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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Tazria – Sin and Suffering

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Tazria, which is Hebrew for “She conceived,” and it goes from Leviticus 12:1 to Leviticus 13:59.

This Torah portion gives laws for purification after childbirth as well as laws governing how to diagnose and quarantine lepers.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about how we should respond to physical suffering.

Leviticus 13:9

[When a man is afflicted with a leprous disease, he shall be brought to the priest.](#)

In the Torah, those who suffered from certain skin diseases were considered ritually impure. This simply meant that they were restricted from participating in certain sacred activities, such as the tabernacle or temple services in ancient Israel.

The Torah provides the priests instructions regarding how to identify the ritual status of skin diseases, which include the person being quarantined until a determination is made. If a skin disease is determined to be ritually defiling, the priest officially declares the person to be ritually impure. The person then remains in quarantine until such a time that the priests are able to ascertain that the skin disease had fully healed.

Aside from ritual impurity, those who contracted certain skin diseases often suffered an immense amount of physical pain. And when we read the instructions in the Torah, we might be inclined to ask why people suffer from such painful conditions. This often brings to mind suffering in general, not just that related skin disease. Why *do* people suffer?

Some people immediately assume that a person suffers because the Lord is punishing them for their sin.

While it's true that God can, and did, afflict people with skin diseases and other illnesses as judgment for their sins (e.g. Numbers 12:10), we shouldn't automatically assume that every disease, sickness, and so forth are always the result of sin.

For instance, consider Job. He suffered painful sores all over his body (Job 2:7), yet God regarded him as a "blameless and upright man" (Job 1:8). The Lord even rebuked Job's friends for their errant assumption that Job had some secret sin in his life (Job 42:7-9). Sadly, too many people today take the position of Job's friends by assuming that one's suffering *must* be because of a specific sin in their life.

Is the suffering in our world *ultimately* due to sin? Yes. But not *all* suffering is the result of one's *specific* sin in their life. The consequences of sin are that we live in a fallen world in which innocent people often suffer. Both the righteous and the wicked have been afflicted with sicknesses and diseases since the fall. Moreover, many wicked people have prospered and many righteous people have suffered and died young. Justice in this life does not always prevail. As the preacher of Ecclesiastes repeatedly declares, "[All is vanity.](#)"

Rather than focusing on whether or not someone's suffering is the result of a specific sin, perhaps we ought to follow the example of Yeshua and focus on how we might glorify God in the midst of the suffering in this world:

John 9:1-3

[As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus \[Yeshua\] answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.](#)

The passage goes on to describe how Yeshua healed the man of his blindness. In the same way, we as Yeshua's followers are called to bring light and healing to this broken world. We should pray for physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. We should "visit the sick" (Matthew 25:36)—that is, care for and look after those who are suffering. We should mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15), bringing warmth and comfort to hurting people.

The laws about these often-painful skin diseases don't, in themselves, suggest that these conditions are because of sin. The Torah is concerned only about what to do when these conditions occur. Likewise, our Messiah taught us not to focus so much on *why* bad things happen, but rather on what we are to do in light of the suffering in our world. Let's focus on being a light in a dark place.

John 1:5

[The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.](#)

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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