

### LEVITICUS

#### Lesson 21 - Chapter 14

Chapter 13 was spent with Yehoveh, through Moses, teaching about how to identify Tzara'at in its many forms; even tzara'at on clothing and objects made from leather. It was ALWAYS the job of a priest to make such a judgment.....a common Israelite could only abide by that priest's decision. Let us remember that the Priest was neither a healer nor a doctor who made a medical diagnosis; rather it was a spiritual diagnosis that was being called for. Tzara'at was NOT seen as a biological disease.....it was a divine affliction resulting from an unacceptable (unacceptable to Yehoveh) spiritual condition.....it was a punishment. So, in essence, the priest was to use a tangible, visible means by which to determine a person's inward, invisible, spiritual condition. Naturally these visible scales and sores were carefully defined into categories of clean and unclean according to God's standard. Not all skin diseases were Tzara'at.....just the ones called out in Leviticus 13.....and it was ONLY **those** particular skin diseases which were deemed to indicate that the Metsora, the one with the affliction, was ritually unclean.....in Hebrew, **tamei**.

Now, in chapter 14, the rites of purification from uncleanness are introduced. As tedious as Leviticus 13 was with all its micro-details concerning Tzara'at, chapter 14 is utterly fascinating as Yehoveh unveils the root and purpose of these ritual purification procedures. Chapter 14 lists the procedures by which a Metsora becomes clean, and after additional rituals he or she becomes acceptable to Yehoveh once again.....that is the person is re-sanctified, re-holy-fied.

But chapter 14 also talks about another type of Tzara'at; Tzara'at on a house. So, for the sake of making our study a little more cohesive, we're going to divide Leviticus 14 into two sections; verses 1- 32, which deal with the purification rituals of a Metsora....that is, a person who is made unclean by contracting Tzara'at..... and then verses 33-53, which introduce us to the final type of Tzara'at discussed in Leviticus, that which could infect a house. Notice when we get to that section that the matter of Tzara'at on a house only takes affect **after** Israel enters the Promised Land, Canaan. And that is at least partially because the house in question must be a stone and/or mud brick house; this law had nothing to do with the tents these wandering Israelites were currently living in.

#### READ LEVITICUS 14:1-32

The first thing to notice is rather obvious: the ritual procedures for cleansing a Metsora from his uncleanness are among the most demanding and complex rites in all of Leviticus. What might not be so obvious though is that they are quite similar to those rituals we studied back in chapter 8; rituals which consecrated a priest into the priesthood. This is no coincidence.

Perhaps there is no more sober matter in these various prescribed Levitical rituals than for someone who is about to take his place among God's set-apart servants.....a priest. But running a close second was the super-serious issue of someone becoming ritually unclean, and the high price that had to be paid to become clean again.

Let's look closely at these rites because they are a shadow and type.....a precise PATTERN, actually.....that Yeshua would bring to fulfillment 13 centuries later.

The stage is set for our study in the first 3 verses of chapter 14: the Metsora who is living outside the camp, away from his family, separated from his society and God, believes he is now well. But he cannot make that judgment for himself. A priest must be called to come and examine him (or her); and this priest must venture "outside the camp" to look the victim over. If the priest determines that the Tzara'at is gone then the ritual procedures to make the Metsora clean begins.

A couple of comments here: First, be aware that the priest did not EVER attempt to cure this person. There is nothing to indicate that the priest even prayed over the Metsora, or offered any sort of comfort whatsoever. Why? Because this was not a typical disease like a cold virus, or the flu or the measles.....things, which the Israelites commonly suffered just as we, all do. This was a spiritual disease, and there was no "cure" other than Yehoveh releasing the Metsora from his affliction. The priest was not asked to determine what **offense** the person had committed against God to contract Tzara'at, he was only asked to determine IF the person indeed had Tzara'at and at a later time IF the person no longer had it.

So after declaring the person unclean with Tzara'at the only thing a priest could follow up with was to declare that person clean, if that was the case.

Second notice that in addition to the inspection of the Metsora, the first of the purification rituals takes place outside the camp. What this tells us is that just because the person's skin condition clears up he isn't automatically deemed clean. He is simply **eligible to become** clean. So the priest had to first go to place where the Metsora was living (he had to venture into an unclean place in order to make his examination, and to conduct the first procedures aimed at making the unclean person clean again).

This is not unlike the Red Heifer sacrifice that ALSO had to take place "outside the camp". Therefore it was outside the camp that the Red Heifer ritual was performed by the High Priest; a ritual which resulted in a mixture of ashes of the Red Heifer and water, which was then used to sprinkle upon those who needed cleansing from having touched a dead body. In fact there are even more similarities between the Red Heifer ritual and the ones described in verses 4-7 for purifying someone from Tzara'at.

This ritual for cleansing the Metsora begins by having two birds brought to the priest.....two birds of a clean variety of course. Along with the birds cedar wood, scarlet from a worm, and a hyssop branch are to be brought. The *scarlet from a worm* is referring to a dye.....a red dye produced in Bible times from the eggs of a certain type of worm, which lived in trees. A hyssop branch was invariably used in all the various types of Israelite purification ceremonies

prescribed in Leviticus and elsewhere in Scripture. When we read in later studies about the Red Heifer sacrifice you'll see that these same exact items were involved: cedar wood, red dye, and hyssop. The procedure for purifying the Metsora is that one of the birds is to be killed and his blood drained into a clay bowl. The bowl is to have water in it. Next the remaining live bird along with the cedar wood, the hyssop and the red dye, is dipped into the mixture of blood and water in the bowl. Then the attending priest sprinkles the blood and water onto the Metsora 7 times. After that the live bird is released to fly away.

Let's examine some of this ritual. First the clean birds had to be of a type that were not for domestic use, and therefore when released would not return. So they did NOT use pigeons or doves that had the homing instinct to come back. Usually the birds used for this procedure were sparrows. Second an interesting term in the original Hebrew is used to describe the water that is to be placed in the clay bowl, into which the sparrow's blood is to be drained.....it is **mayim chayim**.....and you might be a little surprised to hear what it means, because you've heard it before; it means "living water". That's right, living water. Bet you thought that the "living water" reference to Jesus was a New Testament idea. In fact living water.....meaning water taken NOT from a well or a pond, but from a running spring or a river that flows.....living water is a requirement for the water used in many of the Levitical sacrifices.....particularly the ones involving purification from uncleanness.

So when Yeshua described Himself as the source of "living water" it was instantly understood by the Jews of His day. Rivers dried up. Artesian springs would quit flowing from time to time. And when that happened it was necessary to go find a new source for the required "living water" for the purification rites. Jesus was saying that He was the REAL source for purification, and it NEVER dried up; the source was unlimited. So here we have yet another NT idea that actually begins in the Torah.

Third the scarlet, or red, dye that was dipped into the bowl was actually in the form of a strip of wool that had been died red.

Finally even though an animal.....in this case a bird.....is killed for this purification rite, it is technically NOT considered a sacrifice.....that is it does not fall within the category of one of the named sacrificial rituals we have studied. Rather it is simply a matter that the bird is slain by cutting its neck because its blood is needed. That is NOT the required procedure for sacrificing a bird. When a bird *is* used as a sacrifice its neck is pinched in a precise way using a fingernail to sever its delicate brain stem. Plus all sacrificial rituals are to take place at the Tabernacle (or Temple), and the killing of this bird was done far away from those holy grounds (now before someone points out that the Red Heifer sacrifice.....a TRUE sacrifice.....was also done "outside the camp", it was connected TO the Tabernacle because the High Priest who was slaughtering the Red Heifer worked in concert, simultaneously, with other priests who were at the Temple.....the priest who killed the bird worked alone).

I point this out because in previous lessons I mentioned that there were required steps in the Torah to go from unclean to holy: first one had to go from unclean to clean, and **then** one was eligible to go from clean to holy. Strictly speaking no unclean person could even participate in the only means that could make a person holy, which was a ritual sacrifice involving blood.

Only clean people could offer blood sacrifices. It was living water that was the primary medium required to make the unclean, clean. On the other hand it was BLOOD that was required to make the clean, holy. So a set of procedures THAT WERE NOT CONSIDERED BLOOD SACRIFICES first had to be performed to take the unclean person out of that defiled state and back to neutral ground so to speak. OK. Back to being clean....and that involved water.

Now let me demonstrate to you another good example of how we should always be searching for **patterns** as the answer to “why” certain things are as they are when studying the Bible. Since the Torah pattern is that **water** purification makes the unclean person clean, and sacrificial **blood** makes the clean person holy.....and because Jesus Christ is said to be the one who fulfilled all the requirements of the sacrificial system, can we actually make a solid connection between the two.....that is, something that is NOT simply allegory?

A couple of weeks ago I told you that just as in the OT times, unclean people **today** must FIRST become clean before they can be made holy. That although the process is instantaneous and invisible so we don't realize what has happened, when we accept Yeshua as our Savior we move from being unclean in God's sight, to clean. And then from clean to holy. So the spiritual principle we have learned in Leviticus still holds true even with the advent of Jesus Christ. Listen to a NT passage we are all familiar with, but it should mean something a little different to you now that you've been studying Torah: NAS **John 19:34 but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. 35 And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.**

Blood AND water poured out from Him? Yes; and it was so startling that the chronicler of this event acknowledges that he was an eyewitness and what he is saying is true, even though it really doesn't make any sense.

What is the significance of the water that poured out of Jesus body? You see, that water poured out of Jesus from the spear wound surprised people.....this was not something anyone had seen before...this was in no way a natural part of the crucifixion process.....which is why the author went to great length to state that this actually happened. The water had great meaning because Jesus declared that He was the source of “living water”.....the specific kind of water the Torah calls for in the **purification from uncleanness** rituals. This matter about Jesus and water and purification was prophesied and explained by Zechariah. Listen to this verse from one of the great Biblical prophecies about the coming Messiah; KJG **Zechariah 13:1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.** A few verses later, it speaks of the Messiah being pierced. This passage is speaking of the coming of Yeshua. Now, a fountain, by definition, produces “living water”. A fountain is the source of moving water, as opposed to a well, for instance, that only holds water that doesn't move. Water from a fountain used for uncleanness is simply referring to the standard purification procedures. Even more, where our Bibles say in that verse “for sin and for uncleanness”, the original Hebrew says for **Hatta'at** and for **nidda**. Now that you've studied Leviticus, you know that Hatta'at doesn't mean sin offering.....Hatta'at is the name of the “purification offering”, and **nidda** is the Hebrew for the spiritual state of uncleanness, usually associated with a woman on her period or after

childbirth, but also meaning a general state of ritual impurity. So what this passage is actually getting at is that Yeshua is THE fountain of living water for the purification offering and for those who are in a state of uncleanness. Remember: uncleanness can be caused by sin, or it can simply be a state declared by God where sin is not involved (a mother after giving birth).

If we would only bother to read Moses, as Jesus said we should, and take the OT seriously, we would know that Jesus would **have** to provide both blood AND water in order for mankind to be made holy; water to take the unclean and make them clean, and then blood as the atoning sacrifice to make the (now) clean people, holy. This was simply the playing out of the God-ordained Leviticus pattern and model, and of course of the prophecies concerning Him and His ministry on earth.

In verse 7 the priest, upon sprinkling the Metsora 7 times with the water and bird-blood mixture, DECLARES the Metsora clean. Next the 2nd bird is released into the air to fly away. Although we've not yet studied the Scapegoat ritual, this idea of taking a pair of animals and killing one and releasing the other is the same for the Scapegoat as it is for the purification procedure for the Metsora. The concept is that the live animal (in this case the bird) bears the person's iniquity and it is sent far away from that person; or in the case of the Scapegoat, the sins of the entire nation are put upon that goat and sent away. I point this out because it is difficult to understate the tremendous importance placed on returning one who has had Tzara'at to a state of cleanness. The ritual involves identical elements of two of the sacrifices over which ONLY the High Priest may preside: the Red Heifer sacrifice and the Scapegoat ritual...plus, as I mentioned earlier, the ritual to cleanse a Metsora is very similar to a priest being consecrated into the priesthood.

After the bird has been released the Metsora must now wash his garments and shave his head and also bath himself.....once the Israelites were settled in Canaan, the place of ritual bathing became the Mikvah....kind of a stone swimming pool.

As we have discussed the concept of clean and unclean is complex. And it is not a simple matter of a person being either fully clean or fully unclean. You will notice that several times after a certain part of the ritual procedure we're studying, Scripture will say that the person is now pure.....it says it after vs.7, then after vs.8, then again after v.9, and it will say it several more times in Chapter14.....which can be a little confusing. Here, as with the new mother, what we're actually seeing is the Metsora gaining greater and greater LEVELS of purity. In verse 7 he reaches the first stage, the stage of least purity, upon the live bird being released. In verse 8 after shaving and bathing, he moves up to the NEXT stage of purity. In this 2nd stage of purity he is finally allowed back into the camp of Israel, but he may not enter his house or tent for another 7 days. In verse 9 the 3rd stage of purity is reached upon the person shaving all his hair off yet again, including his beard and his eyebrows (what a strange looking thing he must have been at this point), and then AGAIN washing himself and his clothes in water.

Finally he is clean enough; he has reached a state of ritual purity sufficient to participate in sacrificial rituals meaning he can approach the Temple. What we see, in one sense, is a gradual re-socialization of the person; that is step by step this person is taken from being a social outcast, back to being a member of Israelite society. And in the same way, step-by-step,

this person is brought from being shunned by Yehoveh back into His favor and His holy presence.....the physical and the spiritual elements of restoration are linked in lock step.

On the 8th day after the first step toward becoming clean, then holy, the sacrificial procedures for the Metsora begin. Here we have another link that we should not overlook. Male circumcision also took place on the 8th day. See, in God's eyes, and in Hebrew thinking, an unclean person is spiritually dead. The purification of a person from his uncleanness actually has many aspects of resurrection from the dead involved (we'll look at that at a later time). Quite literally the purification process breathes new life into a spiritually dead person. So what has this to do with circumcision? The male child is not an official member of Israel until he is circumcised. For all practical purposes until circumcised, that male child is therefore "outside the camp" of Israel. This is because the Abrahamic covenant, from which came the Hebrew people, and God's promise of making Hebrews a multitude and giving them a special land, required as a sign of joining the covenant, male circumcision. This was reaffirmed with the Mosaic covenant and was non-negotiable. On the 8th day after life was given to the baby boy (that is, the child was born), he was accepted into the camp of Israel during a circumcision ceremony. On the 8th day after NEW life was given to the Metsora (or better yet, life was RETURNED to the Metsora), he was accepted BACK into the camp of Israel. Outside the camp is death, inside the camp is life. Outside a relationship with God is death; inside a relationship with God is life. Do you see this pattern and connection?

The evangelical concept of "born again" did NOT originate in the NT.....because the Metsora was quite literally considered to be "born again" when he was purified and reintroduced into Israelite society, and his relationship with Yehoveh was re-established. So the NT "born again" concept is simply an OT pattern brought forward and to a greater meaning by Yeshua. In fact not only did "born again" originate in the OT, not the NT, so did the idea of "circumcision of the heart". And circumcision of the heart (a phrase Paul employed) was first stated by Moses in Deuteronomy 10:16, and its purpose was to point out the same exact thing Paul was pointing out; that true circumcision, entry into the "camp of Israel", (and thereby into a relationship with the God of Israel) was a spiritual matter far more than a physical matter. We'll look at that more closely when we get to Deuteronomy.

Verse 10 prescribes those 2 lambs, plus a single year-old lamb, some grain mixed with oil, plus a flask with some additional oil.....oil of course meaning OLIVE oil. The Hebrew describing the oil says it is to be a "log" of oil. This is not a reference to the type of container, it's a measurement of liquid; a log of oil is about a pint. In the following verse we see that several types of sacrifices have to be performed for the Metsora: the 'Olah, Minchah, Hatta'at, and the Asham.....that is the Burnt Offering, the Grain or Meal Offering, the Purification Offering, and the Reparation Offering. The ONLY typical sacrifice that is available to a non-priest to offer that is NOT prescribed for this Metsora is the Peace Offering, the Zevah. Again this points out the enormously serious nature AND PRICE that had to be paid in order for a person who was unclean from Tzara'at to return to cleanness.

The priest was to accompany the person being purified and re-consecrated to the entrance of the Wilderness Tabernacle (later the Temple).....not actually inside the courtyard but at the main entry gate into the Courtyard. It can get a little confusing as to where exactly something

was to take place around the sanctuary because usually the entire Tabernacle area, courtyard and Sanctuary tent, is simply referred to in the Scriptures as the Tent of Meeting. So in our current case where most Bibles say the person was to stand at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, it does NOT mean to actually stand at the Door into the Holy Place (the Sanctuary Tent), but rather at the entrance gate into the entire complex. Or in later times, when a permanent structure to replace the Tabernacle was built.....the Temple....the Metsora is taken to the entrance into what was called the Azarah, which was at the entrance to the Temple proper (where the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were located).

The Metsora would face towards the Sanctuary (consisting of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies), and the priest would go forward with the **korbanos**, that is, the several sacrificial offerings brought by the Metsora. The Metsora was required to stand at the entrance to the courtyard (or Azarah) and wait while the priest went through the several sacrificial rituals.

First the priest offered the Asham, or reparation, offering, and he is to do so by offering them in a manner that is commonly called a Wave Offering. In Hebrew, this Wave Offering is called **tenufah**; and the priest holds the lamb and the log of oil together, shoulder high, and moves them side to side, and up and down. Briefly the idea of an Asham offering, for reparation, is unusual for what amounts to a purification procedure. Because the Asham is normally meant to atone for trespassing against holy property, or for making a false oath, or for causing injury to a 3rd party...or, as I have pointed out on several occasions as one of the offerings made for a SUSPECTED trespass. That is the person is feeling guilty, but doesn't have a clue as to what sin he might have committed. And depending on the situation this person will offer an Asham, and sometimes a Zevah, sacrifice.....just in case.....so as to avoid God's wrath.

Since Tzara'at is considered a spiritual disease, and therefore a punishment from Yehoveh, we can rather easily see why a Metsora would offer an Asham sacrifice because he MUST have trespassed against God or he wouldn't have contracted Tzara'at in the first place. But just so we don't get the wrong idea..... whereas an Asham and a Zevah COULD be voluntary sacrifices, depending on the situation.....here the Asham is REQUIRED. So Yehoveh most certainly sees the need for it. What, exactly, was the trespass the Metsora had committed? Well most of the ancient Jewish sages agree that the most likely sin was that of **Lashon Hara**...slander, or evil talk, against someone.....what we might call "character assassination"; a very grievous sin akin to murder.

Although it doesn't tell us so here in Leviticus, the Mishnah informs us that the procedure was that the Asham lamb was then brought back to the Metsora, and the Metsora laid hands on the head of the still live lamb.....remember in Hebrew this is called Semichah. Recall that the laying on of hands onto the sacrificial animal signified two things: 1) that the worshipper is identifying THIS particular animal as the one he is offering-up, and is now transferring ownership of the animal to Yehoveh.....that is, the animal at that moment becomes holy, or sacred, property; and 2) the guilt of the worshipper is transferred from the worshipper onto the animal.

Next the lamb is taken back to the altar area....specifically on the NORTH side of the altar (this is called for in Lev. 1:11, 6:18 and 7:2), and is slaughtered there. Some of the blood is splashed on the altar, and some is dabbed on the right ear lobe, the right-thumb, and the right-

big toe of the Metsora. Following that some of the olive oil from the flask of oil that was brought was sprinkled in the direction of the Holy of Holies. Then from the oil that remained the priest was to dab oil on the Metsora in exactly the same places he had just finished dabbing the lamb's blood. It's important to notice that this is the same procedure we saw back in chapter 8, used for consecrating priests into the priesthood. The idea of dabbing blood and oil on ear, thumb and toe was that the cleansing and the consecration was from "head to toe".....the whole person was now pure.

The Metsora, still standing at the entrance to the Tabernacle Courtyard (or the Temple Azarah), now has oil applied to the crown of his head. It is believed that the purpose of the oil on the head (which was being applied **over** the blood of the lamb that had been placed on the Metsora) is that the oil is meant to cover and protect the blood so it can do its atoning work. Following that, the female lamb for the Hatta'at offering and the male lamb for the 'Olah offering were slaughtered, and along with those the Minchah offering was given. While the first offering performed, the Asham, was offered entirely by the priest because the Metsora was not yet pure enough to participate in sacrificial ritual, the Metsora was now allowed beyond the gate to the Courtyard, and he could take his rightful role in the Hatta'at, 'Olah, and Minchah sacrifices.... a significant step.

Again, notice, that there are these steps, or levels, of purity that had to be attained. Starting off unclean, and outside the camp, it took until the 2nd level of purity before the Metsora could set foot inside the camp, the 3rd level before he was considered clean and eligible to even be present for Temple sacrifices, and yet a higher level before he could pass beyond the gate of the Tabernacle (or Temple) and actually participate, as normal, in the ritual sacrifices.

From verse 21 – 32 we see that birds can be substituted for some of the lambs if the Metsora is poor and cannot afford it. Likely this was the case more often than not due to the normally lengthy time the afflicted person had been forced to live outside the camp unable to work or tend his flocks, etc. Yet he cannot under any circumstance escape the need for a lamb for the initial offering, the Asham (reparation) offering. We won't go over these verses because other than for the substitution of birds for lambs the ritual is the same as we just covered.

After this the person is no longer a Metsora, therefore he or she is fully re-integrated with Israelite society. Most important, His relationship with Yehoveh is now re-established. He is at peace with God.....holy once again. Can you imagine that person's relief? What an ordeal.

A quick comment and we'll move on. Religious Jews often refer to Christianity as a "cheap religion". I won't delve deeply into all the reasons (some of them unfair and simply false) but perhaps you're starting to see it for yourselves. Jews scoff at the idea that we pray a few words to receive Christ....and in an instant we are purified and made clean, brought inside the camp and joined to the covenants, and have our sins atoned for. Batta-bing, batta-boom; from unclean to saved! The cost? Nothing. How can that be? We don't give up anything.....at least on the surface... but our sin and it's awful destiny. Look at what it tangibly cost a Hebrew to maintain his relationship with Yehoveh, year after year. Look what it cost.....in time and money..... to be taken from unclean, to clean, to holy..... all these sacrifices we have studied are VERY costly.....many were repeated on a regular basis. Indeed it often cost a Hebrew almost

everything he had to participate in these REQUIRED sacrificial rites. If he didn't his relationship with God was either lost or damaged. But in general they did it because they saw peace with God as the #1 priority in their life. Without that peace with Yehoveh, what hope was there in their life?

So from a Jewish standpoint, it's not too hard to see why many see our Christian faith as "cheap"....meaning without cost. And as pertains to us, the receivers of what God did for us.....they're right. Our cost is pretty much zero. But God, and His son Jesus, gave everything.....a cost far beyond the richest man on earth's ability to pay. Sometimes Christians walk around rather proud about this, and accuse Jews of trying to work their way to Heaven. We shouldn't. Rather we should walk around humbled beyond imagination. We should also be a little more understanding, now, of why a Jew would see Christianity as a "cheap" religion. And hopefully after studying Leviticus, perhaps we're now in a better place to converse with them about it, since we can better see where they're coming from.

Let's move forward now with the second half of Leviticus 14, contained in verses 33-53. This concerns the matter of Tzara'at on houses.

This section is interesting if for no other reason it anticipates that future time when this mob of about 3 million Hebrews, living in tents, out in the desert wilderness, will live in a designated land of their own.....in cities, with permanent housing made of stone and plastered with mud.

Let's pause for a few minutes to end this lesson, and regain some perspective; remember that here in Leviticus we're at a time a little more than a year after the Exodus from Egypt. With all the studying we've done to this point it's easy to forget that barely a year has passed since the very first Passover; that terrible and dreadful night that God brought death upon the firstborn of Egypt, in order that His people, the descendants of Jacob, would be set free. It all would have been pretty fresh in the minds of the people.

I wonder how **real** the possibility of the future that God promised to them was at this moment. In the midst of living in such difficult conditions.....a time, which would soon be extended far beyond what, they had expected.....could they have faith that they actually WOULD eventually have a land of their own? That they actually WOULD eventually live in a place flowing with milk and honey? That they actually WOULD eventually shed their temporary tents, and once again live comfortably in cities, with roads, and water wells, and cultivated fields, and houses?

In fact everything in Leviticus, as with all the Torah, is a preparation for a future time even though it was also for the present. It is still so with us today. Even though Yeshua HaMashiach has brought much of the Torah into fruition.....much still remains to be taken to a yet higher level of meaning and reality. The Prophets, including Jesus, tells us about a future....a time **still** future to us..... in which many things are yet to happen...some wonderful and some well beyond calamitous proportions. Do we have the faith to believe that these things actually WILL happen? Will we be faithful in the midst of these things and recognize them for what they are; God's judgments. It's so easy for us to look back in hindsight at this rebellious and stiff-necked nation of Israel and find fault with their constant grumbling and stumbling and dissatisfaction; thinking, my goodness, what MORE does Yehoveh have to do to prove His

power and love and trustworthiness to them? He practically destroyed Egypt to free them; he killed hundreds of thousands of Egyptians but spared Israel; He gave Israel His divine Torah and set them apart as His own people; He rained food from the sky daily to satisfy their hunger; He sprang water from rocks to quell their thirst; He traveled with them in a visible way in a pillar of fire and cloud. But are we any different? As the people of God.....who now actually have God dwelling within us..... if we actually BELIEVED and TRUSTED that we are guaranteed an eternal future with God Almighty, and if we actually believed and trusted that our sufferings here on earth are serving a greater purpose for the Kingdom of God; if we actually believed and trusted that the day is just around the corner that our Messiah Jesus is going to return, would we still live our lives the way we typically do?

I only say these things to put into perspective that these Israelites we continue to read of were no different than we are; they were just people....a set apart people.....elected to serve God. But, like us, they struggled to put the promises of God and His Laws and Commands and principles into practice in their lives. And when they were told of a glorious future it brought hope at times; but it was all so hazy....all so far away and difficult to grasp and to lay hold of. They lived in the now...not the future.....just as we do. And sometimes just getting through today was plenty to deal with.

Further they were faced with constant re-application of God's spiritual principles, just as we are. Sometimes we think that the only major transition for Israel as it concerns having to re-apply God's principles, was from the OT to New. From the time before Christ to the time after His coming. But that's not so. We see them here in Leviticus being transitioned from a time in Egypt to a time of wandering. From a time of slavery to a time of freedom. From a time of servitude to Pharaoh to a time of service to Yehoveh. And then a little later from a time of wandering to a time of possessing a land. Eventually they would transition from the Tabernacle.....a fabulous tent.....to a Temple.....a fabulous wood and stone building. They would struggle with taking God's Laws and Commands from the situation and time they were originally presented it.....at Mt. Sinai, a year after leaving Egypt..... and applying those laws and commands to new circumstances that weren't precisely addressed in the rather limited instructions given to them through Moses. Yet they were fully expected by Yehoveh to do exactly that. And they were fully expected to maintain the purpose of every spiritual principle God gave to them.....no matter how difficult the struggle. We will find over and over again in the OT, the Tanakh, that the leaders of Israel tried to abrogate, change, dismiss, and rebel against God's spiritual principles. Saying that these principles were from a long time ago, and didn't apply to them anymore. And the consequences for these leaders and their people and the nation of Israel as a whole were terrible.

We are faced with the same responsibility as people of God; we are NOT to reinterpret God's Word for our time, but to re-APPLY them to the current situation. Our immediate circumstances are in constant flux but Yehoveh's principles are perfectly stable. It was true for Israel and it is true for us, and for all who will come after us.

Next week we'll look at the remainder of Leviticus chapter 14.