

Leviticus 14

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[0 : 00] May we turn now back to Leviticus chapter 14. We can read again from verse 17.

Leviticus chapter 14 and at verse 17. The priest is to put some of the oil remaining in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed.

On the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot on top of the blood of the guilt offering. I know the first time I read Leviticus 14, I just read it and it made absolutely no sense to me.

And I was reading there with a sort of, not so much an open mouth, but a very confused blank stare. Because when you read it, it can very often, especially if you're reading it for the first time, it can just seem quite cold.

It can seem very strange. Just all these rules about sacrifice and these birds being killed and blood and oil everywhere. It can seem very strange when you're reading it for the first time.

[1 : 15] But there is a way to read, especially Leviticus, especially this book of the Old Testament. Because everything that's in it is symbolism. You know, the whole law of the Old Testament, the whole law, especially Exodus and Leviticus, the whole law was meant to be a school of the gospel that was to come.

It's the primary school of the teaching that is yet to come when you reach secondary. So when you reach secondary school, there you learn more and more detail and there you're taught more and more what the truth of the world is and maths and so on.

But you learn the building blocks of what you learn in secondary school in primary. The whole law of the Old Testament is the primary school for the people of Israel.

They were meant to see that all the imagery, all the symbolism, all the sacrifices were meant to each tell a story, meant to each reflect something new about the gospel of Christ.

Through the law, Israel were meant to be surrounded by different pictures of the gospel. How were the sacrifices a picture of the gospel?

[2 : 32] Well, very simply, Jesus is the priest who sacrifices and offers himself. The sacrifice. He is both the priest in this story, right throughout.

He is the high priest at every point. And at the same time, he is each and every single one of the sacrifices. You see, through the law, right throughout, especially this book of Leviticus, what we have when we're seeing all these different sacrifices are different camera angles all pointed at the cross.

Every single last one of them are simply different camera angles pointed at the cross. The New Testament doesn't even tell you as much about the cross as the book of Leviticus does.

It's quite something. We need to go into the Old Testament to fill in the details. But very quickly, and it feels like an injustice really to burn my way through it, but if you go to Leviticus chapter 1, you find there what the burnt offering is all about.

There's so many different types of sacrifices. In chapter 1, we're told that the burnt offering, and verse 3, if the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect.

[4 : 00] Now, I could go into the sacrifice, but we don't have time. But very quickly, I just want to highlight, he is to offer a male without defect. And that straight away should flag up to us, should tell us that there's something going on here.

It's not just a burnt offering of a bull. It's a male without defect. Why?

Because Jesus is the male without defect. That one is simple enough. And to be burnt is to be consumed by God's wrath. So there we have Christ, the male that did no wrong, the man that had no defect, the perfect man, and yet consumed by the fire of God's wrath.

Verse 4, he is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering. The sin is to be transferred from the people through the hand onto the burnt offering.

And that offering takes the sin. Again, Christ makes atonement because of his sacrifice. Then you have chapter 2, all about the grain offering, which is seed or grain that's offered to the Lord.

[5 : 19] Very quickly again, how does that resemble Christ? Well, you see, the flour had to be a fine grain that was beaten. A beaten grain that had no imperfections, that had no lumps in it.

Again, it represents Jesus, who is the perfect bread of life. And then we have the oil.

Now I could go into each one of the sacrifices, the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, the guilt offering, there's so many, but there's oil involved in every single last one of them.

And every time we're seeing the oil, we should understand that it's the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The oil gives spirit. And right throughout Leviticus, there are so many different sacrifices.

But I want to take us to Leviticus in chapter 13 and 14. 13 gives us a bit of context as to what's going on in chapter 14.

[6 : 23] Because there, we see in chapter 13 that we have a list, just a list of skin disease. Again, this can seem very strange.

It's just a list of skin diseases. And when you're reading it, it can seem so alien as you're going through it. Regulations about infectious skin diseases is the heading of this chapter.

But I want to simply highlight one thing. What's our historical context? Well, at this point, the people of Israel, they've come out of the land of Egypt.

They've escaped from the land of slavery. They have come away symbolically from being under sin. And they're now in the wilderness. And as they're coming through the wilderness during this 40-year exile, before they enter the promised land, as they're going through this wilderness, they're moving from place to place.

They're moving and pitching tents, and moving from one place to another. And there you have, in the middle of this big desert, this vast campsite, just this super large campsite, hundreds and thousands, maybe millions of people.

[7 : 40] And there in the middle of this campsite, you have this massive super tent, the tabernacle. And there in the middle of the tabernacle, you have the Holy of Holies, behind the veil, where only the high priest could go.

And in the middle of that Holy of Holies, you have the Ark of the Covenant, which we will look at tonight. But you see, you can only go into these places.

You can only go into the Holy of Holies if you were the high priest. You could only be in the campsite, full stop, if you were clean, if you belonged to the people of Israel. But if you were unclean, you were cast out into the desert.

You had to stay outside the campsite. And what made you unclean? Everything that's in chapter 13. Different skin diseases, different boils, different infections.

But there's one key thing that goes on with every single last one of these diseases. And one thing that we're all meant to see. Look at chapter 13 and verse 3.

[8 : 53] The priest is to examine the sore on his skin. And if the hair in the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is an infectious skin disease.

When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean. More than skin deep.

It's mentioned five times in this chapter. Just that one phrase, more than skin deep. And that's the answer here. What the Jews were meant to see, and what every Jew knew, that it wasn't what was on the outside that made you unclean.

It was what leaked out from the inside. It wasn't what was simply going on on the skin. It was what was going on underneath the skin.

The reason that these people were unclean, symbolically, is because the problem was more than skin deep. It wasn't just the surface.

[10 : 04] There was something wrong inside. You're meant to see. They were meant to see the symbolism there. And do you?

Do I? You see, leprosy is spoken a lot, spoken about a lot in the book of Leviticus. And leprosy breaks out in light patches, first and foremost.

And it's painless. But then, it spreads. But what you're seeing are just symptoms, because it's inside, the problem really is.

Inside, the whole nervous system is dying. Your nerves are dying. You're inside, you're pretty much beginning to rot, and the cartilage is absorbed back into the body.

You see, the leper, as this disease starts to rage from the inside through the whole body, the leper, right throughout the Bible, is the picture of the sinner.

[11 : 06] Because while, of course, all of us can appreciate that we do wrong things, all of us can appreciate that we do things not quite that well in life, that we sin.

All of us can appreciate that. But do we see? Do we think? Do we understand the rotting that's going on underneath?

So many times, for myself personally, I keep thinking I'm aware of my sin. I keep thinking, okay, I see this. I understand what's going on. I know how I'm sinning. And then a little bit later down the line, I realize that I haven't even touched upon how sinful I am.

I haven't even come close to understanding what's going on in my heart underneath. The sheer hypocrisy that is in this heart. And it worries me.

Of course it does. Do we see the rotting? Can we ever fully understand the rotting that's going on underneath the skin, underneath our personas that we give off?

[12 : 16] Becoming a Christian. Becoming a Christian is not just about changing behavior. Not in the slightest. That's not what becoming a Christian is about.

It's about healing on the very inside. Changing behavior comes from that healing. But what comes first? The foundation of what becoming a Christian is, is healing on the very inside.

God is the most desirable thing in the universe. He is. But so often our hearts simply turn to so many other things and it enslaves us.

Because you know, if you had a skin disease back in those days, if you were a skin disease in the book of Leviticus at this time, you had to walk around outside the camp and shout constantly, unclean, unclean, so that everyone would know not to come near you.

You made sure that everyone kept away from you because you knew and they knew you were unclean as you walked around in your torn clothes. We're all meant to see the symbolism of what's going on here.

[13 : 32] The Jews were and we are. That it's the problem of sin that's more than skin deep. It's right at the core of humanity.

It's the very corruption of our nature. The problem is more than skin deep. What were these unclean people meant to do? Now let's look at chapter 14.

Chapter 14 and at verse 3. Here we come to how God brings people back to Him.

And these are beautiful words. Whether we fully understand just how beautiful they are, these are beautiful words. The priest is to go outside the camp and examine Him.

The priest is to go outside the camp and examine Him. It's the priest that comes out of the camp.

[14 : 37] It's the priest that comes out from among the clean. It's the priest that comes out from among the people of God and He goes out to the untouchables.

It's the priest that comes out of comfort and goes to the place of discomfort. The place of cleanliness to the place of uncleanness.

That's Jesus. The great high priest. This is the symbol here. And the leper would do nothing.

The leper's not the one that goes into the camp. It's the priest that comes out to Him. And so we come to this cleansing process.

And first of all we have this. We have the leper brought forward. The priest examining him. And he calls for two live birds. Two birds to be taken.

[15 : 41] And what happens to these birds? Well one of them is killed in a clay pot that's filled with fresh water. Filled with running water. And what does this running water mean?

What does this fresh water mean? Why is it there in the pot? Well it's again symbolism. Every single element of this is meant to be symbolism. This fresh water from a running stream.

It had to be specifically from a running stream which other translations say. It had to be fresh. Because it's alive.

It's full of motion. It's been running. It isn't stale. It isn't tepid water.

It's alive fresh water that is completely different from the leper himself. And the leper he's dull he's pale he's looks like death.

[16 : 44] But the water is the exact opposite. It's alive. It's running. It's fresh. And they were meant to see that it's completely different. And it's there in the pot.

And the blood from the bird that's killed would collect in this pot with the water. Why? What is the meaning here?

Why are we seeing here in verse 5 the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot?

Why? What's the meaning of the process between sacrificial blood meeting with running water in such a unique little way?

Well you see it's quite simple. there has to be satisfaction for the broken law. The broken law of God needs satisfaction.

[17 : 44] Sin needs payment even to the point of death itself. That's the stream of blood coming from the bird. But not only that the water is obedience rendered by a holy unsinning observance of the law.

The law that is kept so well, the law that is observed so perfectly is alive, it's fresh, it's pure, it's clean.

And what you have here in one go is sacrificial blood, is the payment for sin, meeting the obedient, perfect life.

life. And I suspect John, the apostle John had one eye on this in John chapter 19 when we have there the soldiers piercing the side of Christ and out of his side came blood and water mixed together.

He could very well have had his eye on this part of Leviticus because what you have is sacrifice and the holy, obedient life that Christ lived together in this sacrificial process.

[19 : 07] He brings us holiness through his perfect life and he brings us atonement, he brings us sacrifice through his death on that cross.

He is the first bird. He is this first bird being killed in every single sense of the idea. And for the sake of the cleansing of this leper, and for the sake of this leper, the first bird is killed for him.

And for the sake of you, Jesus Christ is killed for you in the exact same way. Jesus is killed for you.

you see, every element of Leviticus, every element of this chapter is telling us about Jesus and what he has done. His death on the cross, just like it's for the leper, it's for us.

And what next? The second bird is taken. It's alive. And while it's alive, it's dipped into the blood of its mate.

[20 : 19] It's dipped into the blood of the first bird. It's literally baptized in the blood of the first bird. And then what?

We see end of verse 7. He is to release the live bird into the open fields. You know, this typifies Jesus again.

In that, after his work of suffering, after his work of sacrifice on the cross, after all that he did on the cross, he rose again on that resurrection morning.

He rose again, imbued, empowered, filled with the blessing of what he had done. He rose again, filled, with the blessing of what he had done on the cross.

And this living second bird is dipped into the clay pot and it flies free into the beautiful open field. Can you not see Jesus risen?

[21 : 29] And he's there in all the merit of all his death and obedience. He's there basking in the rays of his father's love, just like the bird is flying, basking, free at last, in the rays of the sun.

He basks in the ray of the father's love. And this bird soars across the field and the whole time it has the marks of death on its wings.

It hasn't died, but it has dried blood on its wings. And every time anyone saw the bird, if they did, it was covered in blood.

Can you see the lamb slain, bearing the marks in heaven, in his father's very presence? The marks of the sacrifice, the marks of the cross.

And what else does this mean? because how precious, how valuable, how fantastic it is that this isn't all.

[22 : 40] The sacrifice wasn't there just for the birds. That's not all. But the priest would take the rod of cedar wood and he would take a clump of hyssop and tie it to the cedar wood with the scarlet yarn, creating a little sponge.

And what he would do is that he would use this sponge and he would dip the sponge into the blood of the first bird and sprinkle the leper with the same blood.

And what he had was the leper and the second bird covered in the same blood, both in the same position.

They're both now free. They're both now covered by the sacrifice of the first one. And we know in the same way that we are as free and as full of joy as Christ is.

We know that before us, if we have been sprinkled by the sacrifice of Christ, if the sacrifice as Christ was for you, if you have accepted it, if you believe that it is effective for your soul, then you stand there with the same promise as Christ who has risen again.

[24 : 14] The same promise applies to you and to me, the leper, perish, that we too will rise again free. Someone once said that to be justified was to mean just as if I had died.

Because while you're standing there covered in the blood, you too have been reckoned to have died. The second bird goes free because it is reckoned to have died.

It's covered in the blood. The blood has paid for its sin. And you and me, well in a sense we've already died the death that our sins deserve.

But we didn't die it. Christ did. And he covered us in his blood. And when God looks at us, he sees the payment of sin.

And it's all taken care of. This second bird and this leper is Christ and us.

[25 : 29] And we have been reckoned to have died. It's just as if I had died. And after this, verse 7, seven times he shall sprinkle the wand to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean.

He's clean. He doesn't have to do anything else. That's him clean. He doesn't have to doubt. He just has to realize that what has happened has happened.

And he's clean. He didn't have to say anything. He didn't have to mumble anything. He accepted the sprinkling.

He accepted what had happened for him. And that was it. He was pronounced clean. But what then for this person?

What comes next for this person? Well, we have here that he goes and he washes his clothes. And he shaves off all his hair. And he stays outside his tent for seven days.

[26 : 46] And then on the eighth day he comes again. He shaves off all his hair. He washes himself again. He shaves off his eyebrows, his beard, his hair. Every single last hair in his body is shaved off.

And he's standing there newly washed, newly shaven. And on the eighth day, then he's free. Why eight days?

Well, it's the first day of the new week. The eighth day is the first day of the new week. It's the new creation. It's the new life.

Children in Genesis 17 were circumcised on the eighth day. Jesus appears to his disciples on the eighth day and the ex-leper enters into his new life on the eighth day too.

All things old are now gone. And I recently heard this. He even looks like a newborn baby.

[27 : 52] Shaved, completely hairless, smooth, clean. He's an overgrown, adult-sized, smooth baby in a sense.

He even looks brand new. He's a new creation. It's a new birth. It's a new life. And then we have the other offerings being done.

Verse 10, you have the grain offering and you have the trespass or the guilt offering. You have these offerings being done, the process which each and every single one of them is telling a different story of what Jesus did on the cross.

Just slightly different from the birds. Each and every single one of the sacrifices speak about Jesus but in a slightly different way. But notice now what happens.

You have the blood of the sacrificed lamb is put onto the right earlobe, the right hand thumb and the right big toe of the leper.

[29 : 04] What does this mean? Why is the blood of the lamb, of the guilt offering, put on the earlobe, the thumb and the toe? Well, the blood goes onto the earlobe and it's as if to say you are clean.

Now go and hear and enjoy and take part in the music, in the freedom, in the sounds, in the fellowship of the camp.

Go, join your people. Go, join the people of God who are also clean. Because he would have been living outside in the desert, in the wilderness, where he would never have heard the fellowship.

He would never have heard the joyful coming together of God's people. He would never have been able to enjoy the world. It would have been danger after danger out in the wilderness, all alone, hearing nothing of comfort.

But instead, the blood goes on the ear and it says, you are clean. Go and hear the joyful sounds. And then the blood goes onto his thumb.

[30 : 18] As if to say, go, you are clean. Now use your hands in God's work. You are free to use your hands for God.

And the blood goes onto the right big toe as if to say, go, you are clean. Now walk in the way of the Lord. Walk in his paths. oil.

And then notice this. Oil. Oil poured everywhere. Oil mixed in with the flour. A log of oil, which is about half a pint in our measure, waved before the Lord.

And you have oil put on his right earlobe, oil put on his right thumb, oil put on his big toe, and then oil poured all over his head. Psalm 45 and verse 7 says there, God, therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness.

So what's going on here? Because we know that the Spirit is being poured out on this new creation.

[31 : 38] Not only does he have blood that takes care of the old life, not only is he free from death, but now he is free to life.

He is given the Spirit because that is life, and life more abundantly being in the Spirit. It's not just his past taken care of, but he is also given a future.

It's not just death taken care of, but it's life given to him. People don't start living until they have life in Christ. We simply exist until then.

But what we have here is the Spirit being poured out onto this leper. But not only that, it's the oil of gladness too.

The two things are one and the same. The Spirit and gladness. It's meant to come together. If the oil is the Spirit, but the oil is also gladness, the Spirit brings gladness.

[32 : 44] Gladness and Spirit poured all over you on top of the blood of the sacrifice. You're not just saved from sin. You're saved to life.

You're saved to God. You're saved to love. That's what holiness really is. holiness really is being saved to love God more.

Being saved to follow Him more. Being saved to live more. People always talk about it in the negative as if it's the don't do this. But holiness is really do this.

Do it out of love. Do it because God wants you to do it. Do it because it's where life is. and the oil goes on the ear and we say in response I will hear for you.

And the oil goes on to the thumb and we say in response I will act for you God. And the oil goes on to the toe and we say in response I will walk for you.

[33 : 56] the high priest goes out. It is him that goes out of the camp to you. It is Christ that came down from heaven to you and to me.

He did the work. He did it all. He is the priest. He is both birds and it's his blood that takes care of all of our sin.

His blood takes care of my sin. And his blood takes care of yours. Completely takes care of it. And the oil.

The oil of the spirit. The oil of gladness. And not only that it's the oil of obedience. Because if it goes on the ear to mark our obedience and our acceptance of what he says to us then what we have is that the oil brings the spirit.

The oil brings gladness. But you can't have the spirit without obedience. You can't have gladness without obedience. You can't have true obedience without gladness.

[35 : 14] Dull simple obedience to the law of God isn't fully infused with the spirit. Does it have the spirit at all? we can follow God's word with a deadness.

Doing it simply because. But following it with the spirit. Following his commands, keeping his commandments and law in the spirit is one of joy and gladness.

No Christian should be a dullard. No Christian should just follow because they're meant to. They want to follow God because he is the one that loves them.

And it's the love that he gives us is the reason that we can love him. In Mark chapter 1, and with this I close.

In Mark chapter 1 and at the very beginning, at the very end of chapter 1, you have here a man with leprosy. Mark chapter 1 verse 40.

[36 : 28] A man with leprosy came to him, Jesus, and begged him on his knees, if you are willing, make, you can make me clean.

And filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. I am willing, he said, be clean. Immediately, the leprosy left him and he was cured.

And Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning, see that you don't tell this to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony unto them.

why did Jesus tell him? Once he had cleaned him, he had cleaned the man, why does he go tell him, go do the sacrifices?

We know that because of the gospel, that we don't need to do the Old Testament sacrifices anymore. That was primary school. And with the New Testament, you have the light of secondary school.

[37 : 40] You have the light of the New Testament illuminating the shadow of the Old Testament. You don't need the shadow once you have the real thing. You don't need the shadow once you have the real thing.

So why is Jesus telling the man, I have given you the real thing, now go, do the shadow part. Why? As a testimony.

Christ had not yet died on the cross. His time had not yet come. The new covenant hadn't yet been established fully.

Even though the covenant of works was always a temporary solution. But he says as a testimony unto them, a testimony of what?

That the true high priest is here. That the true fulfiller of Leviticus is here. That the true sacrifice is here. The priest declared the man clean in Leviticus.

[38 : 46] And in the same way Jesus says, I am willing. For all of us, he says I am willing. And he says be clean. That's the symbolism of Leviticus.

That's the story of the Old Testament. Really, the Old Testament law in a nutshell. it's all pointing forwards to Christ.

But the reality is found in him and him alone. The sacrifices of the Old Testament didn't save a single person. The sacrifice themselves were useless.

But it was those in the Old Testament, it was the Israelites that did the sacrifices looking forward to the Messiah to come. they were the ones that fully understood.

They were the ones that were granted the efficacy of the sacrifice. This oil is poured on every one of us so that the Spirit has a clean tablet on which to rewrite his holy law.

[40 : 00] God. And I pray that every single last one of us, every sinner here today, whether we are sinners that have already been sprinkled with the blood, or whether we are sinners that need to be sprinkled even still, I pray that all of us will see what this Jesus has done.

and the high priest offers it to you, the blood that will pay all your sacrifice, that will pay all your sin, and the oil that will give you the peace and the joy and the comfort to love this priest, to love this Messiah, to love this Savior, to love this Jesus.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word today, Lord, and we pray that you would go before us and apply it to our hearts, Lord, that we would remember that you are our king and that you are our master, but Lord, that you are also our high priest.

Lord, if any of us here today still do not know you as our high priest, Lord, we pray that they will see through your word just the offer that is there before them and just how final your sacrifice is.

Lord, those who do know you, Lord, may we understand more and more of the purpose of the Old Testament shadow, and may we see and glimpse in it a wider picture of who you are and what you have done and what you have done in our lives.

[42 : 02] May we see clearer and clearer just the work of the cross and everything that Christ did for us. Go before us, Lord, and we pray that every single last one of us will understand and know this Holy Spirit for ourselves, that we will know Jesus through the Holy Spirit, that we would be able to see him through this Spirit.

And we ask this all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We can conclude now singing from Psalm 23.

Psalm 23 in the Scottish Psalter. And on page 229, these famous words, The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by. And we can look at verse 5, particularly my table thou hast furnished in presence of my foes.

My head thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows. Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

[43 : 26] We can sing these verses to the tune Sin Columba from Psalm 23, The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want. The Lord's my shepherd has a heart He makes me down to high in the master stream toxins and hissing to Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[46 : 42] Thank you. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for today, Lord. We pray that you'll go before us now. Help us all reach home safely and enjoy the rest of this, your day.

And we ask this all in Christ's holy and precious name. Amen. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.