

More Than Skin Deep

Church on the Park
Sunday, 01 DEC 2013

Texts: Leviticus 13:1-3, 45-46 & Hebrews 12:14-15

Theme: Bitterness is like a skin disease. It has the power to go under your skin, take root and defile you as well as others. However, the Lord is able to make you clean.

Intro: There are some things things and people that are slight **irritations**. They affect us, but after a week or so, they go away. However, There are some things that go **deeper** than our skin. They affect us, but moreover they **infect** us. They end up **defiling** us and **spread** to others. The Bible warns us not to allow the defiling power of **bitterness** to take root and spread. Today, I want to talk about **healing** from bitterness. I want to liken bitterness to the skin diseases that are outlined in Leviticus 13.

1) **Bitterness is like a skin disease. It may start off like a small rash, but it has power to take root and defile you as well as others. (Lev. 13:1-8; Heb. 12:14-15)**

- Usually the **progression** is: An Offense --> Anger --> Unforgiveness --> Bitterness
- Leviticus is the **heart** of the Torah. It's in the middle of the Torah and deals with the subject of **holiness** and instructs us on how to live with a pure heart.
 - At the centre of its teaching is the distinguishing between the **clean** (Tahor) and the **unclean** (Tamei) as well as the **holy** (kadosh) and **ordinary** (chol; sand) (Lev. 11:45-47).
 - God wanted Israel to be **clean** both physically and spiritually. If they **listened** they would be kept from the diseases of the Egyptians. God taught them good **hygiene** of both the heart and body.
 - Do you know when **doctors** began to **wash** their hands in the Western world? If they would have listened to the wisdom of the Bible they wouldn't have killed so many people through infectious diseases.
 - It was **1847AD** that a doctor made the discovery. But it was 1500BC that God gave Leviticus to Moses.
 - So, it took 3347 years for man to catch up with God. That's the pride of man on demonstration.
 - "In 1847, Dr. Ignaz **Semmelweiss**, a physician in a Vienna hospital, discovered that fatal infections were spread among patients by doctors who failed to wash their hands between examinations. Semmelweiss immediately instituted a disinfecting procedure whereby physicians were required to wash in a chloride of lime solution after autopsies and with soap and water between patient visits. Doctors also had to change into clean lab coats before examining patients. As a result, hospital mortality rates from infectious diseases declined." (www.waterandhealth.org)
 - He was Jewish

- But, he received extreme opposition from the medical community because he said that the doctors were spreading the diseases by not washing their hands. (<http://explorable.com/semmelweis-germ-theory>). He actually lost his job (not reinstated) because of his theory. And later ended up dying depressed in an asylum.
- **Bitterness** is caused by not **washing** spiritually from offenses or unkept expectations.
- We can have bitterness toward people (father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son or daughter)
 - The people closest to us often offend us the most.
- We can have bitterness toward God
- We can have bitterness toward leaders

2) It takes vigilant effort to keep your heart clean from bitterness. In order to get rid of it we must get to the root of the problem. (Heb. 12:14-15)

- Bitterness is like **poison ivy**. Touch it and it will affect you. The **more** you **touch** it, the more it **spreads**. You need to **uproot** the weed before it causes more damage.
- Notice the **connection** between **peace and holiness** in Hebrews 12:14-15.
- Notice the mention of **God's grace**.
 - **Literally**, Hebrew 12:15 says, "See to it that no one **lacks** the grace of God..."
- It's **lacking God's grace** that causes the **problem**. What is God's grace?
- God's grace is his **power** in the **weak** areas of your life (2 Cor. 12:8-10)
- God's grace is also his **power to forgive**, extend **mercy** and **restore**.
 - Each one of us needs God's grace for **ourselves**.
 - We also need God's grace working in us for **others**.
 - **Hebrews 13:9** - hearts strengthened through grace.
- **Jesus** taught about the power of **forgiveness** (Matt. 18:21-35)
 - Real forgiveness is God's power in you to forgive others.
 - **Mercy** begins in the **house of God**. Many people complain about the church. Why? They don't exercise forgiveness. Love goes two ways. Yes, the church is meant to love one another, but it is also called to love when we don't love one another.

3) Here are some ways you can keep yourself from getting bitter:

- 1) Apply the **cross** to the bitter areas of your life (Exo. 15:22-27)
 - The cross is all about God's mercy and grace in action. Jesus dies for our sins and the sins of the whole world. This makes real forgiveness possible.
 - It's through the cross that we are truly healed—not just our bodies, but our hearts.
- 2) Be **quick** to get rid of anger; don't give the devil a foothold (Eph. 4:25-26). Don't allow the problem to get more than skin deep.
- 3) **Keep** forgiving until the bitterness/pain goes away (Matt. 6:12)
- 4) **Go** to your brother or sister and be reconciled (Matt. 6:23-24)
- 5) Wash **everyday**. Wash is the blood of Jesus and the water of God's Word. (Matt. 8:1-4)

Conclusion: Bitterness is dangerous. It has power to take root and defile you as well as others. But the grace of God is the key to uproot this weed. Allow God's grace to work in the wounded areas of your life and forgive those who have sinned against you.

END NOTES

5302. ὑστερέω *husteréō*; contracted *husterō*, fut. *husterēsō*, from *hústeros* (5306), last. To be last, behind, posterior in place or time. In the NT, figuratively of dignity, condition, strength and the like, to be behind, inferior, to lack. In later usage, also mid. deponent *husteroúmai*, to lack.

(I) Of dignity, used in an absolute sense, meaning to be the worse (1 Cor. 8:8). Followed by the gen. depending on the idea of comparison contained in the verb (2 Cor. 11:5, behind the "super" apostles).

(II) Generally meaning to lack, fail.

(A) To fail in something, come short of, miss, not to reach, followed by the gen. expressed or implied (Rom. 3:23, "all . . . come short of that glory which is from God" [a.t.], have failed to obtain the divine favor, fall short of the true recognition of God; Heb. 4:1). Followed by *apó* (575), from, with the gen. (Heb. 12:15).

(B) To want, be without, lack. Followed by the gen. (Luke 22:35); by *en* (1722), in, with the dat. of that in which one is wanting (1 Cor. 1:7); by the acc. of thing, meaning as to which (Matt. 19:20; Mark 10:21, "what lack I yet?"; Sept.: Ps. 23:1; 39:5). Used in an absolute sense, meaning to be in want, suffer need (Luke 15:14; 2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 4:12; Heb. 11:37).

(C) Intrans. of things, to fail, be lacking, wanting, used in an absolute sense (Matt. 19:20; John 2:3).

Deriv.: *hustérēma* (5303), need, want; *hustérēsis* (5304), need.

Syn.: *déomai* (1189), to recognize one's need and beg; *aporéō* (639), to be without means; *leípō* (3007), to fall short, be destitute; *elattónéō* (1641), to have less; *chrézō* (5535), to need; *échō anágkēn* (*échō* [2192], to have; *anágkē* [318], need), to have need.

Ant.: *perisseúō* (4052), to abound; *hyperperisseúō* (5248) and *hyperpleonázō* (5250), to abound exceedingly; *pleonázō* (4121), to superabound; *plēthúnō* (4129), increase, multiply; *hyperbállō* (5235), to exceed, excel; *euporéō* (2141), to be well off; *akmázō* (187), to be fully ripe; *gémō* (1073), to be full.¹

¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

4491. ῥίζα *rhíza*; gen. *rhízas*, fem. noun. A root (Matt. 3:10; Luke 3:9); pl. (Mark 11:20, “from the roots” meaning wholly). In Matt. 13:6; Mark 4:6; Sept.: Ezek. 17:6, 7, 9; Job 28:9; 31:12, to have “no root” means not to have firm hold.

(I) Figuratively of being rooted and established in faith or doctrine (Matt. 13:21; Mark 4:17; Luke 8:13). Figuratively the cause or source of something (1 Tim. 6:10). Abraham and the Jewish people are the root from which the gospel dispensation with its blessings has sprung (Rom. 11:16–18). In Heb. 12:15 “the root of bitterness” means a person who has turned away from following the teachings of Christ, in allusion to Deut. 29:18.

(II) Metonymically, a sprout or shoot from the root meaning offspring, descendant (Rom. 15:12 in allusion to Is. 11:10 [cf. 11:1]; Rev. 5:5; 22:16).

Deriv.: *rhizóō* (4492), to cause to take root.²

4088. πικρία *pikría*; gen. *pikrías*, fem. noun from *pikrós* (4089), bitter. Bitterness (Acts 8:23 where “gall of bitterness” denotes extreme wickedness, highly offensive to God and all good men, likely to be hurtful and destructive to others, for which much suffering is reserved in the world to come for unbelievers [cf. Deut. 32:32]). A “root of bitterness” in Heb. 12:15 means a wicked person whose life and behavior is now offensive to God and obnoxious to men (cf. Deut. 29:17; 32:32; Rev. 8:11). Bitterness in the sense of bitter anger (Eph. 4:31; Sept.: Jer. 15:17); of bitter and reproachful language (Rom. 3:14, quoted from Ps. 10:7, bitterness of speech; see Sept.: Job 7:11).

Ant.: *chará* (5479), joy, delight; *agallíasis* (20), exultation, exuberant joy; *euphrosúnē* (2167), good cheer, mirth, gladness of heart.³

3392. μιáίνω *miáinō*; fut. *mianṓ*, aor. pass. *emiánthēn*, perf. pass. *memíasménos*, perf. pass. 3d person pl. *memíantai*. To stain with color as the staining of glass, to tinge, pollute, defile. Trans.:

(I) In the Levitical sense (John 18:28; Sept.: Lev. 5:3; 22:5, 8).

(II) In a moral sense (Jude 1:8). Pass., to be polluted, corrupt (Titus 1:15; Heb. 12:15).

Deriv.: *amíantos* (283), undefiled; *míasma* (3393), defilement, referring to the vices of the ungodly which contaminate one in his contact with the world; *miasmós* (3394), the act of defiling.

Syn.: *koinóō* (2840), to make common, render unholy or unclean in a ceremonial sense; *molúnō* (3435), to besmear or soil in a figurative moral sense, while *miáinō* is used to indicate ceremonial defilement; *spilóō* (4696), to defile, which in James 3:6 expresses the defiling effects of the evil use of the tongue and in Jude 1:23 is used of moral defilement; *phtheírō* (5351), to corrupt; *diaphtheírō* (1311), to corrupt completely; *kataphtheírō* (2704), to corrupt utterly; *sēpō* (4595), to render rotten; *aphanízō* (853), to

² Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

³ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

cause to disappear, e.g., the destructive work of rust (Matt. 6:19, 20) which causes a metal to lose its proper function, to corrupt, disfigure.

Ant.: *katharízō* (2511), to make clean; *diakatharízō* (1245), to cleanse thoroughly; *kathairō* (2508), to purge; *ekkathairō* (1571), to cleanse out thoroughly; *hagnízō* (48) to purify, cleanse from defilement. The difference between *hagnós* (53) and *katharós* (2513), pure and clean (see 1 John 3:3), is that the first implies shrinking from pollution while the second expresses simply the fact of cleanliness.⁴

μιάνω, μιάσμα, μιασμός, ἀμίαντος

† μιάνω.

a. In the neut. sense: “to paint in colour,” Hom. Il., 4, 141 (φοίνικι). b. Censoriously, “to spot,” “to stain,” first materially, then in the religious or cultic sense. μιάνειν is used esp. for staining by bloodguiltiness.² **In primitive thought this was understood physically like dirt or infection. But the act does not affect only the doer. The doer transfers the stain to his fellow-citizens, the city, the temple of the gods. Cultic cleansing by water or sacrifice is needed to purge away the stain,**⁵ In primitive thought there is no sense of the pricking of conscience. Spotting is particularly incurred by processes in which there was originally thought to be participation in the demonic, e.g., sexual intercourse or decomposition. **Even bad news can make the ear unclean.**⁷ Only later (in Plato, the tragedians) is staining felt to be a moral and spiritual matter.

The OT reflects these primitive and cultic ideas. **In the LXX μιάνω is predominantly used for נָמַט (q, ni, pi, pu, hitp).** This is a cultic term, and occurs a great deal in P and Ez., who has a strong cultic interest. A developed casuistry works out the rules of cultic defilement and its removal. Judgment concerning what defiles is often linked with primitive and direct feelings (aversion) and experiences, or with earlier religious connections (demonism).¹⁰ In particular all contact with alien cults defiles. **The unclean person can disqualify or desecrate holy objects by contact.**¹² In all such cases μιάνω is thought of in cultic and ritual terms. Distinction between the ritual and the moral develops with the OT (prophecy).¹³

Peculiar to the LXX is the declarative use of μιάνω, “to declare unclean” (Lv. 13, 3). In accordance with his tendency to ethicise the Jewish religion, Philo often uses μιάνω for spiritual defilement.

In the Mishnah the 6th order (טהרות) deals with the different possibilities of defilement and its removal, e.g., tractate כלים (vessels), אהלות (defilement by corpses), נגעים (leprosy), טהרות (lesser defilements which last only to sunset), מקואות (baths), נדה (uncleanness of the wife), ידי, (defilement of the hands) etc.

In the NT, which no longer thinks in ritual and cultic terms, μιάνω is very rare.

1. It is used in the cultic sense in connection with the Jewish religion in Jn. 18:28. The Jews avoid entering the house of Gentiles so as not to defile themselves cultically.
2. **It is also used in the religious and moral sense of the defilement of the person by inner apostasy from God. In Hb. 12:15 the apostate, by his turning from God’s**

⁴ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

grace, pollutes the other members of the community (alongside πόρνος and → βέβηλος, v. 16; opp. ἁγιασμός, v. 14). In Tt. 1:15 it is used of the inner defilement (νοῦς, συνείδησις) which results from adopting Gnostic libertinism. The champions of this trend are themselves called μεμιαμμένοι (alongside ἄπιστοι in v. 15, βδελυκτοί, ἄπειθεις, v. 16). Jd. 8: σάρκα ... μιαίνουσιν—not of the sexual act itself, but licentious sexual action which treats the commandments of God with contempt.

† μίασμα.

This means “defilement” as the result of an action. The word follows the religious changes in the meaning of → μιάνω. It denotes esp. ritual and cultic pollution, which along the lines of primitive thought is first held to be corporeal. μίασμα arises esp. from bloodguiltiness. It clings to the doer, but can be transferred from him to the countries, sanctuaries and images of the circle which tolerates him in its midst,¹ also to unjust judges and witnesses who prevent expiation. It must be set aside by καθαρμός or ἱλασμός. Later it is employed for moral defilement.⁴

There is no true original for μίασμα in the Mas., and it is rare in the LXX.⁵ Jdt. 9:4 (bloodguiltiness); 9:2 (licentiousness); 1 Macc. 13:50 (Gentile defilement); also Iερ. 39(32):34 (for ΥΙΡΨ); Ez. 33:31 (for ΥΥΓ; the LXX seems to have read ΓΥΥ); Lv. 7:18 (ΛΙΛΘ, cultically forbidden flesh); in the moral sense, Jdt. 13:16 alongside ἀισχύνη. The word is common in Joseph. in the sense of cultic pollution.⁶ Philo uses it for ritual, then for moral, defilement. It occurs in the NT only at 2 Pt. 2:20 for “pollution by partaking in that which is contrary to the holy will of God,” ἀποφυγόντες τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ κυρίου. Κόσμος here has the sense of the ungodly world, in practice paganism.

† μιασμός.

“Defilement” as an action or state (→ μιάνω, μίασμα), first cultic, Plut. Solon, 12 (I, 84c): ἄγη καὶ μiasμοὺς δεομένους καθαρμῶν, then moral, Test. B. 8:2 (alongside πορνεία, opp. διάνοια καθαρὰ; Test. L. 17:8.

It occurs in the LXX only at 1 Macc. 4:43 (of the pagan βωμός on the θυσιαστήριον of God) and Wis. 14:26: ψυχῶν μiasμός (“moral corruption of the soul,” along with forgetfulness of the grace of the covenant, and sins of licentiousness).

The only NT occurrence is at 2 Pt. 2:10, where the reference is to the licentious affirmation of sexual impulses by the libertines: τοὺς ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ μiasμοῦ πορευομένου (cf. Jd. 8: σάρκα μιάνειν).

† ἀμίαντος.

“Undefiled,” “clean,” physically, Pind. Fr., 108b of light, then esp. cultic purity, Plut. Numa, 9 [I, 66b] of the virginal purity of the Vestals, fig. in the moral sense. ἀμίαντος is often used to strengthen καθαρός and has thus the sense of perfect and inviolate purity, Plut. Is. et Os., 79 (II, 383b); Pyth. Or., 3 (II, 395e). Freedom from pollution is the presupposition of cultic proximity to God.²

In the LXX ἀμίαντος, for which there is no Heb. term, occurs only 5 times in the Aprc.: 2 Macc. 14:36; 15:34 of keeping the temple cultically pure: a few times for sexual purity in Wis. 3:13: ἡ

ἀμίαντος, ἥτις οὐκ ἔγνω κοίτην ἐν παραπτώματι, 8:19f.: ψυχῆς ἀγαθῆς ... σῶμα ἀμίαντον, 4:2: ἀμίαντων ἄθλων ἀγῶνα, of the life of the unmarried.

In the NT it is used 1. in the narrower sense of purity from sexual transgression in Hb. 13:4.

2. More generally, it is used of the moral purity of true worship, Jm. 1:27 (along with καθαρός), of the perfect purity of the heavenly inheritance, 1 Pt. 1:4 (along with ἄφθαρτος and ἀμόραντος), of the perfect moral purity of the highpriest, Christ, Hb. 7:27 (along with ὅσιος and ἄκακος, → III, 482).

Hauck⁵

י. S290, 291 TWOT809, 809a GK3237, 3238 vb. be or become unclean (NH Pi. □ =



, and especially deriv □ = pollute (ceremonially); Aramaic □ = .Lv 11:25 + 22 times; 3 fs □ = .ṭama) Pa. pollute; v. RSK307ff.) —Qal Pf. 3 ms) Lv 5:3 + 34 □ = Ḳ.Lv 15:18; Impf □ = .Ez 22:4; pl □ = .times; 2 fs 2 + 12:2 Lv 15:32 + 6 □ = .p 106:39; Inf □ = Ḳ.times; pl 4 + 12:2 □ = .times; 3 fs Lv 18:20, 23 (H), Ez 23:17; the land □ = .times;—be or become unclean: 3. sexually, c v 4; with necromancers Lv - .Lv 18:25, 27 (H). 4. religiously, with idols Ez 22:3; c 19:31 (H); by sacrificing children to idols p 106:39. 5. ceremonially, by contact with carcasses of unclean animals Lv 11:24, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34(), 35, 36, 40 (P); any carcass 17:15 (H); eating of a carcass 22:8 (H); by issues 15:4, 9, 20(), 24, 27, 32 (P); by contact with an unclean man 5:3; 15:4 (P), 22:5 (H), or thing 22:6 (H); by leprosy 13:14, 46; 14:36, 46 (P); by contact with the dead Nu 6:12; 19:20 (P), Ez 44:25, or with one unclean by such contact Nu 19:22 (P), Hg 2:13(); by contact with creeping things Lv 22:5 (H); certain animals were always unclean 11:26, 27 (P). In ordinary unclean till even Lv 11:24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32, ^a O O □ = cases of uncleanness 39, 40(); 14:46; 15:5, 6, 7, 8, 10(), 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 27 Nu 19:7, 8, 10, 21, 22 (all P), Lv 17:15; 22:6 (H); but uncleanness lasted 7 days for woman bearing a son Lv 12:2() (P), for man lying with woman having an issue 15:24 (P), or one coming in contact with the dead Nu 19:11, 14, 16 (P); it lasted 14 days for a woman bearing a ;Nu 5:27, 28 □ = Ḳ.Ho 5:3; 6:10; 3 fs □ = Ḳ.daughter Lv 12:5 (P). Niph. Pf. 3 ms) Lv 11:43 □ = Ḳ.Je 2:23; 2 m.pl ll □ = Ḳ.times; 1 s 5 + 5:13 □ = Ḳ .etc. + 4 times pf.; Pt. pl ,(□ = omitted by scribal error; but Ges al. derive from Ez 20:30, 31;—defile oneself, be defiled: 1. sexually, Lv 18:24 (H), Nu 5:13, □ ll □ = Ḳ 14(), 20, 27, 28, 29 (P). 2. by idolatry conceived as whoredom Ho 5:3; 6:10 Je 2:23 Ez 20:30, 31, 43; 23:7, 13, 30. 3. ceremonially, by eating creeping things Lv 11:43. 4. be Jb 18:3 we are accounted as unclean; □ ll □ = Ḳ.regarded as unclean (cf. Pi. 4), prob

⁵ . Vol. 4: *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964- (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (644–647). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- = .Gn 34:5 + 15 times; sf - = .Pi. Pf. - = .metapl. form; on another view v
 K 23:8, etc. 2 - = - .Ez 5:11, etc. + 7 times Pf.; Impf - = .Lv 13:8 + 3 times; 2 fs
 - = .Lv 13:44 + 2 times; sf - = .Ez 9:7; Inf - = . + 12 times Impf.; Imv. pl
 etc. + 4 times Inf.;—defile: 1. sexually Gn 34:5, 13, 27 (R), Ez 18:6, 11, 15; ,15:31
 22:11; 33:26; the land by sexual impurities of the people Lv 18:28 (H); Isr. by spiritual
 whoredom Ez 23:17. 2. religiously: the land, by bloodshed Nu 35:34 (P); by allowing
 the dead body of the murderer to hang on the tree over night Dt 21:23; by idolatry Je
 2:7 Ez 36:17, 18; Isr. defiled the sacred places by the sacrifice of children Lv 20:3 (H),
 Ez 23:38, and God defiled him thereby 20:26; he defileth the sacred places by idolatry
 Josiah defiled the ;8 ,43:7^l || 2 Ch 36:14 Je 7:30 = 32:34, Ez 5:11; the holy name of
 idolatrous places of worship by destroying them and making them unfit for use 2 K
 23:8, 10, 13, 16; of Isr. defiling idolatrous images Is 30:22, and the nations the temple
 of God p 79:1. 3. ceremonially: by ceremonial uncleanness, the sacred places Lv
 15:31 Nu 19:13, 20 (P); the camp Nu 5:3 (P); the temple by dead bodies Ez 9:7; the
 Nazirite's head of separation by a death occurring in his presence Nu 6:9 (P); the
by creeping things Lv 11:44 (P). 4. pronounce (- || x' -) people defile themselves
 or declare ceremonially unclean: the leper Lv 13:3, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 25, 27, 30, 44(),
 Ez 4:14 myself is not - = - 3 ||x' - - 59 (P); unclean animals 20:25 (H). Pu. Pt
 - - - - ;Ez 14:11; 37:23 - - - - .Lv 21:1 + 4 times; pl - x - - .polluted. Hithp. Impf
 Ho 9:4 Ez 44:25, etc. + 6 times Impf.;—reflexive, defile oneself: by eating of an
 Lv 18:24, 30 (H), 11:43 (P), Ez 14:11; 20:7, - .unaccepted peace-offering Ho 9:4; c
 for a dead person Lv 21:1, 3, 11 (H), Nu 6:7 (P); by Lv 11:24 (P); - .18; 37:23; c
 Dt 24:4 after that - - - - a x - - - - .without prep. 21:4 (H), Ez 44:25. Hothp. Pf
she has been defiled (sexually); on form v. Ges^{54.3.6}

“See to it” (Heb. 13:15)

1983. ἐπισκοπέω *episkopéō*; contracted *episkopō*, fut. *episkopēsō*, from *epí* (1909),
 upon, and *skopéō* (4648), to regard, give attention to. To look upon, observe, examine
 the state of affairs of something, look after, oversee. In the NT, used in Heb. 12:15;
 1 Pet. 5:2 of the work of shepherding the flock (Sept.: Deut. 11:12).

Deriv.: *episkopé* (1984), the office of a bishop.

Syn.: *poimainō* (4165), to shepherd, tend a flock; *bóskō* (1006), to lead to pasture,
 fodder; *epimeléomai* (1959), to show concern over; *merimnáo* (3309) to be concerned.

Ant.: *ameléō* (272), to neglect.⁷

⁶ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (2000). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (electronic ed.) (379). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.

⁷ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

šāraʿ) be diseased of skin, leprous. (ASV and RSV similar). This) OĒ 1971
.denominative verb is used chiefly in the Pual

Parent Noun

1971a שָׂרָאֵת (*šāraʿat*) **malignant skin disease, leprosy.** Strictly, leucoderma and related diseases. (ASV and RSV similar: “leprosy”).

1971b שִׂרְאָה (*širʿâ*) **hornet.**

While usually rendered leper or leprous, the term “leper” is not correct medically, since *šāraʿat* refers to a wider range of skin diseases (cf. “malignant skin disease,” neb). For convenience, however, the term “leper” can be retained.

A person with leprosy. apart from the telltale malignant raw flesh and white hair, was to be otherwise identified by torn clothes, announcement of “unclean” when in the streets and was to live isolated from the community. Four persons are named in the ot as becoming leprous. Not counting Moses (Ex 4:6; cf. also II Kgs 7:3), there were Miriam (Num 12:10), Uzziah (II Kgs 15:5), Gehazi (II Kgs 5:27) and Naaman, the Syrian (II Kgs 5:1).

God may inflict the disease of *šāraʿat* as punishment for sins such as jealousy (cf. Miriam), anger, and lack of full compliance with God’s commands (cf. Uzziah), and covetousness (cf. Gehazi). One must not conclude, however, that all sickness is a result of an individual’s sin (cf. Job; Lk 13:1–5; Jn 9:1–7).

šāraʿat was not necessarily incurable (cf. II Kgs 5:7). Leprosy by contrast, was likely incurable (Lev 13). In any event, healing of *šāraʿat* could serve as a sign of divine power (Ex 4:6; II Kgs 5:8).

The isolation of a leprous person was doubtless a sanitary measure in order to avoid further contagion. That a priest in Israel’s theocracy was to diagnose the illness does not mean that today’s clergy should become health officers. But the principle of God’s concern for the health of bodies is not only self-evident but remains an enduring principle (cf. Jesus, Mt 8:2–3).

Diseases with eruptions affecting the skin are sometimes mild, sometimes, as in smallpox, scarlet fever, etc., both dangerous and highly contagious. The only effective control in antiquity would have been isolation. Only the Hebrew laws had this very valuable provision.

šāraʿat is found primarily (twenty times) in the two chapters that govern the diagnoses and the cleaning measures for one who had become unclean (*tāmēʿ*, Lev 13, 14). In the nature of a contagion, *šāraʿat* refers not only to eruptions on the skin but to mildew or mold in clothing (Lev 13) or in houses (Lev 14:34–53); therefore obviously the word is not specific for leprosy. The determination by the priest of an individual as unclean meant separation from the community, and ceremonial unfitness to enter the temple (cf. II Chr 26:21). The cleansing measures to be performed upon recovery involved a ritual with two birds, which ritual according to KD was necessary for restoration to the community (Lev 14:2–9). An additional set of offerings followed, notably the guilt offering, perhaps because disease is ultimately to be linked with sin (Lev 14:10–20).

There is no Scriptural warrant for regarding leprosy as a type of sin, though the analogy can be helpful for illustrative purposes. Bibliography: Harris, R. Laird, *Man—God’s Eternal Creation*, Moody, 1971, pp. 142–43. Browne, S. G., “Leper, Leprosy,” in *WBE*, II, pp. 1026–27.

E.A.M.⁸

Lev. 13:1-6

Lev. 19:17

The people that hurt us the most are those closest to us. They can proactively sin against us. Or it can be a matter of neglect. Or they may not meet our expectations.

It can be caused by jealousy. Someone has something that we should have.

Bitterness toward God

Bitterness toward leaders (as in the wilderness)

Leaving something at the altar.

Hebrews 12:14-15

Coming short of the grace of God. To lack.

The grace of God is key to overcoming bitterness.

Grace means God’s power in our weakness. (2 Cor. 12). Grace means forgiveness and mercy and helping the weak and sinful. It’s bending down in order to pick someone up.

Eph 4:31 (rom. 3:14; Ps 10:7)

Defilement (the same word used for skin diseases in the Septuagint in the Greek Old Testament. Here we see the connection between Hebrews 12:15 and Leviticus 13.

To declare unclean (defile). Bitterness causes spiritual uncleanness to spread.

The study of poisonous weeds.

What Jesus taught about forgiveness.

Moses makes the bitter waters sweet.

⁸ Martens, E. A. (1999). 1971 פָּרַע. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (777). Chicago: Moody Press.

Jesus cleanses the leper.

How can you keep from becoming bitter?

Wash everyday. Wash yourself in the blood of Jesus. Wash yourself in the Word of God. Remember what Christ has done for you.

Ask for God's grace

Live in forgiveness. Constantly forgive until the infection goes away.

Go to the High Priest - Jesus Christ.

Don't let offenses take root.

When you start spreading gossip, slander and talking bad about something, you know that bitterness has seeped into your heart. You need to do everything to become pure in heart again (clean).

Tahor (clean) and Tamei (unclean)