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Protecting the Covenant Community
13: 45-46

Protecting the covenant community DIG: How was the unclean person to act? What was he to say? What was the purpose of teaching the concepts of being ritually clean and ritually unclean? How did God use tsara'at as an example of the holiness for the Israelites? How can believers determine their own spiritual health? When you have been victorious in a battle with a sin-symptom, what led to your victory? What practical warnings against sin would you give others?

REFLECT: How do you distinguish between the kingdom of sin and death, and the Kingdom of Life and Righteousness? What guides your decisions? What is your "owners manual?" In what sense is Yeshua Messiah your own personal physician (Isaiah 53:5)? Why is it that unless the heart is changed, there can be no solving the sin problem? What happens to the "good news" message of the Gospel when the "bad news" of sin defiling all it touches is left out?



Beginning with the previous Torah portion (**to see link click Bc – On the Eighth Day**)**, and continuing with this one, we have been examining the concepts of being ritually clean and ritually unclean in terms of what they can teach us about two kingdoms: the kingdom of sin and death** (see **Bv – The Test of Tsara'at**), and **the Kingdom of Life and Righteousness** (see **Cg – The Test of M'tsora**).

This concluding section on infectious **skin diseases** refers to anyone who had been pronounced **unclean** from any one of **the seven previous cases**. The ritually defiling **skin diseases** (see **Bw – Holiness and Tsara'at**) resulted in impurities spread easily by physical contact, **verses 45-46** focus on minimizing contact between those who have contacted **tsara'at** and those who have not. This would have the added benefit of minimizing the spread of any defiling **skin diseases** that were contagious. Those with **tsara'at** were required to follow **three mitzvot**.

First, they had to change **their** physical appearance, perhaps in part to warn others from a distance. **Everyone who has tsara'at sores is to wear torn clothes and unbound hair, cover his upper lip and cry (13:45a).** These actions were also part of **mourning (Leviticus 10:6; Ezeki'el 24:17)**, and therefore, especially appropriate for those experiencing the pain of living outside the covenant community.

Second, they were to **cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" As long as he has sores, he will be unclean (13:45b),** clearly alerting others of **their** condition.

Third, since he is unclean, he must live in isolation; he must live outside the camp (13:46). This did not mean that they had to live alone. The Hebrew word for isolation (badad) simply means to be "apart from" a larger group, although contact with others who lived "apart" was still possible. At the very least, those with **tsara'at** could live with others who suffered from the same affliction. At the very most, it seems possible that family members or friends could join them, since it was not wrong to become **unclean** in this instance, only to fail to deal with **the impurity** properly. To purify themselves, family or friends might have to do something along the lines of **Leviticus 14:46-47** before re-entering the camp.

Nevertheless, living apart from the covenant community was still a hardship, since the community was the covenant community **(Deuteronomy 1:8; Ephesians 2:19)**. And while those with **tsara'at** could certainly still praise and worship **ADONAI**, **their** deepest longing would have been to do so with **their** covenant

brothers and sisters at the Tabernacle. **Those** with **tsara'at** were to follow those **three mitzvot** as long as **their** condition persisted. This was not meant to increase their hardship, but to prevent the impurity from spreading.[230] Being **outside the camp** parallels the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden in **Genesis 3.** The execution of criminals took place outside the camp **(Numbers 15:35:36)**. It was little wonder that when a man was diagnosed as being **ritually unclean** he had to go into mourning. Yet from a public health point of view isolation was essential.[231]

ADONAI was using tsara'at as an illustration of the kingdom of sin and death. There was to be no compromise when it came to tsara'at, and there was to be no compromise in the purity and holiness of the individual Israelite so that he would not die in a state of ritual uncleanness for defiling God's holy Tabernacle/Temple (Leviticus 15:31).

We, like the ancient Israelites, should not compromise our spiritual purity and holiness. We need to realize that there is a spiritual battle going on in our lives. **John** warns us: **do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world – the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and pride in our achievements and possessions – these are not from the Father, but are from this world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (First John 2:15-17).**

The kingdom of the world and **the kingdom of God** are inherently incompatible, mutually exclusive and opposed to one another **(First John 4:5-6, 5:4-5; John 15:19; Galatians 6:14).** True believers, therefore, will not be characterized by a habitual **love** for **the world**, nor will worldly people demonstrate a genuine affection for **the Gospel** and **its Lord (John 3:20; Acts 7:51, 13:8-10, 17:5** and **13; Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21,** and **First Thessalonians 2:14-16).**

Clearly, there is an unmistakable line of demarcation between the things of **God** and the things of **the world**. The ongoing moral and ethical deterioration of contemporary culture makes this obvious. Even brief consideration provides a lengthy list of cultural agendas that are aggressively hostile to biblical teachings: an attack on the traditional family by feminism; an active promotion of sexual promiscuity and homosexuality (see **Ae – the Bible and Homosexual Practice**); an emphasis on materialism and hedonism by the secular media; a steady decline

in standards of personal integrity and business ethics; the confusion of right and wrong by postmodern relativism; and so on . . .

To support **his** rebuke, **John** doesn't offer a long list of specifics or detailed illustrations. Instead, **he** presents **three general reasons** believers must **not love the world: because of who they are, because of what the world does, and because of where the world is going.**

1. Because of who believers are: If anyone loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him (First John 2:15b). Because believers are forgiven **(Psalm 86:5, 130:3-4; Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 26:28; Luke 1:77; Ephesians 1:7** and **4:32; Colossians 1:14, 2:13-14, 3:13; First John 2:12)**, have a true knowledge of **God (Second Corinthians 2:14, 4:6; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:9-10)**, have **the Word of God** living in them **(Psalm 119:11; Colossians 3:16)**, have overcome Satan **(James 4:7; First John 4:4)**, and have an increasingly intimate relationship with **the Father (First John 2:12-14)**, they cannot **love the world**. **Anyone** who **loves the world** demonstrates that **the love of the Father is not in him.** Like **Demas,** such a spiritual defector reveals that any previous claim to know and **love God** was nothing but a lie **(First John 2:19)**.

Nevertheless, the basic identity of believers as the children of **ADONAI** does not make us immune to **the world's** allure. Because we are still **sinners** – saved by grace – we are tempted through our remaining flesh by **the world's** behaviors and schemes **(Matthew 26:41; First Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 6:16; James 1:12-14; First Peter 5:8-9).** Whether the temptation comes from **worldly** priorities, **worldly** amusements, **worldly** riches, or **worldly** lusts, we need to resist **the world's** efforts to seduce us. **Yeshua** warned **His** listeners: **No servant can serve two masters; for he will either hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (Luke 16:13).**

2. Because of what the world does: For all that is in the world – the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and pride in our achievements and possessions – these are not from the Father, but are from this world (First John 2:16). Although **it** manifests **itself** in external actions, the roots of **sin** go much deeper, embedded in the very fabric of the depraved human heart. **Sin** permeates the fallen mind, internally defiling **the sinner** in every aspect of **his** being **(Matthew 15:18-20)**. Thus, the TaNaKh likens **sin** to **a** deadly **plague**

(First Kings 8:38), **filthy garments (Zechariah 3:3-4),** or even **filthy menstrual rags (Isaiah 64:6). Sin** is so foul that **Ha'Shem hates it (Proverbs 15:9)** and **sinners loathe themselves** because of **their** inherent weakness **(Ezeki'el 6:9)**. **Sin** is so humanly incurable that **sinners** have no capacity in and of **themselves** to remedy **their sin (Romans 8:7-8; First Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1)**. Finally, **sin** is universal. **David** wrote: **They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one (Psalm 14:3; Isaiah 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:10-12, 3:23,** and **5:12).**

The three-fold attack on humanity through **the flesh**, **the eyes** and **the pride in our achievements and possessions** can be most easily seen in **Genesis 3:1-7,** one of the most foundational and pivotal passages in Scripture. There **Satan** utilized the same threefold temptation to attack his target. **Adam and Eve** succumbed in **Genesis 3:6**, plunging the human race into **sin**. **When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it had a pleasing appearance and that the tree was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her; and he ate. The Adversary** appealed to **Eve's** desire for food (**the desires of the old nature**), **her** desire to have something attractive (**the desires of the eyes**), and **her** desire to have **wisdom** (**the pride of life**). **Adam** accepted the same enticements without protest and ate the fruit **his wife** gave **him**, and **the Lawless One's kingdom** gained its initial foothold on earth.

It is not surprising, then, to see that **the world**, under **the Tempter's** leadership, continues to assault **sinners** through those same three pathways of temptation. **The Ruler of Darkness** plays on the corruptibility of the fallen human heart to achieve the maximum impact for evil and chaos in **the world**. But we are not slaves to the diabolical, corrupt **world** system **(Romans 6:5-14; James 4:7; First Peter 5:8-9; First John 4:1-6)**. Like our **Lord**, who has redeemed us, we possess the ability to successfully resist the temptations of this world **(Romans 8:1-13; James 4:7)**.

3. Because of where the world is going: The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (First John 2:15-17). The third reason we are **not** to **love the world** is because **it is passing away**. The principle of **the kingdom of sin and death** is the exact opposite of the principle of **the Kingdom of Life and Righteousness**. Therefore, the living dead in the world are destined for eternal **death** in hell, but believers are destined for

eternal **life** in heaven (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**). **The one who does the will of God,** who trusts and obeys Messiah, has nothing to fear concerning **the world's** process of self-destruction **(First Thessalonians 1:10** and **5:9).** It is **God's** will that people believe the Gospel, repent of their **sin**, and embrace **Yeshua Messiah** as their personal **Lord** and **Savior (Mark 1:15; John 6:29; First Timothy 2:4-6).** By doing this they will demonstrate that they **love** what **ADONAI loves** and **hate** what **He hates**. They will clearly no longer be devoted to the unbelieving **world** system and will shun **its** continuous appeal to **sin**, which comes through **the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and pride in achievements and possessions.**[232]

What is the future of disease or illness? In the present world . . . **death**. But in **ADONAI's** new creation, it will be done away with because of **Messiah's** victory over the grave. For the believer, this life of pollution and pain, of disease and **death**, will end with the glorification of the people of **God**. Because disease and **death** are incompatible with the glory of **YHVH**, nothing impure will enter **the heavenly City (Revelation 21:27)**. The same promise has not been given to the wicked **(Revelation 22:11)**.[233] There is no middle ground.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** perfect balance of **Holiness** and **Love**. The great depth of **Your** holiness is shown by **the Seraphim** in heaven repeatedly calling out about **Your** holiness. **Seraphim . . . called out to another,** saying: **Holy, holy, holy, is ADONAI-Tzva'ot! The whole earth is full of His glory (Isaiah 6:3). Your** desire is for those who **love You,** follow **You** by **their** walking **in love**. **The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love (First John 4:8). You** command **Your** children to be **holy (Leviticus 11:44a, 19:2, 20:7** and **26).***

*Yet, **You** also model **hating violence**. **ADONAI examines the righteous. But the wicked and one loving violence His soul hates (Psalms 11:5). David, the man after Your own heart (Acts 13:22) hated evil,** when **he** said: **I detest the company of evildoers, and do not sit with the wicked. I will wash my hands in innocence, so I can walk around Your altar, ADONAI (Psalms 26:5-6).** Even in the B'rit Chadashah **You** tell **Your** children to **be holy**. **For it is written, "Kedoshim you shall be, for I am kadosh." If you call on Him as Father – the One who judges impartially according to each one's deeds – then live out the time of sojourning in reverent fear (First Peter 1:16-17,***

First Thes. 4:7) *and to* ***hate/detest evil. Let love be without hypocrisy-detesting what is evil, holding fast to the good (Romans 12:9).***

When to ***hate****? When to* ***love****? Praise* ***You*** *for* ***Your*** *life that lives out the answer to both of these questions.* ***Your*** *great l****ove*** *desires all to be saved.* ***The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you – not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance (Second Peter 3:9). Your*** *promise of* ***love*** *was not an open promise to all people; but a promise to those whose faith turns them away from* ***their sin*** *and towards* ***loving*** *and following* ***You****.* ***Your love*** *and forgiveness was revealed to the paralytic and all who had faith and repented of their* ***sins (Mark 2:12).***

Though love was ***Your*** *new commandment* ***"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another (John 13:34);*** *yet* ***holiness*** *was also important. It was not a cold* ***holiness*** *of a dead deed, but* ***Your*** *warm* ***love*** *and* ***holiness*** *were inseparably wrapped together so that* ***Your love*** *and* ***Your holiness*** *paid the price for* ***sin (John 1:29)*** *to give* ***Your righteousness (Second Corinthians 5:21)*** *to all whose hearts were cleansed by* ***Your blood (Ephesians 1:7).***

There is a correlation to whom ***You*** *allow into heaven and who was allowed into the camp of* ***Your*** *covenant people.* ***You*** *protected* ***Your*** *covenant people in* ***Leviticus 13:44-46*** *by having the unclean lepers outside the camp. In the same way, all who will live in heaven will be protected from* ***uncleanness****, for no* ***sin/uncleanness*** *will ever be able to enter heaven. A****nd nothing unholy shall ever enter it, nor anyone doing what is detestable or false, but only those written in the Book of Life (Revelation 21:27).***

Your love *offers* ***heaven/inside the camp****, to all who have* ***love/faith*** *in* ***You*** *turning from* ***sins/repentance*** *to follow* ***You****.* ***Yeshua*** *came to heal. Lepers healed by* ***Yeshua (Matt 8:1-4, Luke 17:11-19)*** *were made whole and could reenter the camp.* ***Your holiness*** *cannot allow any unclean heart in heaven. Sinners* ***(Romans 3:23, 6:23)*** *who turn to* ***Yeshua*** *in faith* ***(Romans 10:9-10)*** *are made whole by* ***Yeshua's blood (Ephesians 1:7),*** *and are able to enter heaven. Yet heaven is not so much a place to go, but a* ***Person*** *to be with.* ***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates (Revelation 22:13-14).*** *Lepers*

*made whole, could come back and live inside the camp**. Sinners** cleansed/made whole by **Jesus'** blood, can live with **God** in **His** holy heaven. Thank **You Yeshua** for **Your** great love and **holiness** coming together in **Your** cross and resurrection power. We love and worship **You**! In **Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*