Eph 2:1 Psa 32:3

Further Study:

Psalm 32

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 21

The leprous garment

If a person has a blemish on their priestly garment and they do not go outside the camp with a clean person to apply the waters of purification, then the blemish will become a stain. It will become a garment stained or spotted by the flesh. This describes a leprous priestly garment. Leprosy describes the afflicting, wasting and destructive judgement of God upon a person who is perpetuating their uncleanness and not being sanctified. Leprosy is the symbol of God's judgement upon uncleanness. The Scripture identifies that leprosy can be in a person's body, head or beard, garment, or house. When an Israelite had an infection of leprosy, they would present themselves to the priest and not a physician. This signifies that they understood their condition was not firstly medical; it was a spiritual uncleanness.

If a person has leprosy in their garment then there is a corruption in their priestly work. The Scripture teaches that if a leprous spot in a person's garment spreads, then the garment was to be burned outside the camp. If a person's garment is burned in this way, they will no longer have a work. Paul said, 'If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire'. If the mark of leprosy did not spread, then the garment was washed. Depending on the outcome of washing, the garment would either be burned outside the camp, have the leprous portion torn out, or be considered fully clean. In considering the severity and irreversible damage of leprosy, we are reminded that the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. We are to hate the garment spotted by the flesh. If we have touched something that is unclean so that our capacity to do our priestly work has been corrupted, it is imperative we present ourselves for the process of cleansing.

References:

Lev 14:9, 35 1Co 3:15
Pro 8:13 Jud 1:23
Mat 8:4

Further Study: Leviticus 13**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 22

Houses marked with leprosy

The Scripture identifies that leprosy can contaminate both an individual and a household. For a house to become leprous, an individual member of that household will be accommodating uncleanness within their home. The Lord said to Moses, 'When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you for a possession, and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession, then the one who owns the house shall come and tell the priest'. Entering Canaan represented their entry into an unclean and unsanctified world. They would no longer be encamped around the tabernacle on the desert floor, with the culture of their tents closely guarded by the sanctuary at the centre of their camp. Instead, they would be spread across territories and cities, working the fields and vineyards to bring forth the produce of the ground and receiving all the blessing that the Lord had given to each household. This was a tremendous opportunity, and also a great risk.

Like Christians today, the mandate for guarding the culture of their individual homes fell to the people inhabiting those houses. If they turned away from the Lord in their heart and became unclean, they would subsequently take that infectious uncleanness back to their homes. The mandate for the head of each household was to notify the priest if they saw stones in their house marked with leprosy. These stones represent endemic cultural problems within a household that are incompatible with the culture of the kingdom of God. If the priest determined that the leprosy was spreading, then the infected stones were removed. They were replaced with new stones and the house was re-plastered. If the leprosy returned after this process of cultural restructuring, then the entire house needed to be torn down. It is our hope that, as Jesus sends His word and messengers into our homes, we are found to have worthy houses.

References:

Isa 13:11

Ezr 4:1-3

1Sa 7:3

Gen 35:2

Heb 11:7

Further Study:

Leviticus 14

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 23

The damage of leprosy

Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, 'I do not condemn you ... from *now on sin no more*'. We could reasonably conclude that the life of this woman would have undergone substantial practical changes after this day. Jesus freed her from the guilt and condemnation of her sin. And He commanded her to pursue a process by which she would not return to her sin. If we escape the defilements of the world but are once again entangled with them, the last state is worse than the first. The glorious hope of the gospel is that our uncleanness is not only forgiven, but we can be cleansed and restored. These are distinct steps in the process of recovery.

Responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit over a matter, may lead to a person's forgiveness. But forgiveness does not mean they have been cleansed from the addictive, debilitating nature of their sin. Nor does forgiveness imply there is restoration to a priestly work. Cleansing is determined by a person's willingness and diligence to embrace the process of cleansing. And the nature of a person's priestly work is proven as they present their 'members' as instruments of righteousness to God.

We are familiar with the image of a leprous person missing fingers and toes and being covered with bandages. This is because the nature of the disease targets the nervous system and progressively removes a person's ability to feel pain and awareness of damage. A person may be forgiven and cleansed, but if they are figuratively 'missing their fingers', how effectively can they present their offering in the sanctuary? A person with residual permanent damage from leprosy will be able to eat and drink the communion, and live in the kingdom of God, but they may not be able to handle the vessels of the Lord within the sanctuary in certain ways.

References:

Joh 8:10 2Pe 2:20
Lev 21:12 Rom 6:13
Num 19:19 Num 31:23

Further Study:

Matthew 12

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

The testimony of our conscience

The apostle Paul testified to the church in Corinth saying, 'Our proud confidence is this: *the testimony of our conscience*, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you'. The word 'conscience' means to 'know together with yourself'. The outcome of cleansing is a testimony concerning our sanctification. We will know who we are, who we should be, and how to conduct ourselves in the world while remaining unstained by the world. We will be blameless and free from condemnation if we are spiritually minded and our conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit. This is the meaning of a good conscience before God. Alternatively, if we do not appropriate the waters of purification, our conscience becomes a barrier, stopping us from entering the sanctuary of God. We will endeavour to fulfil our sonship, without receiving mercy and grace according to our name in the ark of testimony.

We have a clear conscience when it has been cleansed from dead works by the blood of Jesus Christ in the waters of purification. Dead works only serve to produce a justification by law because we have no confidence that we are justified through faith in Christ. If we are not cleansed, we will presume to appraise good and evil, and approve or disapprove of ourselves using our fallen conscience. While we seek to justify ourselves in this way, we will never stand before the Lord without spot, stain or wrinkle. The promise of the Scripture is that we can find a good conscience before God. A fountain of cleansing has been opened for us. If we surrender our pride and are washed, we can approach the throne of grace. The Lord gives mercy and grace to the humble, but He resists the proud.

References:

2Co 1:12 1Pe 3:21
Jas 1:27 Gal 2:16
Heb 9:14 Zec 13:1

Further Study:

Galatians 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 25

Madness

King Solomon set his mind to know wisdom and to know madness. He said, 'I directed my mind to know the *foolishness of madness*'. The notion of 'madness' that King Solomon identified is equal to what the Bible means by leprosy. If the Lord passes judgement concerning a person's uncleanness and inflicts them with leprosy, He blinds their eyes. When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, the Lord pronounced the curses that would befall them if they became disobedient. Moses wrote, 'The Lord will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart, and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways'. Madness is the 'bewilderment of blindness' and figuratively implies there is a skin over the eye distorting a person's vision. Hence, the scriptural definition of madness is 'no sense of reality according to God'. This will mean a person has lost their connection to their name and their work in the will of God. The apostle Paul described those who are 'not believing' as having their 'minds blinded'.

If we pursue uncleanness, the Lord will deliver us to the foolishness of madness. The Lord inflicts us with leprosy commensurate with the madness we have pursued. Possible examples could include, inordinately striving in our vocations, promoting uncleanness in the lives of our children by convincing ourselves they will be disadvantaged without certain experiences and opportunities, and fostering ongoing relationships with those who oppose the fellowship of Christ and the word of God. When the Lord sent Isaiah to render the eyes of the people dim, he asked, 'Lord, how long?' God answered, 'Until the Lord has removed men far away'. In our day, the Lord is judging uncleanness, progressively removing those who refuse to be washed far away from His sanctuary.

References:

Ecc 1:17 Deu 28:28-29
Ecc 7:25 2Co 4:4
Ecc 10:13 Isa 44:24-25

Further Study:

Isaiah 6

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 28

Anger

The Scripture identifies four macro areas of uncleanness that produce madness or leprosy. They are the conditions of anger, immorality, anxiety and dissent. These are the emotions of sin and they are interrelated with each other. If a person is carrying the infection of leprosy, they will most likely manifest the symptoms of more than one condition. Chapter thirty of the book of Proverbs nominates these four areas of uncleanness. Concerning anger we read, 'There is a kind who curses his father and does not bless his mother'. Quite often, an angry person has unresolved issues with their parents. This is especially relevant for men who feel 'let down' by their natural father or the fatherhood that has been expressed toward them in the church. There may be a lack of formation in a man that makes him overly dependent on affirmation concerning his identity. Finally, this demeans a man. He resents his own ongoing need for approval, even though he continues to seek out confirmation. Perhaps the most destructive statement a father can make to his son is, 'You will never amount to anything'. We note that the way of Cain demonstrates the uncleanness of anger, which leads to murderous wrath.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul also nominated these four areas of uncleanness. He said, 'Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents'. The Israelites repeatedly tested the Lord by the many expectations they placed on Moses, and the anger they directed at him. On one such occasion, Moses believed that the congregation was so angry, they were going to stone him. If we default to anger whenever a messenger proclaims the word to us, we have leprosy. Our anger is the fruit of self-righteousness and will not achieve the righteousness of God.

References:

Pro 30:11

Jud 1:11

Gen 4:8

Exo 17:4

Jas 1:20

Pro 19:19

Further Study:

 1 Corinthians 10

Daily Proverb:

 Proverbs 29

Immorality

The second area of uncleanness that becomes a leprous condition is immorality. The book of Proverbs states, 'There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness'. Regardless of the specific type of immorality a person dips into, the nature of their sin can be summarised at two levels. Firstly, the immoral are sinning against the temple of their own body. Secondly, they are sinning against the temple of another's body. In today's digital world, the most destructive and endemic immorality amongst society is pornography. An addiction to pornography certainly constitutes leprosy. It is a foremost uncleanness that this generation must overcome, in order to appear before the Lord clothed in white.

The sins of immorality promote a high level of shame amongst those who have become unclean. We recall the words of the apostle John, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us'. We cannot forgive our own sins or cleanse ourselves. A person will not be cleansed until they bring the matter to the light. This is despite the shame and the rationalisations they may use to justify or excuse their immorality. The way of Esau demonstrates the uncleanness of immorality. We read that he exchanged his birthright and inheritance for the temporary, passing pleasure of a meal to satisfy the lusts of his flesh.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 'Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day'. This is in reference to the time when the nation of Israel 'began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab'. We recognise the declining moral virtue and normalisation of immorality in society today. But this is not cause for variation or shifting shadow in God. Immorality is a form of leprosy in every generation and the church cannot accommodate uncleanness.

References:

Pro 30:12 1Co 6:19
1Jn 1:9 Heb 12:16
1Co 10:8 Num 25:1

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 30

Anxiety

The third area of uncleanness that becomes a leprous condition is anxiety. The book of Proverbs tells us, 'There is a kind, oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised in arrogance.' Anxiety is the cause and outcome of idolatry. Lofty eyelids signal an idol in the heart. Jesus linked anxiety and idolatry when He said, 'No one can serve two masters ... for this reason do not be worried about your life'. Anxiety results if we try to serve two masters. An alternate master could be money, fame, a pleasure orientated lifestyle, a perfect family, and so on. Anxiety and idolatry compound each other in a self-perpetuating cycle. The more anxious we become, the more we look to an idol to answer our dilemma. But an idol cannot speak to us, nor resolve our anxieties! If our prayer is motivated by anxiety, then we will have already determined the answer we are looking for, and are praying to an idol instead of God. We can be assured that God does not answer our anxious prayers. The way of Balaam demonstrates the uncleanness of anxiety because he loved the wages of unrighteousness and endeavoured to serve two masters.

Paul warned the Corinthians, 'Do not be idolaters, as some were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play".' He is referring to the account of the golden calf at Mount Sinai. Interestingly, the Scripture accounts that Moses looked upon the people and saw they were 'out of control'. This is ironic, because the people had grown impatient waiting for Moses to return from the mountain and made the golden calf in an effort to seize control! An anxious person is motivated by an irrational fear that all things will not work together for good and will seek to control their environment.

References:

Pro 30:13 2Pe 2:15-16
1Co 10:7 Exo 32:25
Rom 8:28 Psa 115:4-5

Further Study: Matthew 6

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 31

Dissent

The final area of uncleanness that becomes a leprous condition is dissent. We read in Proverbs, 'There is a kind of man whose teeth are like swords and his jaw teeth like knives, to devour the afflicted from the earth and the needy from among men'. If we bite and devour one another, we will be consumed by one another. Paul warned the Corinthians not to 'grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer'. He was referring to the rebellion initiated by Korah. Korah assembled two hundred and fifty men of renown and sought to usurp Moses and Aaron. They desired to take custodianship of the priesthood in the sanctuary of God. Furthermore, Dathan and Abiram, who represent heads of houses, rejected the oversight and authority of Moses. They refused to align their households to the altar and sought to establish their homes as family fortresses. After the houses of Korah, Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up by the ground, the congregation began grumbling against Moses and Aaron for the death of the Lord's people. This murmuring became an infection among the congregation and the Lord sent the destroying angel to kill those who were grumbling with a plague.

In the first case, grumblers, murmurers, cynics, and those prone to criticising will become defiled by the uncleanness of dissent, if they continue in their presumption concerning instruction. They give themselves the prerogative to reinterpret the instruction of those with grace and authority who are leading them. They may be overseers with ascension-gift grace, deacons running administrations, or simply fellow heirs and workers in Christ who are taking up a role commensurate with their name and works. The book of Hebrews reminds us to 'obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.'

References:

Pro 30:14 Gal 5:15
ICo 10:10 Heb 13:17
Num 14:2 Psa 106:25

Further Study: Numbers 16

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 1