

Self-righteousness versus Total Depravity

Le 13:1 ¶ "And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests: 3 And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean. 4 If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days: 5 And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin; then the priest shall shut him up seven days more: 6 And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague be somewhat dark, and the plague spread not in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean: it is but a scab: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. 7 But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen of the priest again: 8 And if the priest see that, behold, the scab spreadeth in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a leprosy. 9 When the plague of leprosy is in a man, then he shall be brought unto the priest; 10 And the priest shall see him: and, behold, if the rising be white in the skin, and it have turned the hair white, and there be quick raw flesh in the rising; 11 It is an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not shut him up: for he is unclean."

We want you to look at leprosy and, in its place, put sin. God is teaching Israel how to deal with leprosy in their lives to keep it from spreading to the family of the leprous one, the tribe of the leprous one, or throughout the whole nation. In the New Testament, God teaches us how to deal with sin in our lives to keep it from spreading to our individual Brothers and Sisters in Christ, to our church body, our family in Christ, or throughout the church, as seen in: ***1Co 11:31 "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."***

Did you notice that the plague of leprosy is deeper than just being on the skin? This tells us that the disease has broken through the protective barrier of the skin and entered the body. The principle is the same for sin in our lives. When we give in to our fleshly nature, whose nature is to sin only, we have become infected with sin. Our sin is always such that it needs our confession to God, and our sin always requires us to ask forgiveness of God. I trust you understand that all sin is sin against God.

Sometimes our sin is such that it breaks through the protective barrier and infects the spiritual life. This can be viewed as when a person that has been born-again and is walking in faith, stumbles and falls for false doctrine. Do you see the picture? Now the leprosy is not on the outside, it has entered in our body. When this happens, we are declared unclean and set apart until the leprosy be healed. This is why we are given the instruction of God of how to deal with sins against one another in Matthew chapter 18.

Now, let's look at leprosy, and make the comparison to sin in our lives, and how it ties to self-righteousness. If we have sin in our lives that is tied to idolatry, to disbelief of the bible, disobedience to the commandments of God and Christ, sins that would lead others to doubt or disbelieve God and Christ, we have a leprosy and we need to go to our High Priest, Christ Jesus, first for examination, and if necessary, as the text also says the sons of the priest, we may need to seek out our brethren for assistance, as seen in Matthew chapter 18. Since, by the new birth, all of the born-again sons of God are priest and sons of the High Priest, our leprosy may need to be looked on by our church family, the church deacons, or the church Elders or pastor, who should have such biblical knowledge to teach us how to deal with our sin.

What does this have to do with self-righteousness? In our lives as Christians, we may see our Christian life as: I am doing pretty good. We look at others and say: my sin is not as bad as someone else's sin. We do not see our own selves, as completely and totally depraved in our flesh nature. This may be because we are only looking

at some present sin in our lives, which is causing us to feel grief and remorse, and is a present sore on our skin and in our flesh. When we have forgotten; we are always a sinner in the flesh nature, and no better than any other Christian, we have become self-righteous.

When we are righteous in our own sight, sometimes not even realizing our condition, we have forgotten what God has declared in: ***Ps 14:3 "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.***" Some will immediately say that is Old Testament, to which I answer: ***Ro 3:9-12; 9 "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.***" Do you understand how easy it is to fall into the trap of self-righteousness; simply because we forget our total depravity?

Now let's look at the verse, which reveals the picture of total depravity and eternal forgiveness of sins through the finished work of Christ Jesus. ***12 "And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; 13 Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean."***

In this verse we see that if a person has leprosy and the leprosy has covered their entire body that the priest shall declare that person clean. How in the world can this be? Let's look at leprosy as a type of sin again. Do you understand? If one is totally depraved, and understands that they are completely sinners, in all they say and do in the fleshly nature, then that person has been born-again. If that person has been born-again, then we know that our High Priest, Christ Jesus, has redeemed that person, and by his shed blood has declared that person to be clean. All their sin, of their entire life, has been forgiven through the finished work of Christ Jesus. The shed blood of Jesus has turned the blackness of our sin to whiteness, because Christ has presented us to God the Father by his finished work, cleansed from sin by the shedding of his blood on our behalf.

Now, do you understand how we can come to the Lord's Supper, to partake of the bread and wine and wash each other's feet? It is because our High Priest has declared us to be clean.

We have the Lord's commandment in: ***1Co 11:26-29; 26 "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*** As we come to the table of the Lord's Supper, we examine ourselves, not each other. Seeing, and understanding, our total depravity, we understand; we have no need to examine our brothers and sisters in Christ. We understand that we all equally need the declaration of our High Priest that you are clean.

The glorious prophesy of the Lord's Supper is the eternal picture of the hope set before us. The great hope that when our High Priest returns as King and Lord of all, He will change our leprous (sinful) fleshly bodies to be incorruptible and immortal. He will call us unto himself, and he will carry us away to the place he has prepared for us. There, we shall never again be molested by sin, and shall spend eternity in full communion with our Saviour and Lord. Praise and glory to our great High Priest who has declared those who see and understand their totally depraved to be clean forever. Hallelujah! Amen!