

Leviticus 13:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean.

Analysis

And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean.

This verse falls within the section on **Diagnosing Skin Diseases**. Detailed procedures for priests to diagnose skin diseases (תַּצְהַרְתָּ, 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. Ritual purity laws taught Israel to distinguish between clean and unclean, holy and common, training them in discernment and reverence for God's presence.

Hebrews 9-10 explains how Christ's once-for-all sacrifice supersedes the repeated Levitical offerings, providing permanent cleansing from sin.

Historical Context

Detailed procedures for priests to diagnose skin diseases (צָרָעָת, 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. The tabernacle's design parallels ancient Near Eastern temple architecture, yet its portable nature and absence of divine images distinguished it from pagan temples.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of 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 develop greater spiritual discernment in distinguishing what honors God from what defiles?
3. What does this verse teach about the seriousness of sin, the cost of redemption, or the beauty of holiness?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׂר וּמַעַרְבָּדְתָּה אֲתָּה הַכֹּה | וְכֹא הָוּ
shall look And the priest H853 and the plague in the skin of his flesh
H7200 H3548 H5061 H5785 H1320

נִגְעָר וְשָׁעַר יְמִרְאָה הַלְּבָב | נִגְעָר וְשָׁעַר
and when the hair and the plague is turned white in sight and the plague
H8181 H5061 H2015 H3836 H4758 H5061

וְכֹא הָוּ הַאֲזַבְעָתָה עַמְקָה
be deeper in the skin of his flesh and the plague of leprosy H1931 shall look
H6013 H5785 H1320 H5061 H6883 H7200

אֲתָה אַתָּה
And the priest on him and pronounce him unclean H853
H3548 H2930

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