

# **Leprosy And Sin (Sin) (Forgiveness) (Restoration)**

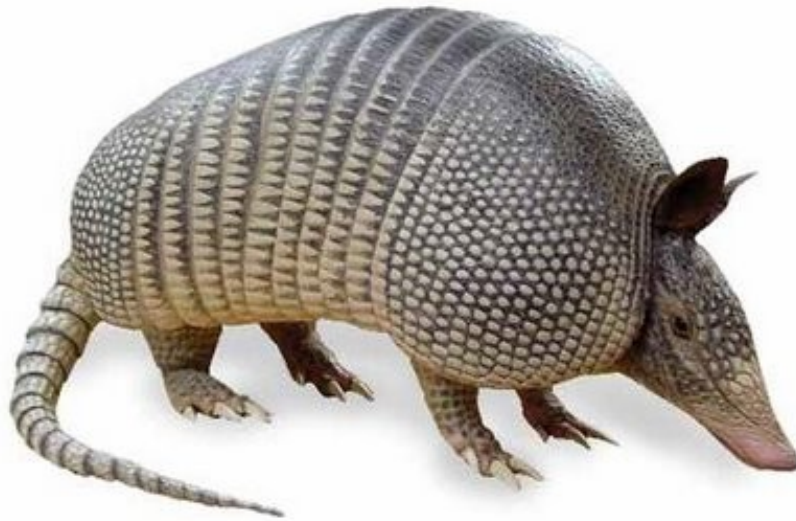
*Leviticus 13-14*

## **The Basic Bible Truth**

Types in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, are always a fascinating study. And so it is with leprosy, a dreaded skin disease of that day. God set aside two entire chapters of Leviticus to address the issue of leprosy, even spending an entire chapter delineating the process of being cleaned from this incurable disease. Curious. Until you realize that leprosy, in the Old Testament, is a picture of sin. Another truly deadly problem that, in the life of a Christian, can be dealt with.

## **The Object**

A Picture Of An Armadillo



Here in the South, armadillos are despised creatures. They can dig up a garden or a lawn overnight. They are too stupid to catch in a trap, so ridding your yard of them as a pest is a challenge. As animals go, though, they are unique. They almost always have identical twins or quads when they give birth. That genetic idiosyncrasy makes them excellent subjects for scientific study. But do not try to keep one as a pet. They also are known to carry leprosy.

## **The Lesson**

The Old Testament is fascinating. Much may seem archaic from our vantage point today, but it is the Word of God and therefore very, very special. One of the most often overlooked, but most rewarding studies that a student of the Bible can do is to look carefully at The Law, given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Old Testament is full of *types*, that is, parallels, to New Testament truths. Many of the laws pointed directly at Jesus. One in particular, though, addressed our New Testament understanding of sin. God

spent 2 complete chapters in Leviticus alone, carefully explaining the problems with leprosy and the results of the disease if found present in a person's life.

According to the Law, if someone was found to have the disease of leprosy, they were to be cast outside the camp of Israel, and were to have no contact with anyone. Never again to live with loved ones, never allowed to experience a comforting hug, but rather, they were required to shout, "Unclean" at people who might accidentally come near them. To hear the diagnosis of leprosy, meant loss of social contact, loss of income and a life of destitution, and an eventual ugly death.

There are some interesting parallels between leprosy and sin.

1. Leprosy was loathsome. We often fail to understand the view that God has towards sin. He hates it. It is a very, very big deal to Him. We seem to be able to just pass it off as part of life sometimes. Sin, even small things in our lives, should break our hearts with disdain.
2. Leprosy is not a respecter of persons. Anyone could contract the disease, from the lowest slave, to the king. Sin, likewise, affects all. No one is immune to its lure.
3. Leprosy begins small and grows and grows. Sin works the same way. We start with something very minor, get accustomed to tolerating it, maybe even enjoying it a bit, and then we move on to something larger.
4. Leprosy grows surely. The walk of a Christian is just that. It is a walk. It is not a sit down and rest a bit. We are either growing in the Lord or we are growing away from Him. There is no neutral gear in the transmission of the Christian life. Only forward and reverse.
5. Leprosy was a living death. Leprosy attacks the nerve endings and blocks the sense of pain. A person suffering from the disease might cut a finger and never notice, and it become infected and eventually even fall away. The wages of sin is death. Those caught up in a life of sin are looking death straight in the face and not realizing it.
6. Leprosy is ultimately fatal. It is never a pretty death, but leaves behind a maimed and deformed corpse. Unchecked sin in any life, will ultimately lead to destruction. It is the nature of the beast. Sin destroys.
7. Leprosy is actually not painful. The pain sending nerve endings have been dulled and are not communicating with the brain. When we allow sin in our lives, we get comfortable with it. It doesn't offend us as it should. Our sin should break our hearts and cause us to fall on our faces before an Almighty God.
8. A diagnosis of leprosy meant separation from the congregation of Israel. Completely alone. Sin separates us from God and from others. One of the most frightening aspects of Hell is that those who will be there in torment, will also suffer complete "aloneness".
9. Leprosy was considered highly contagious. When we allow sin to remain in our lives, others may see our foolishness and think that they can do that too. A rotten apple will always spoil the rest of the bushel basket. Sin tolerated, will cause problems.
10. To be cured of leprosy was nothing short of a miracle. God's offer of forgiveness is nothing short of a miracle. The requirements for being declared clean from the disease, was for the priest to come to the individual and thoroughly inspect the skin. It is a relationship with Jesus that points out the sin in our lives as well. Jesus lowered Himself to our condition as a human being for that very reason. He came to us.
11. To be cured of leprosy required a special offering in response. Our "cure" for sin, the Atonement, is a very special thing that God has done.

There is an interesting clause that considers the possibility of a cure. In that eventuality, the healed individual was to appear before a priest, submit to ritual cleansing, and then sit outside his home for a week. What may seem incongruous initially begins to make sense when you contemplate the spiritual picture here. God is able to forgive us when we do wrong, but many times the sin has spoiled our reputation. The cured person was to be seated outside his dwelling for a week as a testimony to his

healing. Interested or curious persons could come by and see for themselves that the individual was definitely now cleansed of leprosy. Likewise, a sinner may indeed be forgiven, but human nature is wary of those kinds of claims, until proof can be seen of a genuine change of heart. It requires time to re-establish a tarnished reputation.

God took a tremendous amount of time detailing out for Israel how to deal with leprosy. That was no accident. It is a picture of sin. And sin is a very, very large concern.