

Ritual Purity

It's becoming clear that the Law of Moses ranges from the mostly symbolic (circumcision, the burnt offering, and the Sabbath, for instance) to the mostly practical (such as restitution for theft, removing pigs, rats, and carrion birds from the menu, and not marrying your sister). Most of these precepts fall somewhere in between: part practical advice, part metaphors of some greater truth.

The subject of ritual purity falls within this “hybrid” category. The things that are defined as ceremonially defiling often have a basis in hygiene. Thus separating people who are “defiled” or “unclean” from the general population or barring them from certain activities is only prudent from a community health-care perspective. On the other hand, Yahweh has invariably couched the process by which one may return to a “clean” or “undefiled” state in terms of ritualistic law, fraught with symbolic significance. Only through the performance of certain rites may one regain his “undefiled” status in the commonwealth of Israel.

But it has also become increasingly obvious that religion (for its own sake) is something Yahweh detests. He is not the least bit interested in seeing us follow the rules just because there are rules to follow. Rather, He wants us to know Him, to understand what He is doing for us, and why. You can almost hear the agony in His voice as He speaks through the prophet Hosea: **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me. Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.... I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”** (Hosea 4:6, 6:6) The word translated “knowledge” here is *da'at*, meaning perception, discernment, knowledge, understanding, skill, or wisdom. The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* explains that “*da'at* is derived from the root verb *yada*, ‘to know’ [in a relational sense]. The root expresses knowledge gained in various ways by the senses.... *Da'at* is a general term for knowledge, particularly that which is of a personal experiential nature... it is the contemplative perception of the wise man... also used of moral cognition.”

Note that God doesn't say His people are destroyed by bad behavior, failure to keep every nuance of the Law, or even idolatry. These things are merely byproducts of the real problem—a lack of knowledge concerning their God. But it's not as if they hadn't been taught: Israel had *rejected* knowledge, forsaken it, and finally exchanged it for a list of 613 silly rules and pointless regulations. When Yahweh says, **“You have forgotten the law of your God,”** He's pointing out the place from which the knowledge His people lack was supposed to come—*the*

Law. I know it sounds like we're going in circles here, but we're not. The only logical answer to the conundrum is that the "knowledge of God" that Israel was supposed to receive from the Law was latent in the symbols and metaphors that were written between every line of the Torah, the symbols that are becoming so evident in this present study. If the *olah* isn't symbolic of something important (the sacrifice of the Messiah), all you've got is smoke and ash and one less sheep in your flock. If the Sabbath isn't a metaphor for a greater reality (the conclusion of Yahweh's 7,000-year plan for the redemption of mankind), all you've got is a day off once a week—and God's irrational promise to destroy you if you don't take advantage of it. And if circumcision isn't representative of some significant element in Yahweh's agenda (the separation of man from his sin), then all you've got is the painful, bloody—and pointless—mutilation of the most sensitive part of a guy's anatomy.

Paul chose circumcision as the issue he'd use to demonstrate the difference between mindlessly performing the outward rituals of the Law in an attempt to impress God and the alternative—coming to a knowledge of Yahweh. His case rests upon the recognition of Yahshua the Messiah as the ultimate object of all those symbols and metaphors that permeate the Torah. **"Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ cannot help you."** In other words, you must choose between them—you can't travel on two paths at one time. **"I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses. For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace...."** We recognize the act of circumcision as symbolic of sin being "cut off" from mankind. But Paul is pointing out something quite significant about the symbol here: if your reliance is on circumcision (and on keeping the rest of the Law), then you've identified yourself with the part that's being cut off and thrown away, not the part God wants to keep! (The NIV words it "alienated from Christ," and the NASB renders it "severed.") I'm not sure, but I think Paul just called those who rely on the Law "dickheads." Pardon my Greek.

"But we who live by the Spirit [in contrast with those who rely on the Law] eagerly wait to receive everything promised to us who are right with God through faith. For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, it makes no difference to God whether we are circumcised or not circumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love." (Galatians 5:2-6 NLT) If circumcision *means* something, then that which it means—our separation from our sin—is the reality, and the rite itself is but the shadow. And if that reality has been manifested for us through the sacrifice of Yahshua, then the shadow is no longer significant. Put another way, if circumcision is a sign pointing toward our separation from sin, then our arrival at that destination makes the road sign superfluous. The sign was once important. Now it's redundant.

“You were getting along so well. Who has interfered with you to hold you back from following the truth? It certainly isn’t God, for he is the one who called you to freedom. But it takes only one wrong person among you to infect all the others—a little yeast spreads quickly through the whole batch of dough! I am trusting the Lord to bring you back to believing as I do about these things. God will judge that person, whoever it is, who has been troubling and confusing you.” (Galatians 5:7-10 NLT) I should pause to make something clear. The “Judaizers” whom Paul is castigating here were not rabbis who denied the deity or Messiahship of Yahshua. They were, rather, “Christians” (in the nominal sense of the word) who held that the Torah must still be followed even though Yahshua had fulfilled it to the letter and bought our salvation with His blood. It is my sad duty to report that these guys are still around, camping on the fringes of the “Messianic” movement. Some of them are brilliant scholars; and they’d *have* to be brilliant in order to perform the intense mental juggling act that’s essential to their doctrine. Paul says, literally, that “he who troubles you will bear his judgment.” That word “judgment” is *krima*, meaning a judicial decision, a decree—usually, though not always, implying a negative verdict, a condemnation.

First, they must convince us that the “Law” of which Paul speaks is not the Torah, but rather the “oral law,” a collection of traditions and rulings that have (the rabbis insist) existed side by side with the written Torah since the time of Moses. (In point of fact, the oral law was invented by the Jewish exiles in Babylon, maybe twelve hundred years later.) The Talmud and Mishnah were later developments, *written* versions of the *oral* law (confused yet?) upon which our friend Maimonides based his work. In other words, the 613 mitzvot we’ve been reviewing are in reality based not on the Torah but on the Talmud, a fact that explains some of the Rambam’s confusion. (My commentary, on the other hand, is based on the written Torah.) The bottom line? Believers (they say) are *still* required to observe the Torah in all its detail, whether or not it’s possible, whether or not anybody has ever succeeded in doing so. They’re just not required to keep the “oral law,” something that in Paul’s day was as nebulous and contradictory as any man-made religion has ever been.

Unfortunately for the neoJudaizers (and fortunately for us), there isn’t a shred of evidence to support their theory. When Paul speaks of circumcision, he’s referring to the rite commanded in the Torah, not a “secondary circumcision” demanded by the rabbis. (Much of the really dumb stuff in Judaism wasn’t invented until after rabbi Akiba made eisegesis—reading doctrine *into* a passage instead of extracting truth out of it—a contact sport in the Jewish religion early in the second century.)

To make their argument sound plausible, the neoJudaizers must toss another ball into the air. Since there is no earthly reason gentile believers would be

inclined to heed Jewish rabbis (especially when they contradicted the written Scriptures), it is hypothesized that all of the Galatian believers were actually members of the “ten lost tribes” of Israel. Further, *every* “gentile” believer ever since is actually a biological descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a hitherto unidentified member of these lost tribes. This is the basic thrust of the so-called “two-house” movement. Again, it betrays a fundamental lack of understanding as to what the Torah was meant to achieve in God’s plan, and what the role of the Jews (or more correctly, Israel) was supposed to be. Salvation is not *for* the Jews (not exclusively, anyway). It’s *of* the Jews.

Thus it is that a third ball gets tossed into the air. The neoJudaizers insist that because Paul only sought out and taught Israelite expatriates (not actual gentiles), none of the New Covenant Scriptures were composed in Greek, but were written in Aramaic, a close cognate of Hebrew. This leaves them free to re-translate the Greek texts into Aramaic (or use existing Aramaic versions) and then translate those into English, leaving them lots of linguistic wiggle room in which to advance their agenda. I’ll agree that the book of Hebrews and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John could well have been originally penned in Aramaic or Hebrew. This might explain why the polished Greek of the Gospel of John is somewhat different from the rough language of Revelation: John wrote the latter in his second language, not his mother tongue. But the idea that Paul wasn’t fluent in Greek or didn’t write in Greek to audiences outside of Judea is patently absurd. Paul hailed from Tarsus, in what is now Southern Turkey. He was a Roman citizen. Greek was the *lingua franca* of the day, much as English is today. Outside of Judea, his *only* language options would have been Greek and Latin—even to Jewish audiences.

So Paul makes his case: **“Dear brothers and sisters, if I were still preaching that you must be circumcised—as some say I do—why would the Jews persecute me? The fact that I am still being persecuted proves that I am still preaching salvation through the cross of Christ alone. I only wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.”** (Galatians 5:11-12 NLT) Paul sounds miffed, doesn’t he? I guess he’s got good reason. The advocates of “Law plus Grace” would never have persecuted Paul to the extent they did if he had spoken only against the oral law while upholding the necessity of flawlessly keeping the Instructions of Moses. The word translated “mutilate” (*apokopto*) generally means “to cut off, to amputate.” Many commentators feel that Paul actually intends to suggest emasculation, castration, sort of a circumcision gone horribly wrong. The point is that he doesn’t wish to see these heresies bear any fruit among the faithful.

He continues: **“For you have been called to live in freedom—not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if instead of**

showing love among yourselves you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.” (Galatians 5:13-15 NLT) As Paul and I have both said ’til we’re blue in the face, we’re not suggesting that the Law of Moses has no value and should be discarded as a guidebook to life, our “Owner’s Manual,” to coin a phrase. It has always—and *will* always—have inestimable value in revealing the mind of God to mortal man. And what is Yahweh’s mindset toward us? What does He want us to do? Only to love Him with our whole being and to love our fellow man. If love is what we’re all about, the precepts of the Law will become more or less automatic for us. Of course, **“Love your neighbor as yourself”** is no easier to do in the strength of our flesh than is any other precept in the Torah.

“So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves,” which is: loving yourself at the expense of your neighbor. **“The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. But when you are directed by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer subject to the law.”** It isn’t that we’re above the Law, but rather that the Holy Spirit directs us to conduct our lives in a manner that’s compatible with it, which makes sense, since Yahweh is the Author of both the Law and the Spirit’s counsel. Our sinful nature struggles against both of these things. Which impulse will prevail, our sinful nature or the direction of the Holy Spirit? Good question, but first note that Paul is talking to believers here, for whom *both* things are a potential influence. Those without God’s Spirit dwelling within them have only their sinful natures to shape their behavior (which goes a long way toward explaining why the Law is impossible to keep). But for us, both things, like a couple of hungry dogs, vie for our favors, fighting among themselves. Which one wins? Which one gets stronger over time? The one we feed.

“When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:16-21 NLT) Is Paul saying that if a believer ever has a lustful thought or a twinge of envy he’s not really saved? No. He’s saying that if these things—as a collective profile—describe your life, it’s evidence that you are “following the desires of your sinful nature,” presumably because the Holy Spirit is absent, exerting no influence at all in your life. A key phrase is “anyone living that sort of life,” or as the NKJV puts it, “those who practice such things.” But the word translated “living” or “practice” is *anaprasso*, the very term Paul used to describe

his own frustrating failures in Romans 7. It is therefore clear that it is the totality of one's moral attitude, not the occasional lapse in behavior, that identifies one's spiritual position. But don't let the tail wag the dog here: trying your best to avoid the things on this list won't "save" you any more than trying to keep the Law of Moses will.

If we're really believers, however, we'll have two dogs in this fight (so to speak). **"But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law."** Not in the Torah, anyway. As we have seen, there is a subtle undercurrent of self-centered, joyless, unforgiving harshness in the oral law upon which Maimonides' mitzvot are based. **"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there...."** Note that Paul *didn't* declare that "the Law has been nailed to the cross," as is so often preached these days. What's been crucified is the influence of the flesh with its "passions and desires," *not* the Torah, the part of God's Word that merely points out where we've erred.

Having identified what characterizes a Spirit-led life and how it differs from one dominated by the sin nature, Paul now offers some practical advice. **"If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or irritate one another, or be jealous of one another."** (Galatians 5:22-26 NLT) Once again, it comes down to a choice we've been given. We can choose to follow one influence or the other, the Spirit's leading or our old sinful nature. Paul's admonition identifies certain pitfalls that all too readily entrap Christians: sanctimonious pride, a prickly, provocative, confrontational attitude, and the envy of those who are even more arrogant and irritating (i.e., more "religious") than we are—ecclesiastical ambition. But at least we *have* a choice of how to behave. Those without Christ are never even "tempted" to live godly lives, though they may find that other people like them better if they're kind, patient, gentle, and self-controlled. A far more fundamental choice must be made before real godliness is possible—the choice of whose family to enter.

IMPURITY THROUGH CONTACT

(561) *Eight species of creeping things defile by contact.* **"These also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. These are unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening."** (Leviticus 11:29-31) No there aren't, and no they don't. Some days you just want to take Maimonides and throttle him. It seems as though every time we turn around he's finding new ways to get it wrong.

Leviticus 11 is all about dietary guidelines. We covered much of it in detail back in chapter 5 of this book. By the time we get to these few verses, we've learned that (1) it's only okay to eat land animals that have divided hooves *and* chew their cud, (2) only sea creatures that have fins and scales (in other words, true fish) are good for food, (3) "barnyard" birds are okay to eat, but carrion birds and predators are not, (4) the only insects that may be eaten are locusts and related species, and (5) we aren't to eat anything that walks around on its paws. The eight animals listed in the passage at hand merely clarify the list of forbidden foods: rodents and reptiles are out. The list doesn't pretend to be comprehensive, any more than the list of forbidden birds was. These are just familiar examples of the types of animals that we aren't to eat.

And what about "defiling by contact?" As far as the Torah is concerned, this is only true of touching the unclean animal's *carcass*. They don't ceremonially defile anyone if they're alive. You can pet your cat; you just can't eat him. **"By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; the carcass of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It is unclean to you."** (Leviticus 11:24-28) Life never defiles. Nor does anything that Yahweh has declared to be clean defile someone on contact, sometimes even if it is no longer alive. (If you're going to eat a steak, it's axiomatic that the cow is kaput.) Only things that are both dead *and* unclean defile you by merely touching them.

Spiritually speaking, the lesson is clear: the world is unclean, but we must walk through it on life's journey. Left to its own devices, it is usually spiritually neutral, neither harmful nor beneficial to us. We are instructed not to "ingest" the things of the world, not to assimilate them into our being, not to love them. But there are things within the world—notably dead religious practice, arrogance, greed, and lust for power—that are not only unclean, they're also dead. That is, they are not spiritually neutral, but are enemies of God and His people, warring actively against them. These are things we are not even to touch!

- (562) *Foods become defiled by contact with unclean things. "Anything on which any of them [i.e., the carcass of an unclean animal] falls when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack,*

whatever item it is in which any work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls you shall break; and whatever is in it shall be unclean: in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. And everything on which a part of any such carcass falls shall be unclean; whether it is an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; for they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you.” (Leviticus 11:32-35) Yes, if a dead fly falls into your lemonade, the lemonade has become defiled, unclean. But so has the glass. Depending upon whether it *can be* properly washed, the contaminated vessel is to be either cleansed in water or destroyed. (I get the feeling that while an unglazed, unfired clay pot would have to be destroyed, one hardened in the fire of the kiln could be washed and reused.) There are obvious hygiene considerations, but the steps that Yahweh specified one must go through to regain the status of being ritually pure have meaning far beyond these practical health reasons.

We need to address what it meant to be “ritually defiled,” or “ceremonially unclean.” The Hebrew adjective *tame* is apparently derived from the noun describing alluvial mud, or the related verb meaning “to flow over,” a graphic description of what happens to us as we walk through this world—without even trying, we get inundated by the filth of our environment from time to time. With its derivatives, *tame* is used in scripture 279 times (two thirds of them in the Torah), making it a concept ubiquitous in God’s Law. While becoming *tame* was obviously supposed to be avoided if possible, it was equally clear that it would be inevitable from time to time. As long as we’re mortals, the risk of “defilement” is always present.

Although *tame* is translated with such evil sounding words as “unclean,” “defiled,” and “impure,” it’s not precisely the same thing as sin, which is technically “missing the mark.” It is a statement of condition, not of behavior. If you’ll recall in our discussion of the Levitical sacrifices (Chapter 12), God drew a distinction between offerings for sin (*chata’t*) and “mistakes” or trespasses (*asham*). But there is no sacrifice to cover becoming *tame*/defiled. Cleansing is available (by washing in water and letting time pass), but forgiveness is deemed unnecessary and inappropriate. There are, however, consequences for having become defiled. It temporarily disqualified a priest or Levite from performing his usual service at the sanctuary, and it separated the ordinary Israelite from fellowship and participation in the life of his community, most notably prohibiting him from approaching Yahweh in worship. That’s why we refer to these things as “ritually” or “ceremonially” defiling, even though the words aren’t there in the Hebrew. In this life, becoming *tame* is a

condition that by definition is (or can be) accidental, unavoidable, inadvertent—even inevitable.

Although *tame* isn't "sin" per se, it can serve as a *picture* of our sin, that is, our fallen state or condition. It points out that in addition to requiring atonement through sacrifice, we also need to be cleansed. Ezekiel in particular uses the metaphor of ritual defilement to describe an idolatrous Israel. That makes the cleansing process—the washing in water and the passage of time—especially significant for Israel. You see, another ubiquitous scriptural metaphor pictures Israel as the "land," while the gentile nations are called the "sea." So it is that an unrepentant Israel has been "immersed" in the gentile nations for the better part of two thousand years, enduring a cleansing process that will only be complete when her Messiah returns to close the book on the times of the gentiles—at the definitive Day of Atonement, coming soon to a world near you.

- (563) *Anyone who touches the carcass of a beast that died of itself shall be unclean. "And if any animal which you may eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening. He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.* (Leviticus 11:39-40) The issue here is how a clean animal has died. If a man butchered a sheep or cow for food, or if it was slaughtered as a sacrifice according to the instructions of the Torah (draining the blood, etc.), then he would not be defiled by handling the carcass. However, if one of his cattle dropped dead and he had to dispose of its corpse, he would be "unclean" under the Law. As we saw in Mitzvah #156, a clean animal who died of its own accord could be sold to the neighboring gentiles as food, but the Israelite, having been set apart to Yahweh, was not to eat of it. Here we see that if he *did* eat some of it, it would ritually defile him.

If we look hard enough for them, we can perceive the life-lessons that are latent here. The death of a clean animal (i.e., one suitable for sacrifice) can be a good thing or not, depending upon how it died. It either provides us with nourishment and satisfaction or it's a meaningless waste of living resources. God, I believe, is trying to make us understand that our intimate contact with the dead things of this world separates us from Him and His people, if only temporarily. It makes us useless in His service and too filthy to be of any benefit to our fellow man. Worse, this condition of uncleanness is exacerbated if we attempt to "nourish" ourselves with the lifeless distractions we see around us. In point of fact, the only "good" death—i.e., the only death from which we can legitimately derive benefit—is that purposely suffered by something "clean," for that death is

a reflection of the sacrifice of the Messiah on our behalf, a death that (like the properly slaughtered cow or sheep) actually brings life in its wake—the innocent meeting the needs of the guilty.

- (564) *A lying-in woman is unclean like a menstruating woman (in terms of uncleanness).* **“If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days.”** (Leviticus 12:2-5) We discussed this passage under Mitzvah #501, where the subject was what offerings the new mom was to bring. Here we are given the details of her period of ritual impurity—forty days total (seven plus thirty-three) if she had borne a son, and twice that long if the child was a daughter.

Indulge me for a moment while I chase a rabbit. Could it be significant that the number of days of a woman’s purification precisely matches the number of years of King David’s reign? I Kings 2:11 reports that David, “a man after God’s own heart,” reigned in Hebron seven years, and then in Jerusalem for thirty-three. The character of his reign, then, is defined by where he lived. Both the numbers and place names are significant. Hebron means “association” or “alliance,” from the verb *habar*, meaning “to join or unite.” Seven is the ubiquitous number indicating divine completion, so David’s Hebron sojourn—as well as the woman’s first portion of her post-partum cleansing, if my observations have merit—is indicative of a perfect, complete alliance with Yahweh.

Jerusalem is a bit harder to pin down. The name has two components. The first might be *yarah*, a primitive root verb meaning “to throw, shoot, cast, or pour,” leading to two derivative concepts, to teach or instruct, and to “throw water,” i.e. rain. On the other hand, if *yerussa* is the origin of “Jeru...” then “possession” or “inheritance” is meant. If it’s *yira*, it means, “to see.” The second component is *shalam*—restitution, recompense, reward, payment, or amends, and thus by implication, peace). So *Strong’s* says Jerusalem means “teaching of peace.” The Open Bible suggests it’s “Possession of Peace.” Baker and Carpenter and others call it “Foundation of Peace.” I’ve also heard it called the “City of Peace,” “Secure Habitation,” “To See Peace,” and the place from which “Redemption Flows” or from which “Restitution Pours.” I have the feeling that it really means “all of the above,” for all these things describe the city as it is in

God's view. The city of Jerusalem has no earthly significance outside of what Yahshua accomplished there. So what's the importance of *thirty-three*? Not coincidentally, this is precisely the number of years Yahshua walked the earth as the Son of Man (from the fall of 2 B.C. to the spring of 33 A.D.).

This is turning out to be a tangled skein but one worth unraveling. The woman represents the human race (or at least the portion of it indwelt with the Holy Spirit), and her husband is symbolic of Yahweh. The son born to her is figurative of Yahshua—the union of God and humanity. The birth of a woman's son was the direct result of her “association or alliance,” her joining (*habar/Hebron*) with her husband. The first seven days of her purification reflect this perfect unity of God with humanity—the life of Christ. Only after this period is her son circumcised (which, you'll recall, is symbolic of the removal of our sin, which became historical fact after—and as a result of—Yahshua's sacrifice, His being “cut off”). The day of circumcision thus begins her final thirty-three day period of purification, during which (using “Jerusalem” as our key) her son (named “Yahweh is Salvation”) becomes her “inheritance,” her “possession,” (or alternately, her teacher or the One who pours salvation upon her) through whom she would be at peace with God—a peace attained through *shalam*: restitution, recompense, the making of amends. And since the name “David” means “love,” this final purification period, symbolized by Jerusalem, is “the place where Love lives.” Thus the final thirty-three days represent *our* mortal life in Christ, just as the first seven prophesied Christ's mortal life among us. We are to walk through this life in the reality of His atonement and in the light of His love.

Either that, or Moses was just making this stuff up as he went along, and I'm seeing things that aren't really there. I'll let you decide.

THE THINGS THAT DEFILE US

- (565) *A leper is unclean and defiles.* “When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body like a leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean.” (Leviticus 13:2-3) Moses goes on for the next forty-plus verses describing the visual criteria the priest was to use for determining whether a blemish that appeared on the skin was “a leprous sore.” From the description, it is clear that far more than clinical leprosy—*Elephantiasis*

graecorum, a.k.a. Hansen's Disease—is included in the biblical “leprosy.” The Hebrew word *sara'at* refers to a wide range of malignant (and more to the point, potentially contagious) skin diseases, but the catch-all terms “leprosy,” “leprous,” and “leper” serve as convenient designations for all these various conditions.

As we have come to expect, there is more to the “law of leprosy” than merely preventing physical disease from spreading. The picture is that of preventing *spiritual* sickness from proliferating. Let's begin by identifying the players, in symbolic terms. Aaron plays the role of Yahshua, our ultimate High Priest. His “sons” are believers who have been given access to the throne of grace through Christ's sacrifice. Israel here represents humanity at large—we who have been created and invited to reciprocate Yahweh's love. And the “leprous sore” is anything that is not consistent with God's perfect plan for mankind—estrangement, falsehood, heresy, idolatry, error—of which there are many varieties (no fewer than a dozen different skin maladies are listed in the first 46 verses of Leviticus 13).

If we examine the oft-repeated verbs in this passage that apply to what the priests are supposed to be doing, we discover a stunning truth, one that is very unpopular in today's politically correct landscape: Believers are to be more than discerning; we are instructed to be judgmental and intolerant of falsehood. We are *not* supposed to be forgiving, broadminded, and lenient where the truth of God's word is concerned, though we *are* to forgive the moral lapses of our fellow man, graciously pardoning their personal attacks against us. The difference is important. But if a doctrine or principle is wrong—*any kind of wrong*—then it must be identified and dealt with.

The numbers tell the tale. First, at least twenty-five times in this passage the priests are instructed to look, see, examine, or otherwise consider the blemish in question. We are not to close our eyes to the falsehood around us; rather, we are instructed to look for it, recognize it for what it is, and identify it. Whatever the politicians, pundits, and preachers are saying is to be examined and compared with what we know to be true—the Word of God. And that includes the things *I'm* telling you.

Second, we are told seven times to “isolate” the suspected carrier of the disease. The priest was instructed to keep the person (i.e., his suspected sickness) set apart from the general population until it could be determined precisely what the blemish really was—a dangerous malignancy or a harmless freckle. In spiritual terms, we are being warned to exercise caution—to make a thorough examination of any idea or teaching before we accept it as truth or reject it as falsehood. We are to

take time performing the “due diligence” that’s required to get to the truth. (The Berean Ekklesia was commended in Acts 17:11 for doing precisely that—checking what Paul had told them against the authority of the Scriptures.) Our failure to heed this principle has allowed many destructive heresies to creep into the practice of our faith, turning what should have been a simple relationship with our heavenly Father into a tradition-encrusted religion. And conversely, in our haste to condemn anything that doesn’t mesh with our religious traditions (as opposed to what God’s Word actually teaches), our failure to “isolate” and calmly examine less-than-obvious scriptural truths has marginalized them and robbed many of us of their edification and blessing. (Examples: Yahweh’s ubiquitous six-plus-one pattern; the prophetic significance of His seven appointed gatherings, the “Feasts” of Yahweh; the benefits that naturally result from adherence to the Torah’s precepts; and the divergent roles Yahweh has assigned to biological Israel and the *Ekklesia*, the so-called “Church.”)

Third, the believer-priests were told seventeen times in this passage to “pronounce” the subject either clean or unclean, based upon the findings revealed by their “looking” and “isolating.” We are not to keep our mouths shut for fear of offending someone, being impolite, or trampling upon their “rights.” Rather, we are to shine the bright light of God’s truth upon the matter, no matter how out of step with society we are—even if it’s our own “Christian” society. Believers today have been told that it would be somehow “unloving” to confront Muslims or Hindus, atheistic secular humanists, or even apostate “Christians” with the error of their beliefs. But in point of fact, all we’re doing by remaining silent is encouraging them to walk around with a contagious, deadly disease that promises to kill not only them but anyone with which they come in contact. Where’s the love in that? If your child starts to chase a ball into a busy street, you scream and run after them. Why? Because you love them and don’t want them to get hurt. You don’t worry about sounding intolerant, judgmental, or even hysterical. You’re not concerned about unfairly suppressing your child’s “recreational rights.” At that moment, you only know that being intolerant of speeding cars and judgmental about your child’s ability to see them coming can *save his life*. What’s true on the playground is equally true on the rest of the planet.

- (566) *The leper shall be universally recognized as such by the prescribed marks So too, all other unclean persons should declare themselves as such. “Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone;*

his dwelling shall be outside the camp.” (Leviticus 13:45-46) Oh, if only! We just learned that “leprosy” is a metaphor for spiritual sickness. If only those with malignant doctrines to spread were this easy to identify. But these days, instead of sackcloth and ashes, they tend to wear expensive Italian suits. Instead of covering their mouths so their lies can’t be spread, they stand before microphones and cameras and spew their diseases to anyone foolish enough to listen. Instead of being recognized as being unclean and defiled before God, they surround themselves with fawning sycophants.

Or maybe it just *seems* like spiritual leprosy is being ignored today. Maybe the truth is that the whole world has become one big leper colony. “The camp,” the place where Yahweh’s people dwell, has been reduced to tiny pockets of faithfulness in a sea of spiritual sickness. *Most* people today live “outside the camp.” As Paul put it, **“Know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. From such people turn away!”** (II Timothy 3:1-5) The Apostle has described precisely the kind of spiritual leprosy we see about us today, for we do indeed live “in the last days.”

(567) *A leprous garment is unclean and defiles. “If a garment has a leprous plague in it, whether it is a woolen garment or a linen garment, whether it is in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, and if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest. The priest shall examine the plague and isolate that which has the plague seven days. And he shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather or in anything made of leather, the plague is an active leprosy. It is unclean. He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, for it is an active leprosy; the garment shall be burned in the fire.”* (Leviticus 12:47-52) Here’s where it becomes obvious that “leprosy” is not just a skin disease, but a symbol for something far more pervasive.

In scripture, our garments are a picture of how we are perceived—especially by Yahweh. As far back as Eden, what we wore (or didn’t wear) was an indication of our spiritual condition. When we were sinless, we needed no clothing whatsoever—our lives were transparent and without guile. The fig leaf ensemble our parents donned after they fell into sin was

little more than an admission of their shame. The animal skins with which God replaced the leaves were our first hint that innocent blood would be required to cover our sins. In the same way, Joseph's coat was a sign that he was loved by his father, as was the "best robe" placed upon the humbled shoulders of the repentant prodigal son. And time and again we are told of God's elect being **"arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."** (Revelation 19:8) This in reality is a garment of light given to believers by Yahweh, through which He does not see our sin. Rather, He chooses to see only the glory and perfection of Yahshua (something that was previewed by Peter, James, and John when they saw Him **"transfigured before them. His face shown like the sun and His clothes became white as the light."** (Matthew 17:2)

Contrast that glorious garment with the disease-ridden rags worn by the spiritually lost. **"But if the priest examines it, and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, then the priest shall command that they wash the thing in which is the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days."** As with skin ailments, no snap judgments are made. The priest must go out of his way to see that every opportunity is given for the leprous garment to change, for the plague to correct itself. **"Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed if the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it is unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, whether the damage is outside or inside."** (Leviticus 13:53-55) It is not enough for the disease to stop spreading. One way or another, it must be eradicated. In the end, it's a matter of who is doing the washing: we cannot make our covering acceptable—it is beyond our ability. But David knew the answer, praying to Yahweh, **"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."** (Psalm 51:2, 7)

"If the priest examines it, and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather. But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it is a spreading plague; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague." Likewise, our cleansing is not always a miraculous, "now you see it, now you don't" sort of thing. Sometimes, even though the outward signs of our spiritual sickness have faded or been suppressed, only time will tell if they're gone for good. **"And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean."** This is more encouraging than we have a right to expect. Apparently, it *is* possible to be cleansed of our spiritual malignancies. It *is* possible to be

rid of the influence of false doctrine. But note: the cleansing is a two step process. It is not enough to turn your back on Islam or atheism or...*you fill in the blank*. One must subsequently receive the cleansing of sin from the only one who can—Yahshua—through our acceptance of His sacrifice. “**This is the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean.**” (Leviticus 13:56-59)

- (568) *A leprous house defiles.* “When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession, and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, ‘It seems to me that there is some plague in the house,’ then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes into it to examine the plague, that all that is in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house.” (Leviticus 14:34-36) We’ve moved from skin afflictions and apparel infections to “sick building syndrome,” yet another metaphor for spiritual sickness. For convenience, we’re calling all of this stuff “leprosy,” though there’s obviously a lot more than one physical malady in view. Here we see a new wrinkle: Yahweh Himself is said to be afflicting the house with the leprous plague, and the homeowner is expected to notice it and report it to the priest. This may seem odd, until we factor in Proverbs 3:33. “**The curse of Yahweh is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the just.**” Obviously, a “house” here is a symbol for something larger—where we live, expressed in broad strokes, our whole socio-economic-religio-political world.

Following the symbols to their logical conclusion, we see that the believer is to be cognizant of his surroundings, the society in which he lives. If he sees “a plague in the house,” (and who could miss the signs of spiritual disease in our world today?) he is to report it to the priest. That’s a picture of prayer, for the priest was the divinely appointed link between God and Man. The priest (and remember, *our* High Priest is Yahshua) first “empties the house,” that is, he takes out those within it who remain undefiled. Interestingly, he does this *before* the stones of the house are subjected to examination, to testing or trial. Could this be another subtle indicator of a pre-tribulation rapture? I believe it is. On reflection, it seems this whole passage is eschatological in nature (not that I was sharp enough to catch it when I wrote *Future History*).

Note that the occupant is *not* to (1) tear down the house himself, (2) ignore the problem, (3) become tolerant of it, or (4) defer to the opinion of his neighbors or the government—human wisdom, such as it is. No, he is to go to the priest—that is, to Yahshua. But wait—we’ve already

established that the plague is *Yahweh's* doing, sent in response to our society's wickedness. Are we supposed to appeal to the One who sent the disease in order to be kept out of it? Yes, we are. See Revelation 3:10 if you don't believe me.

The continuing instructions explain (sort of). **“And he shall examine the plague; and indeed if the plague is on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish [the colors of Islam and Communism—a coincidence?], which appear to be deep in the wall, then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days.”** Is what seems like a problem *really* a problem? Only time will tell. The “seven days,” while generally metaphorical of God's perfect timing, might possibly indicate the seven years of trial the earth will experience after the godly inhabitants have departed—a time known as the Tribulation. Note that during this time, the Priest (symbolic of Yahshua) is “out of the house,” a condition that cannot come to pass as long as His people still inhabit the planet. As we saw before, isolation, separation, *holiness*, is part of the formula. The godly inhabitants of the “house” are not to be exposed to the potential threat while its true nature is yet fully undetermined. They are to be set apart from the world.

“And the priest [ultimately, Yahshua] shall come again on the seventh day [yeah, I read about that somewhere: it's the ultimate Sabbath—the Millennial reign of Christ] and look; and indeed if the plague has spread on the walls of the house, then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which is the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city. And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside, all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour out in an unclean place outside the city. Then they shall take other stones and put them in the place of those stones, and he shall take other mortar and plaster the house.” (Leviticus 14:37-42) Here's the bottom line. If an idea is truly toxic, the Priest (Yahshua) will, after giving it time to show its true colors, remove its presence and consign it to an “unclean place outside the city” (for its practitioners, metaphorical of hell). Thus doctrines like Ba'al worship, rabbinic Judaism, apostate “Christianity,” Islam, and atheistic secular humanism will all appear in turn, poison their respective societies, and be removed from the house on the “seventh day,” unceremoniously scraped off and hauled away. But Yahweh doesn't intend to leave gaping holes in the house of human society. “Other stones”—true believers, even if they weren't originally part of the wall's construction—will be brought in as replacements: it's the Church of Repentant Laodicea. And the “plaster?” I believe this white, opaque coating is analogous to the garments of light God's children will wear in His Kingdom—imputed righteousness.

(569) *A man, having a running issue, defiles.* **“When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean.”** (Leviticus 15:2) Not to be picky, but it’s not the man that defiles, no matter what shape he’s in. It’s his *discharge*, any abnormal physical condition characterized by an unusual flowing or congestion: **“And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness.”** As we saw in Mitzvah #503 (where we were discussing the sacrifices to be offered upon one’s cleansing), the “issue” could be anything from a runny or stopped-up nose, a bronchial condition where the sufferer is coughing up phlegm, to diarrhea, to pus from an infected wound. All these things are indicators of disease or injury, and more specifically, evidence that the body is trying to heal itself.

Moses goes on to describe the rules and conditions pertaining to this particular type of “uncleanness.” **“Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries any of those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.”** As usual, the remedy for coming in contact with the defiling discharge is washing in water and waiting for time to pass. Caregivers of the ill or injured person are likely to become “defiled” as a result of their benevolence, leading us to observe once again that “uncleanness” of this sort is not considered sin, though cleansing is necessary nevertheless. The same thing is true of the sufferer himself: **“And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean.”** (Leviticus 15:3-13)

Hygiene, I suppose, would have been enough of a reason for this kind of thing to be codified in the Torah. But I believe the lessons run deeper. Consider again the “carrier” of the defilement—God’s amazing built-in capacity for our bodies to heal themselves, rid themselves of infection, and

isolate and eliminate disease-causing microbes. (Those who insist that these capacities are merely the result of eons of undirected evolution—millions of fortuitous mutations in the human genome, one after the other—are merely demonstrating their inability or unwillingness to do the math.) When our bodies are attacked, God’s defenses rush in to do battle: mucous quickly builds up to deal with dust or mold spores—we sneeze and cough spontaneously to throw off the invaders. Food-borne toxins are eliminated automatically through vomiting or diarrhea. And, perhaps the most amazing defenders of all, white blood cells rush in to deal with all kinds of potential threats: neutrophils deal with bacterial infections; eosinophils attack parasites; basophils work against allergens; lymphocytes manufacture antibodies to protect us from being attacked by the same invaders in the future, and the list goes on. All of these defenders cause the “discharges” that defile us. We might experience pus in a wound or sweat from a fever, but without these “defiling” symptoms, we’d simply die.

The discharges aren’t the problem. They’re merely evidence that there’s a battle raging within our bodies. The real culprits are the viruses, bacteria, allergens, and parasites that attack from without. Put in that light, the spiritual applications are easier to see. Our souls are attacked incessantly. Satan uses a plethora of spiritual viruses to kill us if he can, and if not, make us sick enough to ignore or deny our God. So when we see people around us struggling with spiritual issues, we need to know that there is danger in becoming a caregiver. While meeting their needs, we need to remain set apart from the falsehoods that trouble them.

I’ll offer one example (real-life, not hypothetical) of how this works, but there are too many possible applications to even begin to list them. The virus in this case is Islam, which comes in two basic varieties: a virulent, deadly strain and a milder seemingly benign strain. Robert Spencer (JihadWatch.org), an author, scholar, and self-styled expert on all things Islamic, has set himself up as the care provider to a world infected with Islam—a noble goal. But he (a Roman Catholic) has no immunity against Satan’s wiles. His proposed treatment of the disease consists of supporting and encouraging the mild strain while condemning the obviously evil “terrorist” variety. What Robert doesn’t seem to realize is that the two strains of Islam have virtually identical DNA. Worse, the “peaceful” strain mutates into the virulent, evil variety at the drop of a hat, but the transformation never seems to happen the other way around. Robert therefore finds himself wading knee-deep through Islam-caused diarrhea (I guess you could call it Muhammad’s Revenge), and he can’t smell the stench. He is defiled and he doesn’t even know it.

Meanwhile, a dear friend of mine, Craig Winn, was called by God for a time to be a caregiver to the same Islam-infested world. By examining Islam's "genetic code," its scriptures, he concluded that both strains were deadly (though they presented different symptoms), so he did what he could to make the world safer from all forms of Muslim malevolence. Craig had no choice but to get dirty during the process, finding his studies in Islam's most revered writings to be a spiritually oppressive task. But he got himself "inoculated" daily with heavy doses of Yahweh's Scriptures—the "washing of water by the Word," as Paul calls it—and looked longingly for the hour when the sun would finally set on the job Yahweh had set for him to do. My friend became "defiled" for the world's sake, but he has been thoroughly cleansed. (His insights, by the way, are available free online at ProphetOfDoom.net—four or five thousand pages of irrefutable evidence against Islam.)

The ultimate example of one who willingly became "defiled" for the sake of an infected world, of course, is Yahshua the Messiah. He gave up the "clean room" of heaven to drown in the filth of humanity for our benefit. (Puts the word "Messiah," meaning "anointed," in a whole new light, doesn't it?) I'd say a big "thank-you" is in order. Or are you afraid to get your hands dirty?

- (570) *The seed of copulation defiles.* **"If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening."** (Leviticus 15:16-18) Proving once again that being "unclean" is simply indicative of the human condition (not "sin," but necessitating purification anyway), here we see that an emission of semen defiles both the man and the woman he has lain with. It is significant that God's very first recorded command to mankind was to **"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth."** (Genesis 1:28) It's axiomatic that without the "emission of semen" and without menstruation (see Mitzvah #572), this fruitfulness would have been impossible. Yahweh, having designed us, knew that. Thus His command *required us* to become "defiled," even before our fall into sin.

This line of reasoning leads us to an important truth: our mortal bodies are not designed to inherit heaven. They were made for this earth—made from the same elements, from "dust." I surmise that without this physical type of construction, our God-given ability to choose between good and evil would have been meaningless. Spirits, even created spirits like angels, cannot die, and Yahweh never gave them the prerogative of choice. Their

assigned role is submission, obedience, and loyalty. But choice is our primary gift. We alone are given the choice of whether to reciprocate God's love or not. In order to choose between life and death then, we must be able to comprehend what it is to die. Paul revealed the ramifications of this to the Corinthians. His bottom line was, **"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption."** (I Corinthians 15:50)

Our bodies in all their attributes, whether physical, emotional, or intellectual, simply cannot stand in the presence of Almighty God, **"from whose face the earth and heaven fled away."** (Revelation 20:11) But Yahweh created us to enjoy fellowship with Him. To make that possible, He has implemented a two-stage solution. First God took upon Himself the image of a man: Yahshua walked among us and gave His life for us some 2,000 years ago, and has promised to come again to reign among us. This explains His title, *Immanuel*: "God with us."

The second phase is just the reverse: it requires *us* to change into the image of *God*. How is this done? Paul goes on to explain, sort of. **"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" (I Corinthians 15:51-54)** Believers will be changed from mortals into immortal beings, suddenly, permanently, and all at one time. Our old bodies will be transformed, recreated, *translated*, into a new form that, quickened by the indwelling of God's Spirit, will live forever. Apparently, Yahshua walked among his Disciples for forty days after His resurrection in just such a body.

This new immortal, "spiritual," body cannot be defiled or made unclean. In this body, we will experience nothing that requires cleansing, and that includes "emissions of semen." Immortality apparently cannot beget mortality; life cannot father death. Right about now, all you guys are gritting your teeth and mumbling, "Shoot. I kinda *liked* 'emissions of semen.'" Will God replace sex with something you'll find even more rewarding? Count on it.

- (571) *Purification from all kinds of defilement shall be effected by immersion in the waters of a mikvah. "If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean*

until evening. Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.” (Leviticus 15:16-18) Judaism 101 defines a “Mikvah” as, “Literally: gathering. A ritual bath used for spiritual purification. It is used primarily in conversion rituals and after the period of sexual separation during a woman’s menstrual cycles, but many Chasidim immerse themselves in the mikvah regularly for general spiritual purification.” Many archeological sites in Israel reveal elaborate waterworks that were designed primarily to provide running water to large mikvah ritual purification pools, deep enough for total immersion. There’s a really nice one, for example, at the Qumran dig (an ancient Essene commune). Typically, they feature two parallel sets of stone steps divided by a wall, one for walking into the community pool and the other for leaving it. It’s clear that Torah-observant Jews of Bible times were serious about ritual purity, for the Torah is quite specific in its instructions.

The instructions, however, did not specify how people and their unclean belongings were to be washed, so it’s highly presumptive of Maimonides to restrict purification efficacy to “the waters of a mikvah.” It’s kind of like baptism in the New Covenant scriptures—God never actually told us how to do it. Why? Because He is more concerned with our hearts’ attitude than our adherence to textual correctness. Yes, *baptizo* means “to immerse” in Greek. But when a persecuted Christian pastor in Communist China, imprisoned for his faith, uses the only water he can find—a trickle from a filthy sink in the prison lavatory—to “baptize” his repentant fellow inmates, does Yahweh cry foul and refuse to accept the act because they weren’t actually *immersed*? I think not.

- (572) *A menstruating woman is unclean and defiles others.* “If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. (Leviticus 15:19-24) Here again we see that “defilement” or “uncleanness” is not sin, but merely part of being human, part of being a physical, flesh-and-blood person walking the earth. The irony gets heavy this time, for a woman’s normal menstruation cycle is in itself a cleansing

process, the body's way of discarding an old, unfertilized eggs to make way for fresh opportunities for pregnancy.

Perhaps that's God's lesson here: we all miss opportunities for fruitfulness (which is all the menstrual cycle really is), but we can't expect to be effective in God's service if we allow the baggage of yesterday's failures to accumulate in our lives. Rather, we need to periodically "clean house," undergo a time of purification and renewal. If we don't, our uncleanness defiles not only ourselves, but also those whose lives touch ours. This periodic renewal entails more than just a conscious effort to cleanse our minds and spirits of the world's influence once in a while. An occasional pause from our labors is also called for, and if Yahweh's design of the female body is any indication, that hiatus should consume as much as one quarter of our time. The Sabbath rest is a major component of that by God's design, but we should also seize other opportunities to "recharge our spiritual batteries." Yahshua, you'll recall, was forever wandering off into the hills to meditate and pray by Himself.

Just because we were instructed to "be fruitful and multiply," it is not expected that *every* egg a woman produces should result in pregnancy. Likewise, though being in God's service is a great privilege, we should never get the idea that everything we "do for Him" must either bear fruit or it's a waste of time. The cleansing process, the break in the schedule, is built into our anatomy. We dishonor the God who made us if we act as if He can't get along without our efforts twenty-four-seven. Sometimes He'd prefer us to play hooky, go fishing, leave the work undone—just as long as we invite Him to come along with us.

(573) *A woman, having a running issue, defiles.* **"If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening."** (Leviticus 15:25-27) In #569 above, we encountered an identically worded mitzvah concerning men. All of our observations there would apply to women as well. Here, Moses speaks specifically of a woman's discharge that runs beyond the time of her ordinary menses, extending the conditions of her ritual impurity as long as the condition persists.

We are immediately reminded, of course, of the woman mentioned in Mark 5 and Luke 8 who had suffered from this condition for twelve long

years. She reached out in faith and touched the border of Yahshua's garment, and immediately both of them knew that she had been healed. Technically, she had "defiled" Yahshua by touching Him—or would have, had she not been instantaneously cleansed. What I'd like to point out is the little drama she interrupted by doing so. Yahshua was on His way to raise someone from the dead—a little girl who had been born precisely when the woman had been afflicted with her malady—twelve years before. Coincidence? I doubt it. Twelve is apparently the number of completion in God's economy—especially when it comes to people (e.g. twelve Israelite tribes; twelve apostles). Thus when we see both the woman with the issue of blood and the daughter of Jairus brought together in the same twelve-year context, we witness the complete failure of the human condition without Christ. We are completely impure and hopelessly mortal—*until* we encounter Yahshua.

- (574) *Carry out the ordinance of the Red Heifer so that its ashes will always be available. "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you [Moses and Aaron] a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him."* (Numbers 19:2-3) So begins the so-called "ordinance of the Red Heifer." We've got a big problem right off the bat. The animal specified is *not* a heifer (which, according to Webster, is "a young cow which has not borne a calf"). That would have been an *eglah* in Hebrew, the heifer mentioned in Mitzvot #296 and #297. The word used here is *par*, ordinarily translated "bull," "young bull," "bullock," or occasionally "ox." *Par* denotes an adolescent to fully mature male bovine, usually inferring that the animal has not been castrated. "Red," by the way, is *adam*, meaning blood-red in color. It's related to "Edom," the name by which Esau became known after trading his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of red stew—in effect declaring Jacob the winner of the world's first chili cook-off.

Anyway, the "red bull" was to be taken outside the camp (unlike the typical sacrifice, which was slain at the altar) and slaughtered there for a specific purpose ("purifying from sin"—see verse 9). It should be obvious by now that the "red bull" symbolizes Yahshua Himself, who was slain *outside* the walls of the city in order to purify us from our sins. **"And Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned...."** Let's sort out the players here. Aaron was still the High Priest at this time (vs. 1), so his son Eleazar the priest was his follower, his apostle if you will. Thus I believe Eleazar represents the faithful witnesses to

Yahshua's sacrifice. In their sight, Yahshua was subjected to the fires of judgment on our behalf. And as Eleazar's finger sprinkled the blood before the tabernacle, Yahshua's disciples (ultimately including us) are to take a hands-on role in the process of mankind's purification.

“And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer...” The three elements mentioned here are telling. Cedar, a tall, strong, pest-resistant tree, symbolizes the pride of human strength and splendor—the pinnacle of man's achievement (cf. Ezekiel 31:3, Jeremiah 22:7). Hyssop represents the other side of the coin: our intrinsic insignificance—the concept that we can do great things only when allowing ourselves to be used as an implement in God's hand. A humble shrub of the marjoram or mint family, hyssop was the tool used to apply the blood of the Passover Lamb to the doorposts, and it even played a small part in the crucifixion scene (John 19:29). David, in Psalm 51:7, refers to hyssop as Yahweh's agent of the purging of sin. When Yahshua noted the Pharisees' tithing of “mint,” He was referring to their nitpicking over the smallest, most trivial of matters—hyssop. Scarlet is a metaphor for sin (see Isaiah 1:18) as well as the blood required to atone for it. Physically, scarlet was a red dye made from the dried, crushed carcasses of female cochineal insects (a.k.a. scale), or the textile article dyed with it. Thus by the Torah's definition, it was a substance that defiled on contact. These three substances together represent the irony of the human condition—its irrational pride, its irrelevance apart from Yahweh, and the indelible stain of its defilement. They were all ritually consumed in fire along with the red bull. This tells us that Christ's sacrifice purges us of the negative aspects of our human nature.

“Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening.” (Numbers 19:4-7) The witnesses of Yahshua's sacrifice, represented by Eleazar and his Levite assistants, acknowledge their fallen human condition—their uncleanness before God—and allow themselves to be cleansed. Our “clothes” are a scriptural metaphor for our state of acceptability before God. In this life they are “washed,” but ultimately, they are exchanged for garments of light, the very righteousness of Yahshua. Likewise, being “unclean until evening” is a picture of our earthly existence. When the sun sets upon our mortal lives, when we trade our corrupt mortality for incorruptible immortality (through death and/or rapture—see I Corinthians 15), we shall be rendered forever undefiled in God's sight.

“Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin.” I’ll explain in a moment what was to be done with the ashes and how they were to be utilized. **“And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.”** (Numbers 19:8-10) Like the priest and the Levites who presided over the sacrifice and burning of the red bull, the Levites who gathered and stored the ashes for later use were rendered “unclean” in the process of carrying out their duties. If we are human—even if we are children of Yahweh—we are cursed by the human condition: we are “defiled.” The cure for this, as I explained above, is washing and waiting. Note that Yahweh specifically applied this truth to both Israel and the gentiles—the “strangers”—among them (these days, that’s the Church, we believers who are indebted to Israel for their role in conveying to us the Torah and the Messiah).

I should, however, draw a distinction between the temporary uncleanness of a redeemed individual and the catastrophic condition of one who is not part of Yahweh’s family. It is pointless to “clean” a dead body. You can wash it all you want—it’s still going to rot and stink. No amount of “clothes washing” or “waiting until evening” will make a corpse pure before Yahweh. Worse, we are all spiritually stillborn. We must be quickened—made alive—by God’s Spirit if the cleansing process is to be efficacious. The Torah’s rituals are in themselves only a metaphor for those of us in whom Yahweh’s Spirit dwells. For us, cleanness (symbolized in the Torah by the washing of clothes and waiting until evening) is achieved through a life of prayer: **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** (I John 1:9) Note that as in the Torah, that’s two different things, atonement and purification. We’re in need of both.

- (575) *A corpse defiles.* **“He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of Yahweh. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him.”** (Numbers 19:11-13) We are still within the context of the so-called “Red Heifer” law. Here we are given our first hint as to what is to be done with the ashes of the red bull, prepared as in Mitzvah #574. The “water of purification” is to be sprinkled on someone who has touched a dead body. If he does not

purify himself as prescribed, he not only remains ritually unclean himself, but he is also said to “defile the Tabernacle of Yahweh” as well. Since the Tabernacle is a symbol-rich presentation of God’s Messiah and His plan of redemption, the one who has violated this principle will be “cut off from Israel,” a thinly veiled euphemism for spiritual death, since the name “Israel” means “God prevails.”

If that sounds a little harsh, consider this. Although the phrase “he who touches a dead body” is a proper translation (and no doubt the correct *primary* meaning) it is not the only thing this connotes. Hebrew is a very economical language. The same word is often used in an active (*Qal*) or passive (*Niphal*) voice or stem. Furthermore, the intensive or intentional active voice (*Piel*) and passive voice (*Pual*) are often the same word, as is the causative voice (*Hiphal*). So *naga*, the verb translated (in the *Qal* stem) “to touch” in our passage, could legitimately be rendered “to reach,” “strike,” “inflict,” or even “to arrive,” and it could also be correctly translated, “to be touched,” “to be stricken,” etc. Therefore when we see “he who touches a dead body” we should also rightly contemplate the meaning, “he who is touched by death,” or “he who has reached (or arrived at) death.”

Okay, so what is the remedy for one who has become so intimately acquainted with death? Good question, since because we are mortal, that description fits any and all of us. He is to be sprinkled with the water of purification (that is, water that has been mixed with the ashes of the red bull) on two separate occasions, the third day and the seventh day. Interesting numbers, considering where the ashes in the water came from—a transparent dress rehearsal of the Messiah’s sacrifice as it had been predicted in the Feasts of Yahweh. The third day of the sacrificial process (we can see in retrospect) fell on the Feast of Firstfruits. In order for the Firstfruits, the “Firstborn of the dead,” to be presented as required before Yahweh, He had to rise under His own power from the dead. That resurrection was the culmination of the Messiah’s sacrifice, the proof that it had been efficacious because the sacrifice had been worthy.

The seventh day also speaks of an event commemorated in one of the seven Feasts of Yahweh. The Feast of Unleavened Bread marked the day that sin, represented by leaven, was removed from our lives as Yahshua’s body lay in the tomb on our behalf. But this was a seven-day feast. (To review, Passover fell on the 14th of Nisan, Unleavened Bread began on the 15th—a mandated Sabbath—and ran through the 21st, and the Feast of Firstfruits was on the 16th.) The Feast of Unleavened Bread concluded on the seventh day and was followed on the eighth day by another Sabbath—

this one metaphorical of eternity—our permanent day of rest. The lesson is therefore clear: our cleansing is not complete until the Feast of Unleavened Bread is fully accomplished. Yes, we are *declared* to be free from sin on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But our actual purification is a process that continues as long as we inhabit our fallen mortal bodies. **“He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days.”** The bottom line: we have all been touched by death—stricken by the uncleanness of our mortal circumstance. The only cure for this condition is to be washed in the water of purification—the Word of God—which is made efficacious by the sacrifice of Yahweh’s Messiah.

(576) *The waters of separation defile one who is clean, and cleanse the unclean from pollution by a dead body. “And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave.”* (Numbers 19:17-18) Here we see the instructions for preparing the “water of purification” used in the ordinance of the so-called “Red Heifer” (See also Mitzvot #574 and #575). The ashes of the red bull are put within a container (metaphorical of one’s body) and mixed with running or flowing water—the word *chay* actually means “living” or “alive.” It’s another symbolic reference to Yahshua.

The water-ash mixture was to be sprinkled upon whatever had become defiled by contact with death. Two things bear notice here. First, the person doing the sprinkling had to be “clean.” In the end, there is only One such Person—Yahshua Himself. Second, the implement with which the sprinkling was done was hyssop, the humble shrub that was burned along with the red bull. Hyssop, you’ll recall, was used to smear the blood of the original Passover Lamb (another Messianic symbol) onto the upright doorposts of the believing Israelite’s homes. It was also referred to by a chastised King David after the disastrous Bathsheba affair: **“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.”** (Psalm 51:7-11) David is asking Yahweh to fulfill the promise of the ordinance of the Red Bull. He’s pleading that the sins that have defiled him—sins through which he has touched death—might be washed away through the sprinkling of the waters of purification upon him—“purging him with hyssop.” And his plea tells us the effect the precept of the Red Bull will have upon the

repentant believer: cleanness in God's sight, joy, healing, fellowship with Yahweh, a dismissal of our sins, a renewal of our spirit, and the continued indwelling of Yahweh's Spirit within us. Who could ask for more?

Moses wasn't finished relating the instructions. **"The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean. But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean. It shall be a perpetual statute for them."** (Numbers 19:19-21) We are reminded that although He lived a sinless life, Yahshua "became sin" on our behalf. He willingly subjected Himself to the uncleanness of the human condition so that we might have the opportunity to become clean. As we saw in Mitzvah #575, the third-day and seventh-day cleansings were executed by Yahshua Himself in fulfillment of the Feasts of Yahweh, and in so doing, He also fulfilled the requirements of the "clean person" who sprinkles mankind with the waters of purification.

Further, the precept fairly screams that the principle of the Red Bull's cleansing extended beyond Theocratic Israel to all of Man's generations: this is a "perpetual statute." How many different ways has Yahweh told us about His plan for saving us? Scores? Hundreds? When you know what to look for, they're ubiquitous in the Scriptures. I'll bet nobody's ever found them all. The pity is, Maimonides never even found *one*.

Maimonides did, however, point out something that we shouldn't overlook. **"He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening."** (Numbers 19:21-22) There is a "catch" with the waters of purification. Though he upon whom it is sprinkled is made clean, he who does the sprinkling is thereby rendered *unclean*. Our analysis in the previous mitzvot should tell us why. Eleazar, not Aaron, is tasked with purifying the lost and defiled world with the waters of purification, the ashes of the red bull dissolved in living water. That is, it is not Christ (our High Priest) directly who administers cleansing in this world, but rather His disciples, His followers—us! In order to have a cleansing effect upon the world, we must be here, being *in* the world but not *of* it. When we rub shoulders with an unclean world, our sleeves sometimes get dirty. That's why the Holy Spirit dwells within us. As Yahshua explained, **"The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."** (John 14:26; see also John 15:26) That is the process that Paul described as the "washing of

water by the Word” (cf. Ephesians 5:26), in other words, the cleansing process we undergo in this life.

I would be remiss in neglecting to mention that the Holy Spirit will not always be here cleansing the world through the agency (the “hyssop,” if you will) of His called-out people. Paul describes it: **“Now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains [He’s referring to the Holy Spirit, restraining evil and cleansing the earth through the presence and purpose of Yahshua’s *Ekklesia*] will do so until He is taken out of the way.”** This will happen at the rapture of the Church, for Yahshua’s promise in John 14:16 assures us that the Holy Spirit will abide with us *forever*. No Spirit, no Church, no cleansing influence upon the earth. **“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”** (II Thessalonians 2:6-12) That’s a graphic but sober assessment of what it will be like when God’s people are no longer here on earth to present Yahshua, to sprinkle the water of purification, the living water imbued with the ashes of the red bull, upon a world that insists on touching death.

(577) *Do not shave off the hair from the scale. And on the seventh day the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if the scale has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear deeper than the skin, he shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale another seven days.* (Leviticus 13:32-33) We’re back in leprosy land, folks, territory we explored in Mitzvot #502 and #565-568, and will continue to do for the rest of this chapter, through #580. Leviticus 13 and 14 are all about the examination, isolation, and declaration of “leprosy,” which as we have seen is a catch-all metaphor for spiritual sickness, heresy, or false teaching.

Though Maimonides’ mitzvah zeroes in on one small detail, the precept is considerably more complicated. The instruction begins, as usual, with the realization that something might be amiss, followed by a close examination of the problem. **“If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard, then the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears deeper than the skin, and there is in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is a scaly leprosy of the head or beard....”** There’s an old saying:

“Beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes all the way to the bone.” It’s kind of like that with spiritual things. You can manage to *look* spiritually intact some of the time, but what you believe deep down will eventually come to light. If you’re merely practicing religion instead of enjoying a familial relationship with Yahweh, your lack of trust will tend to announce itself at the first sign of adversity. And when things begin to look hopeless, you’ll feel like following the advice of Job’s wife: “Curse God and die.”

And then there’s the converse situation—it may not be “leprosy”—spiritual sickness—but it is a “sore spot,” so to speak, something that doesn’t line up with the commonly accepted view. Maybe it’s heresy, but maybe it’s something true and valuable that everybody missed until now. **“But if the priest examines the scaly sore, and indeed it does not appear deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale seven days.”** (Leviticus 13:29-31) After examination, the next step is isolation—carefully and lovingly making sure the afflicted soul is not in a position to pass his “disease” on to others until it can be determined if that’s really what it is. In spiritual terms, that means being cautious about what doctrines we embrace. If you don’t know from experience and study that what someone is telling you is compatible with God’s truth, then isolate him until you’ve had a chance to check it out. This precludes the two other possible courses of action—accepting the teaching uncritically (blindly pronouncing it “clean,” in other words) or rejecting it out of hand merely because it’s unfamiliar or not commonly understood (a knee-jerk diagnosis of uncleanness).

I’ll give you a couple of examples of how this works. In the mid 1800s, a fellow named Darby “rediscovered” the doctrine of the rapture. Even today, some reject his findings (’cause they’re *new*, something the Church had ignored for seventeen centuries) and some heartily embrace them without any sort of critical examination. Both paths can lead to error. In this case, the doctrine of the rapture holds up beautifully when tested in the crucible of scriptural truth.

In the second example, *I’m* the suspected “leper.” When doing research for my book on Biblical prophecy, *Future History*, I noticed that multiple avenues of evidence converged on a single date, to the exclusion of all others, for the commencement of Yahshua’s kingdom on earth, a date from which numerous other last-days events could be calculated. My conclusion wasn’t based on vague feelings, wishful thinking, or speculative estimates, but scriptural data—cold, hard numbers that *had to* have been given to us for a reason. This, of course, flies in the face of generations of Bible expositors who’ve taken half a verse out of context

and made doctrine out of it: *Jesus said “No man knows the day or the hour,” so we can’t know anything about the timing of the last days. Don’t even ask!* Then I come along and point out stuff that all those really smart guys before me never saw. In the parlance of Moses, it’s a “scaly sore that does not appear deeper than the skin.” Now, according to the law of leprosy, you are neither to accept my findings without a second thought, nor flatly reject them just because you’ve never heard of this before. You’re supposed to “isolate” my teachings—compare what I’ve said to scripture, mull it over, pray about it, put my logic to the test, and only then decide whether I’m right or wrong, clean or unclean. (The date, by the way, is revealed and discussed in an appendix to *Future History*, available at www.futuretruth.net/Future_History_Appendix_Chronology.Prophecy.)

At this point, we’re where Maimonides put his toe in the water. Our initial text, Leviticus 13:32-33, takes us to the next step. We’re to take away everything that might be confusing us or obfuscating the issue—our previously held notions, traditions, and the opinions of men—in other words, we must “shave.” Then we’re to continue our contemplation and examination of the “sore.” We’re not to shave the suspected area, however. That is, don’t misquote the presumed heretic, don’t edit what’s been proposed. Judge what he really said, not what you might be inclined to read into it. In the example I’ve used, for instance, don’t go off saying “Ken knows when the rapture is going to occur.” I said no such thing.

Moses’ instructions continue. **“On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed if the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean. But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing, then the priest shall examine him; and indeed if the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He is unclean. But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.”**

(Leviticus 13:34-37) The spiritual application: after due consideration and study, the proposed doctrine should be either rejected or accepted, depending solely upon how it holds up in the light of God’s truth. I can’t help reflecting that if this procedure had been followed throughout the church age, we never would have fallen into the error and apathy that plague us today.

- (578) *The procedure of cleansing leprosy, whether of a man or of a house, takes place with cedar-wood, hyssop, scarlet thread, two birds, and running water. “This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall*

examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper, then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.” (Leviticus 14:2-7)

It may seem like I’m splitting straws, but there is an important difference between being “healed” and being “cleansed” (as the unfortunate English translation puts it), though they sound like very similar concepts to our ears. The leper in this case has *already* been healed when he is brought to the priest for “cleansing.” “To heal” in Hebrew is *rapha*, a verb meaning “to cause or promote restoration of health or a right state after being sick, diseased, or injured.” (*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains*) It is Yahweh who does the healing, not the priest. In fact, as I pointed out in Mitzvah #502, the only Biblical record we have of *anyone* being healed of leprosy under the rules of the Torah is when Yahshua—Yahweh in the flesh—did it.

Rapha, the healing that has been accomplished, is contrasted here with the noun *tahara*, translated “cleansing” or the related verb *taher*, meaning to cleanse or purify, whether physically, ceremonially, or morally. Because of its juxtaposition with *rapha* (healing), it is clear that the ceremonial element is being stressed here: the priest *pronounces* the restored leper to be clean; he performs the ceremony that *announces* his cleansing to the community. And if we recall that leprosy is a metaphor for spiritual sickness, the moral purification aspect becomes clear as well.

This pronouncement of cleanness (as opposed to the actual healing) is the subject of our mitzvah. The ritual has details similar to some others we have seen. First, the use of cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop was seen in the ordinance of the so-called “Red Heifer” (See Mitzvah #574), which provided cleansing for one who had been defiled by touching death. To reprise my conclusion, “These three substances together represent the irony of the human condition—its irrational pride, its irrelevance apart from Yahweh, and the indelible stain of its defilement.” There they were burned in the fire that was reducing the Red Bull to ashes; here they are dipped in the blood of the sacrificial bird. This brings to mind a second parallel: one bird was sacrificed while another was dipped in the blood of the first and then released. This is reminiscent of the two goats of the Day of Atonement, one of which was slain while the other was set free in the wilderness. Both the birds and the goats speak of the substitutionary death

of the Messiah—allowing us the freedom to live in God’s grace. A third parallel is the mention of running (or “living” water), which as we have seen (Mitzvot #569 and #576) is symbolic of the cleansing power of Yahshua the Messiah.

It should be noted that there is a completely separate group of sacrifices the cleansed leper was to offer up upon this confirmation of his restoration to health. They’re covered in Leviticus 14:10-32, and include offerings of grain and oil (the *minha*), a trespass offering (*asham*), sin offering (*chata’t*) and a burnt offering (*olah*). There’s a detailed explanation of what these signify toward the end of Chapter 12 of this book. All these sacrifices are offered *in response* to the leper’s cleansing, not given in order to attain it.

The order of events in the law of leprosy (something that applies to all of us on a spiritual level) is: (1) We contract the disease, which I believe is a thinly veiled euphemism for the mortal state we all inherited from Adam; (2) We come to terms with the fact that we are ill, sinful, stricken with a malady that defiles and can ultimately kill us; (3) We are examined, found to be unclean, and isolated from the household of faith; (4) We receive the healing provided by Yahweh through the life of His Son Yahshua; (5) This healing is thankfully recognized as we are pronounced clean, though we still inhabit our formerly leprous bodies, (6) We relegate religious observance to its proper place—not a path to salvation, but a response to it, and (7) The state of being clean and whole is brought to fruition on the “eighth day” (verse 10), pointing toward the eternal state in which we will be forever free of the evil that plagues us in this life. (This interpretation, of course—that the law of leprosy is prophetic of Yahweh’s plan of redemption—would have given Maimonides a rash.)

(579) *The leper shall shave all his hair. “He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.”* (Leviticus 14:8-9) It isn’t just *any* leper who is to shave all his hair off—only the one who has been healed of his disease, the one “who is to be cleansed (*taher*—pronounced clean).”

The commentaries typically speak of this shaving (Hebrew: *galah*) as merely part of the purification process, but I think there’s more to it. In Mitzvah #577, we were instructed to shave off the hair of the leper in order to get a better look at the “scaly sore,” but we were not to shave the sore spot itself—where the “thin yellow hair,” if any, was an indicator of

the leprosy. There I concluded that “shaving” was a euphemism for scraping off the things that tend to obfuscate a spiritual issue—our traditions, religious customs, or the opinions of men that our peers have embraced. We are, in other words, to judge a matter on its own merit in the light of scripture, recognizing that sometimes our religious traditions are *themselves* the problem!

Actually, there are *two* “shavings” the ex-leper is to perform, one at the beginning of his week-long cleansing ceremony, and another at the end. If the spiritual ramifications of the seven-step leprosy/redemption timeline I proposed at the end of Mitzvah #578 have any merit, these two “shavings” are significant instructions of how we’re to live as believers in Yahweh. When we first recognize our condition and receive the “cure,” we are to do it without reference to religion, custom, or dogma—our healing is to be shorn of the trappings of religion that tend to obscure the core issues of our redemption. Don’t get me wrong. I’m not saying that the habits and traditions we adopt in the practice of our faith are necessarily a bad thing (though they can be). We shouldn’t have to reinvent the wheel every time we wish to approach Yahweh in a corporate setting. But they are not in themselves the point, and should never become the point. We are to begin our walk of faith naked before God (for indeed we are), and whatever religious habits we develop over our life as believers should grow naturally into place, not be imposed by others from outside our own personal experience.

The second “shaving” is done on the seventh day. Yahweh’s ubiquitous six-plus-one metaphor—six units of effort and endeavor capped by one unit of God’s grace, followed by an eternity of fellowship and communion—leads us to conclude that man-made religious tradition will be eliminated completely when Yahshua comes to reign among us upon the earth. That’s not to say that our corporate worship will devolve into anarchy during the Millennium, however. The rites of the Torah (which as we have seen all point toward the Messiah) will be revisited for the benefit of the progeny of the Tribulation survivors. (See *Future History*, Chapters 26-28, for a detailed discussion of the Millennial reign.)

- (580) *Do not pluck out the marks of leprosy. “Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy, that you carefully observe and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, shall teach you; just as I commanded them, so you shall be careful to do. Remember what Yahweh your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt!”* (Deuteronomy 24:8) As you can see, the “proof text” for this mitzvah offers no new instruction, but rather is an admonition to pay attention to the law of leprosy. The lesson, it is implied, is contained within the record

of Miriam's curse. We would be remiss, then, if we neglected to check it out. It's in Numbers, Chapter 12....

“Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they said, ‘Has Yahweh indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?’ And Yahweh heard it.” Note that their ulterior motive, racial bigotry, led to something totally unrelated, a grab for power disguised in fancy religious clothes. Yahweh knows our hearts, and He understands what we're up to. **“(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)”** This editorial insertion (probably made by Joshua) tells us that Moses was not of a mind to defend his leadership position against challenges from his brother and sister. Mo would have said, “If God wants me to serve, I'll serve; if He wants me to step aside, that's okay too.”

“Suddenly Yahweh said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, ‘Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!’ So the three came out. Then Yahweh came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward.” Uh-oh. **“Then He said, ‘Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Yahweh, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of Yahweh. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?’”** When Yahweh defends you, consider yourself *defended*.

“So the anger of Yahweh was aroused against them, and He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow.” The irony, in light of her issue with Moses' Ethiopian wife, is hilarious. **“Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. So Aaron said to Moses, ‘Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!”** We are left to wonder why Aaron was not stricken as well. It is evident that he knew and acknowledged that he was equally guilty, equally foolish, equally deserving of the same fate. Perhaps it was the responsibility that Yahweh had assigned to him—being the high priest, prophetic of one of the coming Messiah's roles. After all, *somebody* had to plead Miriam's case, and God had just reminded them that Moses was the only one to whom He spoke face to face. Aaron (unlike us, who since Calvary have direct access to the throne of grace) had to appeal to Moses on behalf of Miriam.

“So Moses cried out to Yahweh, saying, ‘Please heal her, O God, I pray!’” No hesitation, no recrimination. This is one of the few times a prayer is quoted in the Torah, though the word for “prayer” (Hebrew: *palal*) isn’t used (See Mitzvah #22). When Moses said, “I pray,” he used the word *’na*, meaning “please, I beg you,” spoken to stress the urgency or intensity of the situation. Aaron used the same word in his entreaty to Moses: *“Please do not let her be as one dead....”*

“Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again.’ So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again.” (Numbers 12:1-15) The repentant Miriam bore the marks of her sin in her body, for a while at least. Yahweh is merciful, so in response to Moses’ plea, He didn’t make it permanent (as He would the unrepentant King Uzziah). I should point out, however, that repentant or not, Miriam’s sin affected more than her: it prevented Israel from making any forward progress as long as she was afflicted. Our sins may be done in private, but they can have very public consequences.