

**April 17**

**Scriptures:** Read Leviticus 14

**Key Verse:** “So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.” (Leviticus 14:20b)

## **Overview**

Here we see that it was possible for a leper to be restored to health, cleanness, and communal life, as provision was made for his cleansing. The haling of such awful diseases was attributed to the grace and mercy of God. The ceremony of purification was elaborate and spiritually significant: everything was geared to bringing the former leper back into a place of fellowship with God and the community. Jesus, Himself, after miraculously cleansing the leper instructed him to show himself to the priest and “offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them” (Matt. 8:4). He gave another reason for the purification ritual, that it might be a testimony for the glory of God.

On the day the priest found the leper to be clean, two birds were brought to the priest; one was killed, possibly symbolizing the death of the leprosy, the other set free, symbolizing the person's new freedom. He could now return to his rightful place among his people and to the Tabernacle of worship. The sprinkling seven times with the blood mixed with water represented complete purification. Cedar wood, a piece of scarlet cloth, and hyssop (probably had this purification ritual in mind he pleaded to the Lord, “purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean”, indicating his desire to be cleansed from sin.

On the eighth day after the priest pronounced him clean, three lambs were to be sacrificed for the trespass, sin, and burnt offerings. Along with each was offered a grain offering (14:10), which served to express gratitude to God and dependence upon Him to sustain life. The trespass offering was always for restitution. In this case, it may have been offered as restitution for all the sacrifices and tithes that the leper had been unable to make during his uncleanness. As a former outcast, it is doubtful he could bring all these offerings himself, but offerings and welcome him back into their family and community. In the same way, when a sinner repents, he should be happily welcomed into the family of God.

For those who were poorer, the lambs for the sin and the burnt offering could be substituted with clean birds, but the trespass offering always had to be a male lamb. The solemn ritual was the same since both rich and poor are alike in the presence of God. In our own circles of fellowship, rich and poor should be received in the same day.

Following the sacrifices, the healed leper being cleansed was anointed with blood and oil in much the same manner as the anointing of the priests for service, and the meaning was the same: he should hear God's word, do God's work and walk in God's ways. Today, cleansing from defilement and restoration to communion with God is attained only by asking and receiving forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and brought into communion with God must, like the restored leper, not live in seclusion from the brethren. Rather, we must have fellowship with the body of believers, for with this comes the strengthening of faith and spiritual maturity.

## **Prayer**

O Lord, help us today to examine ourselves and properly understand the final and totally complete sacrifice of Jesus for our cleansing and entering into the fellowship of your Church.