

Leviticus 13:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if the priest look on it, and, behold, there be no white hairs therein, and if it be not lower than the skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days:

Analysis

But if the priest look on it, and, behold, there be no white hairs therein, and if it be not lower than the skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days:

This verse falls within the section on **Diagnosing Skin Diseases**. Detailed procedures for priests to diagnose skin diseases (צִרְעָה, tzaraat), often translated 'leprosy' but covering various conditions.

The Aaronic priesthood mediated between God and Israel, offering sacrifices and maintaining the tabernacle. This prefigured Christ's superior priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

The access to God's presence that Leviticus carefully regulated is now freely available through Christ's blood, tearing the veil and opening the way to God.

Historical Context

Detailed procedures for priests to diagnose skin diseases (צִרְעָה, tzaraat), often translated 'leprosy' but covering various conditions. Chapters 11-15 address ritual purity, teaching Israel to distinguish clean from unclean. These laws served multiple purposes: promoting health, teaching spiritual lessons about sin's defilement, and separating Israel from pagan practices. Archaeological evidence shows Canaanite worship involved practices Israel's laws explicitly prohibited.

Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple. Ancient sacrificial texts from cultures surrounding Israel demonstrate the widespread practice of animal sacrifice, but Israel's system uniquely emphasized moral atonement over magical efficacy.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?
2. How can you use this verse to worship God more fully, obey Him more faithfully, or love others more sacrificially?
3. In what practical ways should this verse influence your church life, family relationships, or personal integrity?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵם	וְרָאָה	הַכֹּהֵן	וְהָיָה	אֵין	בָּהּ	שֵׁעַר
H518	look	But if the priest	H2009	H369	H0	hairs
	H7200	H3548				H8181
לְבָיִט			וְשָׁפַל		הָ	מִן
on it and behold there be no white			therein and if it be not lower			
H3836			H8217		H369	H4480
הָעוֹר	וְהָיָה	כִּהְיֶה	וְהִסְגִּיר		הַכֹּהֵן	
than the skin	H1931	but be somewhat dark	shall shut		But if the priest	
H5785		H3544	H5462		H3548	
שִׁבְעַת		יָמִים:				
him up seven		days				
H7651		H3117				