The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:

When you enter the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I inflict an eruptive plague upon a house in the land you possess, the owner of the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, "Something like a plague has appeared upon my house." The priest shall order the house cleared before the priest enters to examine the plague, so that nothing in the house may become unclean; after that the priest shall enter to examine the house. If, when he examines the plague, the plague in the walls of the house is found to consist of greenish or reddish streaks that appear to go deep into the wall, the priest shall come out of the house to the entrance of the house, and close up the house for seven days. On the seventh day the priest shall return. If he sees that the plague has spread on the walls of the house, the priest shall order the stones with the plague in them to be pulled out and cast outside the city into an unclean place. The house shall be scraped inside all around, and the coating that is scraped off shall be dumped outside the city in an unclean place. They shall take other stones and replace those stones with them, and take other coating and plaster the house.
When ... I inflict an eruptive plague. This was actually a means of conveying good news. For the Amorites hid golden treasures inside the walls of their houses during the 40 years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. The eruptive plague would cause the owner of the house to tear it down, at which point he would find the treasure.

Something like a plague has appeared upon my house. Even if he is smart enough to know that it is definitely a plague, he may not pronounce it so by saying, "A plague has appeared upon my house." He must call it "something like a plague."

Before the priest enters. Until the priest gets involved, the category of uncleanness does not apply. So that nothing in the house may become unclean. More literally, so that "all that is in the house be not made unclean" (OJPS). Once the priest closes up the house, anything the owner has not removed from it becomes unclean. But what is the Torah's concern here? Objects that can be immersed will become clean when he immerses.

The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: "When you enter the land of Canaan and the land you possess" (v. 34) show that this passage is actually addressed not to Moses and Aaron but to all Israel, and should rightly have continued, "Speak to the Israelite people, and say to them." The text, however, is terse because this was obvious. Or perhaps the Lord is speaking to them here as stand-ins for all Israel. In this case, the implication is that the intent was simply to teach them all the rules of leprosy together in one place so that they might teach them to the priests, and not to have Moses tell this to all the Israelites. Only to those who would indeed enter the land would be eventually offer this warning: "In cases of an eruptive plague, be most careful to make it exactly as the leviitical priests instruct you. Take care to do as I have commanded them." (Deut. 24:8). We see that before saying this he had given them the commands recorded here in vv. 34-53.

I inflict an eruptive plague. The implication of this phrase is that such a plague is caused by the hand of God. It is not a natural phenomenon at all, as I explained in my comment to 13:47.

When you enter the land of Canaan. This is said about the plague on houses, and not about the affections on a person or on cloth, because they had no houses until they conquered Canaan and settled there (Hizkuni). And I inflict an eruptive plague upon a house. God inflicts such a plague because we are commanded, "You must destroy all the sites at which the nations you are to dispossess worshiped their gods" (Deut. 12:2), and we do not know at which sites they did this (Hizkuni). Besides the possibility of hidden treasure, remember that these are houses which they did not build. God therefore would sometimes inflict a plague to let them know that a particular house was shaky and ready to fall (Gersonides). One should not think this is a natural phenomenon; a "plague," caused by infection of the blood, cannot naturally occur in a house, which has no blood. This is something that God does to urge people to repent of their sins. As Hab. 2:11 puts it, "For a stone shall cry out from the wall, and a rafter shall answer it from the woodwork" (Abarbanel). In the land you possess. This phenomenon does not, therefore, occur in Jerusalem, which was not divided among the tribes and cannot be anyone's private "possession" (Gersonides).

The priest shall order the house cleared before the priest enters. This gives the person time to repent and to pray, and gives the priest time to pray as well (Siforno).

The priest shall ... close up the house for seven days. This can occur twice for an affection in a cloth, but three times for one in a house; the cloth costs little, so the Torah takes less care to prevent one from suffering its loss (Abarbanel). This period too provides time for repentance. The midrash takes the three possible weeks of this procedure to symbolize the destruction of the First Temple, its restoration in the Second, the destruction of the Second Temple, and its ultimate rectification in the Third Temple, may it be built speedily in our days, Amen! (Siforno).
44 If the plague has spread in the house, it is a malignant eruption. One might think it is unclean only if it has spread. But the similar expression in 13:51 with regard to cloth tells us that, as with cloth, [K] the return of the plague marks it as unclean even if it does not spread any farther than it previously had. Why then does our text say “if the plague has spread”? In fact, this verse is logically out of place. V. 45 should follow immediately upon v. 43. V. 44 actually describes the situation where the appearance of the plague is unchanged when the priest examines it on the seventh day but has spread after a second week of waiting—a situation that the text has said nothing about so far. For v. 39 deals only with the case where the plague has spread after a single week. If it has not spread until after a second week, what is to be done? One might think from the fact that v. 45 immediately follows our verse that the house should be torn down. But, again, our verse is logically out of sequence. Rather, in this inspection, just as in the inspection of v. 39, the stones are removed, the wall is scraped and plastered, and they must wait for a third week. If the plague has returned at that point, the house is torn down. If it has not, then the house is clean. But what if the house remains unchanged after the second week? Well, v. 48 again says “the priest comes.” Since the return of the priest after the first week is described in v. 39 and his return after the second week is described in our verse, the doubling of the verb “come” in the Hebrew of v. 48 must indicate that he “sees that the plague has not spread” (v. 48) either time. Since “the priest shall pronounce the house clean” only if “the plague has healed” (still v. 48), we learn that if the plague remains unchanged at the priest’s second visit it is not declared “clean,” but the whole procedure of removing the stones, scraping, and replastering is repeated for a third week, just as it would be if the plague had spread. All of this is according to the explanation given in the Sifra. The bottom line is that the house is not torn down unless the plague has returned after the stones are pulled out and the house is scraped and replastered. If the plague returns, it need not “spread” to a larger size than previously. The verses are to be understood in the following order: “If the plague again breaks out” (v. 43), “the house shall be torn down” (v. 45). But if the house is not torn down, but remains closed up for a second week, then “whoever enters the house while it is closed up shall be unclean until evening. Whoever sleeps in the house must wash his clothes, and whoever eats in the house must wash his clothes” (vv. 46–47). After that second week, again “the priest shall come to examine: if the plague has spread in the house” (v. 44), they remove the stones (and so forth) and give it another week. Then either the plague returns and the house is torn down, or it does not return and the bird procedure is performed. Under no circumstances is an eruptive plague allowed to linger beyond three weeks.

Thus he shall make expiation for the house, and it shall be clean. Note that this expiation is performed by releasing the bird so that it can carry all his transgressions away, out of the city and into the open country, just as a goat is sent off to the wilderness for Azazel. [E] Since the plague that appears in a man's house is not punished as severely as one that appears on his body, he is not required to make a guilt offering or sin offering. In the case of the house, the initial step that the leper must perform for his cleansing—bringing the birds, cedar, crimson, and hyssop—is sufficient to achieve expiation.

Every eruptive affection. This phrase (by process of elimination) refers to burns and inflammations. They are mentioned first because they are more common than the other affections that are subsequently listed by name. Scalls. These are reasonably common.

For swellings, for rashes, or for discolorations. The last listed are those with which the section began, back in 13:2. Note that “discoloration” is listed last wherever it appears, for it is the worst, most severe of all of these affections.

Additional comments performed until his offerings are brought. A house becomes clean by this procedure alone—since it is impossible to immerse a house in water (Gersonides).

Thus he shall make expiation for the house. The straightforward sense of the Hebrew here is simply “thus he shall cleanse the house”—the eruption itself has expiated the sin. There is no real expiation involved in the procedure. The same is true of a woman who gives birth or a person with a discharge. It is just a matter of cleaning (Bekhor Shor).
Haftarah for Parashat Tazria Metzora – II Kings 7:3-20

3 There were four men, lepers, outside the gate. They said to one another, "Why should we sit here waiting for death? 4 If we decide to go into the town, what with the famine in the town, we shall die there; and if we just sit here, still we die. Come, let us desert to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, we shall live; and if they put us to death, we shall but die."

5 They set out at twilight for the Aramean camp; but when they came to the edge of the Aramean camp, there was no one there. 6 For the Lord had caused the Aramean camp to hear a sound of chariots, a sound of horses — the din of a huge army. They said to one another, "The king of Israel must have hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Mizraim to attack us!" 7 And they fled headlong in the twilight, abandoning their tents and horses and asses — the [entire] camp just as it was — as they fled for their lives.

8 When those lepers came to the edge of the camp, they went into one of the tents and ate and drank; then they carried off silver and gold and clothing from there and buried it. They came back and went into another tent, and they carried off what was there and buried it. 9 Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This is a day of good news, and we are keeping silent! If we wait until the light of morning, we shall incur guilt. Come, let us go and inform the king's palace." 10 They went and called out to the gatekeepers of the city and told them, "We have been to the Aramean camp. There is not a soul there, nor any human sound; but the horses are tethered and the asses are tethered and the tents are undisturbed."

11 The gatekeepers called out, and the news was passed on into the king's palace. 12 The king rose in the night and said to his courtiers, "I will tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know that we are starving, so they have gone out of camp and hidden in the fields, thinking: When they come out of the town, we will take them alive and get into the town." 13 But one of the courtiers spoke up, "Let a few of the remaining horses that are still here be taken — they are like those that are left here of the whole multitude of Israel, out of the whole multitude of Israel that have perished — and let us send and find out."
14 They took two teams of horses and the king sent them after the Aramean army, saying, "Go and find out." 15 They followed them as far as the Jordan, and found the entire road full of clothing and gear which the Arameans had thrown away in their haste; and the messengers returned and told the king. 16 The people then went out and plundered the Aramean camp. So a seah of choice flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel — as the Lord had spoken.

17 Now the king had put the aide on whose arm he leaned in charge of the gate; and he was trampled to death in the gate by the people — just as the man of God had spoken, as he had spoken when the king came down to him. 18 For when the man of God said to the king, "This time tomorrow two seahs of barley shall sell at the gate of Samaria for a shekel, and a seah of choice flour for a shekel," 19 the aide answered the man of God and said, "Even if the Lord made windows in the sky, could this come to pass?" And he retorted, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it." 20 That is exactly what happened to him: The people trampled him to death in the gate.