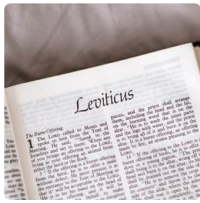


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Leviticus 11 - 12



Leviticus - Steve Gregg

Leviticus 11-12 provides guidelines for worship and cleanliness, including laws related to uncleanness and certain circumstances where a person cannot enter the tabernacle. The chapter also discusses unclean foods and creatures, reminding listeners that every creature God created is good and nothing is refused if received with thanksgiving. The laws around uncleanness are symbolic and spiritual, and every creature is governed by its own distinct choices. The speaker suggests that Christians must live in the world without being influenced by it and understand that humanity is inherently sinful, even in the act of childbirth.

Transcript

Alright, let's turn to the 11th chapter of Leviticus, and this section that begins in chapter 11 goes through chapter 15. I would really love to be able to take all these chapters in one session. It's kind of my dream.

But you may notice some of them are very long. At least two of them are almost 60 verses long each. And so getting through that much material would be a real challenge.

We've got 50 verses in chapter 11. Chapter 12 is short, but chapters 13 and 14 have almost 60 verses each in them. And then there's chapter 15, which is not short either.

It's 33 verses. So I don't know that we can plan to cover them all in one session. But I would love to be able to do so because we could then in a single session focus on this subject, which has to do with cleanness and uncleanness.

And cleanness and uncleanness are conditions that come upon people, sometimes by their own doing, but sometimes through no fault of their own. And therefore, they are not moral states. That is to say, they are not the kind of thing where a person is morally wrong for being unclean, or morally good for being clean.

They are ceremonial states. They are ritual states. They are conditions which determine whether you may or may not enter the tabernacle.

And since Leviticus is a manual of worship, and worship means going into the tabernacle and bringing sacrifices there to God, the state of uncleanness was a very important thing to consider because there were certain circumstances under which a person could not come into the tabernacle. Certain defilements would occur that would keep them unclean the rest of the day. And there were some, most of the things that defile a person kept a person unclean until sundown.

But there were a few things that would make a person unclean for seven days. And there were also some things that would keep a person unclean indefinitely, as long as a condition prevailed, like leprosy or an ongoing issue of blood from a woman who perhaps had not stopped bleeding after childbirth or something like that, where she just has ongoing condition. A person is unclean as long as the condition continues.

So there's like three different possibilities of uncleanness. One is a minor thing, you come into contact with something that's not clean and you remain unclean then for, you know, just till sundown. You wash your clothes and then you're unclean until sundown.

Other times it's a seven day period and other times it's a more prolonged period based on a continuing condition. Now, again, if a person is unclean, that doesn't mean that they are, you know, on the road to hell or anything like that. It doesn't mean they've actually done something morally wrong.

And many times a person would be unclean totally innocently. But if they did contract defilement or uncleanness and knew about it, they were expected to separate themselves for a period of time. If they didn't know about it till later, as we saw earlier in the trespass offering and the sin offerings described earlier in Leviticus, if a person had made themselves unclean but didn't know it, they'd touch something defiling but didn't realize it and therefore neglected to remain separate for the period of time necessary, and then they later learned of this violation, then they had to offer a sin offering or a trespass offering.

And that didn't mean that their uncleanness had made them sinful, but their neglect of the ritual of uncleanness, that is, recognizing it and staying separate. That neglect was the violation that they had to offer a sacrifice for. Now, each of these chapters divide in a fairly natural place.

Chapter 11 is a list of the kinds of foods that were unclean or clean for Israelites to eat. God said this would set them apart from other nations in that they had special dietary restrictions that God placed upon them. And by restricting their diet to those things which God approved, they were proving themselves to be separated unto the Lord.

Because to give God the authority to tell you what you can eat and what you cannot eat is to give God rule over the most mundane areas of your life. Eating is the most fundamental thing that animals do and people do to stay alive. And therefore, to give

God the say about what you will eat and what you won't eat is to acknowledge God's lordship over every area of your life.

And by the Jews refraining from certain foods, this was a declaration of God's lordship over their lives. Chapter 12 talks about a woman's condition after childbirth being unclean for a period of time. Largely because of the blood that a woman continues to bleed after childbirth for a while.

While the inner organs are being healed up from the birth. Then chapters 13 and 14 are about lepers. Chapter 13 is primarily describing how to diagnose leprosy so that a man might be declared unclean or not, depending on whether he really had leprosy.

The priest would be the public health official who would examine suspected cases of leprosy and determine whether they are or are not leprosy. And chapter 14 is mostly the ritual that is to be followed by a leper if he happened to be fortunate enough to cease to be leprous. We'll talk about that when we come to it.

The latter part of chapter 14 talks about even a house having leprosy. It's obvious that the word leprosy is being used to talk about a wide range of conditions, not merely what we call Hansen's disease, but actually other skin conditions and even conditions that can be on the walls of a house or even in the weave of a fabric. They can all be considered leprosy of sorts.

Although in some cases we'll probably talk about mold or some other kind of condition. It should not be thought that leprosy here is supposed to connect precisely with any condition we call leprosy today. The Hebrew word is simply referring to some kind of a surface condition that is not as it should be and is infectious and something that needs to be quarantined.

And then the 15th chapter talks about uncleanness through the secretions, bodily secretions, in the case of a man it would be a seminal discharge. A man would not be unclean during sexual relations when he had a seminal discharge, but at other times, perhaps in his sleep or in some abnormal circumstance, if he had semen that his body was emitting, this would be a condition that would keep him unclean until it was cured, until it didn't happen anymore. And a woman, in the case of internal bleeding.

So there's a sense in which there's a logic to the dividing up of these categories because chapter 11 is talking about things that go into your body, food that you eat. The last of these chapters, 15, is about things that come out of the body, things that your body secretes or that emanate from the body, that defile. Leprosy is simply a condition that inheres in the body.

And so uncleanness can be incurred by taking it in from the environment, as for example when you eat food, it can be something that resides within you innately, like leprosy

does, or it can be something that proceeds from you and possibly can defile others. Now, when Jesus talked about defilement, he made it very clear that he did not consider that eating unclean foods really defiles a person in any way that matters to God. And Paul seemed to indicate that all rules about diet that were given to the Jews are no longer applicable under the New Covenant.

But, of course, all of these ceremonial things, and uncleanness is a ceremonial thing, all of those things are symbolic of spiritual things. But as far as the question of whether we need to continue to observe these rules, there are people, of course, who do try to suggest that we should. It does seem like the New Testament speaks rather directly on the subject.

In Mark 7, when Jesus' disciples were criticized because they ate not unclean foods, but they ate food with unclean hands, Jesus said this in verse 15 of Mark 7, There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him. Now, of course, that's not true under the law. Under the law, eating food that was unclean would defile you.

But Jesus is saying in the ultimate sense, as far as God is concerned, in the sense that God cares about you being defiled or not defiled, it's not going to be determined by things you put in your mouth, things that go into a man from outside. But the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. And he talks about how that is because those things come out of the heart.

And he says in verse 18, he said to his disciples, Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him because it does not enter his heart, but his stomach and is eliminated? And it says thus purifying all foods or thus declaring all foods to be clean. Jesus, therefore, seemed to suggest that there's nothing unclean that we are forbidden to eat. In First Timothy chapter four, Paul said in the opening verses, First Timothy four, one through four or through five, I should say.

Now the spirit expressly says that in the latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. Now, Paul says there's no food that is unclean.

There's no creature that you can't eat. And therefore, these laws about clean and unclean food are no longer applicable. Now, as far as the other unclean states, whether it's leprosy or bodily secretions or the woman's bleeding after childbirth, those are conditions that might have, you know, something.

Actually, all of the all of the unclean conditions we can see some kind of hygienic connection to. The Bible does not make that the issue, the health issue. They didn't know people didn't know in those days about germs.

They didn't know about infection. They didn't know about things that were microscopic. They had no way of knowing about those things.

We do, and we can see, therefore, that a lot of these rules of cleanness uncleanness are really they actually serve a hygienic purpose. And but we would have to say that's only a secondary issue. Their value to the Jew was symbolic, that they represent spiritual things.

What goes into your mouth, although physically putting stuff in your mouth does not morally defile you. Jesus said it's only because it doesn't go into your heart. He said it goes into your stomach, not into your heart.

But there are things that you can take into yourself that do go into the heart. There are influences from the world that you could take in like unclean stuff. You know, there are there's forms of entertainment.

There's a certain company which, if you kept, it's not really fit for Christian consumption. It's taking in spiritual influence from from the world. And therefore, the eating of unclean foods, while it's not directly applicable to us today, it might still be instructive to us that there there are things that do come into us, not so much through our mouth, but through our ears and our eyes and even our imaginations that coming in.

Defile the heart and let me talk to you about the clean and unclean foods here. It's quite expensive. This chapter is almost 50, 50 verses.

And I don't know that we need to read all the verses, but it's first talked about the animals that were edible, that were clean, that were kosher among the the beasts of the field. And then it talks about the creatures that live in the water. And then it talks about what are called birds.

And then it talks about bugs or insects. Now, I want to say that we're going to find some problems just in the way in the terminology that's used here, because many people have found fault with these laws in that they are not scientifically or zoologically accurate. For example, it is said that the coney and the or the rock hyrax and their hair chew the cud.

Technically, they don't. It is said when it's listing the birds that may not be eaten, it includes a bat. A bat is not really a bird.

A bat is a mammal. When it talks about insects, it talks about those who go on all fours and they have four feet. Well, all insects have six legs by definition.

None of them have four. And therefore, there are statements here about these categories of animals that sometimes fall outside of our. Well, they're not technically correct zoologically.

And obviously, some would say, well, see, that proves the Bible is not inspired, because God would know that bugs don't have four legs and they have six legs. Well, not only would God know that, people would know that, too. So whether it was inspired or not, you wouldn't expect anyone, except maybe a blind man or someone who'd never looked at a bug, you wouldn't expect them to think that bugs only had four legs.

I mean, some bugs are so small that an unobservant person might not have taken time to count their legs under a microscope. But there are plenty of bugs big enough that you can easily say they don't have four legs, they have six. And therefore, rather than assuming that there's some kind of a zoological categorical mistake in these things, that things are being described, as we would say, phenomenally.

God is describing things the way that a person at a glance would perceive them, because he does not expect that the average person is going to be giving minute attention. For example, a hare, its jaw moves when it chews in a similar manner to the way that a cow chews its cud. Now, a hare does not chew cud, it does not have four stomachs, it's not a ruminant.

And anyone who'd ever butchered a hare would know that, and people in ancient times had done so. They ate rabbits. And, you know, it doesn't take modern science to tell us that a rabbit doesn't have four stomachs.

Therefore, it's simply the way a rabbit looks that is being described. It looks like it's chewing the cud. A bat, anyone can tell that a bat doesn't have feathers, it's not a bird, it doesn't have a beak.

You wouldn't have to be scientifically sophisticated to know that. But it flies, and obviously what is being described here is the list of all flying creatures that might look tasty. You know, there's certain flying creatures that cannot be eaten.

Now, certainly, the bat is listed among the fowl or the birds. But, you see, we use the word birds to classify a certain set of characteristics that we, you know, since the time of Linnaeus in the early, I think, 19th century. He's the one, he's the taxonomer who put animals in their present categories.

You know, when modern taxonomy puts creatures into the category of reptile or bird or mammal based on a set of characteristics that we have decided are going to define that category. So a bird, by modern definitions, is a creature that has feathers, that lays eggs. A bat would not be that.

But if ancient people preferred to use the word bird for anything that flies, who's to say

they can't use that term? I mean, they didn't have to follow the modern taxonomical designations. Likewise, when Jesus said that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. And the book of Jonah says it was a great fish.

He said, oh, well, whales aren't fish, so this is wrong. You know, they think, you know, the biblical writers thought a whale was a fish. Well, maybe it was a fish by their way of categorizing fish.

We call it a mammal because we are making a separate class of animals that have hair and that nurse their young with, you know, milk and so forth. But if ancient people want to say everything that lives in the sea, we call that a fish, who's to stop them? Why couldn't they do that if they wanted to? Now, the business of the bugs having four legs or walking on all fours, you know, it is truly surprising to find that expression here. But I think walking on all fours is simply a reference to walking, not upright, but walking on one's belly like animals walk on all fours.

But, you know, it wouldn't take a scientist to observe that bugs have more than four legs. They do. So I'm going to have to say that the listing is given to describe things as they appear at a glance rather than the way someone would know things are if they took a close look at the animal.

And certainly it would be a mistake to think that ancient people had never taken close looks at animals before. Certainly they knew those things as also God did. And there's not, I think it's unfair to suggest they're making some kind of a pre-scientific mistake here.

It doesn't take scientific sophistication to recognize that these things are not technically correct. But the ancients were not so interested in technical correctness as we are. We're a scientific age.

Technical things are important to us. Not so much for them. Now, the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, speak to the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.

This is the basic rule in verse three. Among the beasts, whatever divides the hoof, having a clove and hooves, and chewing the cud, that you may eat. Now, chewing the cud is a term that means ruminating.

A certain class of animals ruminate. That means they have multiple stomachs. They chew their food for a while.

They swallow it into one of their stomachs. They then regurgitate it back into their oral cavity and chew it some more, swallow it again. And they sometimes bring up the food several times and re-masticate it.

And by doing so, of course, they get more nourishment out of the food than we would. We just chew it up once and send it on down. It goes on through our digestive tract.

I'm sure that what we eliminate still has a lot of potential nutrients in it, but a ruminant just doesn't let it go until it gets everything that can be gotten out of it. And it's really an amazing thing when you think about it. Take a cow, for example.

A cow would be one of our main sources of protein. It's meat, it's milk. We get a lot of protein from it.

Where does the cow get its protein? I mean, after it's weaned, it doesn't drink milk anymore. Does a cow get its protein from the grass? It has to get it from there, unless it's corn-fed. But, you know, the cattle in ancient times were not corn-fed cattle.

They ate grass. And yet, where do their bodies get the protein? Well, their bodies, of course, made the proteins. We get our protein from eating their meat.

They must draw from that grass a lot more nutrients than you and I would. Because if I ate grass, I wouldn't get a lot of protein out of it. I don't think my body would produce a lot of protein from it.

But, obviously, these animals that re-chew and re-swallow and re-gurgitate, they are ruminants. It's a special class of animals. And, of course, none of them are carnivorous.

They're all herbivorous animals. No carnivorous animals were clean. And a creature, even if it was a herbivore, it would have to have these two things going for it.

It had to have a split hoof, as cows and goats and sheep do. Deer do. Certain wild game, you know, mountain sheep and deer and antelopes, and so forth, have a split hoof.

And, therefore, they would be okay if they also are ruminants. And I think all the animals I just named are ruminants. I think, I think, I'm not sure about deer being, I think deer are ruminants, if I'm not mistaken.

Not that familiar with them. Never dissected one. But, in any case, any creature that had both those traits, a split hoof and it was a ruminant, was clean.

Now, an animal that didn't have both of those characteristics was not. And a few examples are given of animals they can't eat. Verse 4 mentions the camel.

Verse 5, the rock hyrax. And verse 6, the hare. Because it says, although they chew the cud, they don't have a split hoof.

And, of course, as I said, the rock hyrax and the hare don't literally chew the cud. But the motion of their mouth when they chew looks like an animal does. And, therefore, since the average Jew might say, oh, there's an animal that chews the cud, just by looking at

it.

God says, well, it may appear that they do, but they don't have a split hoof, so they should tip you right off. They're not clean animals. You can't eat those.

Then he mentions the swine, the pig, in verse 7. Now, it does have a split hoof, but it doesn't ruminate. The pig just has a regular carnivore's digestive tract. And, though it has a split hoof.

So they have to have both characteristics. If they lack one of those characteristics, they're unclean. And it says about them, you can't eat them.

It says, verse 8, their flesh you shall not eat, their carcass you shall not touch. They are unclean to you. And then it goes into the creatures that live in the water.

And there's like two requirements for them, too. They have to have fins and scales. It says in verse 9, of all that are in the water, whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, that you may eat.

And then anything that's in the water that doesn't have fins or scales are an abomination, it says in verses 10 and 11. It comes to the birds, so-called. And by birds we just mean the category of things that fly, apart from flying insects.

And instead of saying what qualifies a bird to be clean, it just lists the birds that are not clean. So, in the case of animals and fish, it tells us the category of animals that are clean. In the case of birds, it tells us the ones that are not clean.

And that's because most birds are clean. Apparently, more species of bird are kosher to eat than are not. And it lists quite a few birds, and then it adds the bat.

And the thing that these birds have in common with each other is they are carnivorous birds. A lot of birds, like chickens and so forth like that, you know, they eat grain and such. Of course, they'll eat bugs, too, when they can get them.

But the thing is they are not unclean because they do not live off of dead meat. And the ones that are said to be unclean are listed in verses 13 through 19, includes the buzzard, the vulture, the kite, the falcon, the raven, the ostrich. Various kinds of owls and hawks are listed.

And then the bat at the end of verse 19. Again, the bat is not a bird, but it is an unclean flying animal, and so it's listed among those other flying animals that are unclean. And then it goes into the insects in verses 20 through 23, and this is where it says, All flying insects that creep on all forests shall be an abomination to you.

Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all forests, those that have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. These you may eat. That

would be, everyone can picture the back legs of a grasshopper or a cricket or a locust.

They are jointed. The leg extends up above the level of the body and then comes back down. Most insects don't have that feature.

These jointed legs obviously make the creature capable of hopping. And a hopping insect was a clean animal. The others were not.

Locusts, by the way, have been a staple in the diet of Middle Eastern people and some African people for a long time. They actually have about 50% protein by weight, about 20% fat, and they have a fair number of calories in them so that sometimes you would mash them, crush them, cook them, fry them, and eat them. And they're actually a good protein source.

And because locusts live entirely off of plant food, their bodies are simply recycled plants. Whereas most insects, many insects, eat rotting flesh, garbage, and so forth. I mean, insects are very largely suited for tearing down decaying corpses and things like that and garbage.

But the hopping insects typically are all of the type that just eat green stuff, and therefore they were clean and you could eat those. Now, what is the meaning of these particular designations? Some of it may be elusive to us and we may be only able to guess at it, but one thing we should point out is that cleanness and uncleanness of animals is a type and a shadow of cleanness and uncleanness of people. That is, acceptableness and unacceptableness.

Moses, when he was at the burning bush and God told him to go speak before Pharaoh, he said, I can't speak before Pharaoh, I'm a man of unclean or uncircumcised lips. Uncircumcised would mean unclean, of course. The idea is I'm an unacceptable to Pharaoh.

And so cleanness and uncleanness here symbolizes that which is acceptable or not acceptable to God. And there are laws that the New Testament seems to recognize as reflecting this idea. For example, the law in Deuteronomy, which says that you should not plow with an ox and an ass together under one yoke.

An ox is an unclean animal and an ass, I mean, an ox is a clean animal and an ass is an unclean animal. And you're not supposed to use them together under one yoke to pull a plow, according to Deuteronomy. In 2 Corinthians 6, Paul seems to have that law in mind when he says in 2 Corinthians 6, 14, Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? Now he's saying, why would you want to be yoked together with an unbeliever?

You are clean, you are righteous, you are light, you are the temple of God.

They are none of those things. And to say this image of not being yoked together with unbelievers is a picture of a clean animal being yoked together with an unclean animal. And that humans are depicted in these laws of clean and unclean animals seems to be confirmed from Peter's experience on the housetop in Joppa in Acts chapter 10, where God lowered a sheet in a vision full of animals, including unclean animals.

It says of Peter in Acts 10, 11, he saw heaven open and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things and birds of the air. Many of those would be unclean.

And a voice came to him. Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common or unclean.

And a voice spoke to him again the second time. What God has cleansed to you must not be called common, but God is cleansed. You must not call common.

This is done three times and the object was taken up to heaven. Now, later, Peter recognized what that meant when he was sent to the house of Cornelius. He then realized that he was not to call any man unclean.

You see, Cornelius was a Gentile. He recognizes that it is the Gentiles whom he as a Jew thought were unclean that are represented by these unclean animals in the vision and that God had said to Peter, don't object to them. Don't call them common or unclean what I have cleansed.

And it's therefore made clear to him that the unclean animals in his vision were a representation of unacceptable people, Gentiles in that case. And so when we look at the things that make animals clean or unclean, we might think there's something symbolic about those traits that characterize certain people as clean or unclean. And I honestly would have to say it's a measure of speculation we have to bring to the matter because it's never explained to us in the Bible.

The animals that were clean had a cloven hoof and they were ruminated, they chewed the cud. A cloven hoof, that is a split hoof, would make a distinctive kind of walk. A creature with a split hoof would walk somewhat differently, would have a different kind of contact with the earth and its walking than an animal with any other kind of a foot would.

It had its own distinctive walk. And if it chews the cud, we might suggest that this has to do with somebody who ruminates, even the one who ruminates on the word of God, which is what meditation suggests. Meditating on the word of God is a form of mental rumination.

And so somebody whose thoughts are fed by ruminating on the word of God, somebody who walks differently, whose contact with the world and his walking and his living is somewhat different than others, might be suggested by these traits. In any case, all who did not have those traits were unclean animals and could not be eaten. Now, the animals in the sea, whatever had fins and scales.

Now, again, it's entirely speculative what those traits might represent. It's possible that the scaly exterior of a fish is thought to be protective against the environment and that which keeps the environment from penetrating the animals through the skin. Now, I'm not sure that animals without scales would have the water penetrate them through the skin.

I guess they do have to take in their liquid through their skin. I'm not really sure that scales have that function, but it's possible that the scales, like the scales of a reptile, are considered to be protective against the outside environment, like that of Leviathan, where his scales cannot even be pierced by arrows. It's his protective covering.

So a fish with scales might be thought to be protected against the intrusion of the environment. The fish is surrounded by water and it's wet, but the water doesn't get inside it. I remember a Puritan writer once making this point that fish live in salt water, but their flesh is not salty, because the salt of the environment doesn't penetrate through their skin.

And Christians who live in the world need to be able to live in the world and not, as it were, be of it, not have the world's influence penetrate them. They need to be like fish who live in an environment that does not actually penetrate them and influence their own character and their own flavor. As far as the fins are concerned, I assume fins on a fish are used for steering, guiding.

The tail propels a fish forward, but the fins direct it, like a steering mechanism. So they're self-guided, unlike, say, a jellyfish or something like that, which doesn't have any way of guiding itself. Where it goes, it just flows with the tide.

The fish determines its own way by use of its fins. And therefore, it could be a similar thing to even what we were talking about with the animals. The creature that doesn't have the environment invading it, it lives in an environment, but the environment is held out by the scaly exterior of its skin, but it directs its own way.

It doesn't just let the tides determine where it will go. Its walk, its swim is distinctive and is governed by its own choices, rather than by the tides and the currents of the world or whatever. It's hard to know if those things represent that or not, but we'll just have to leave that in the realm of total speculation.

In verse 24, it says, by these you should become unclean. Whoever touches the carcass

of any of them shall be unclean. Whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

And this was the remedy for this kind of uncleanness, is being unclean till evening after washing your clothes. And that was all there is to it. If you touch one of these bodies, obviously, if you ate them also.

And it also lists some other creeping things that are unclean. Verse 29 says, these also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth, the mole, the mouse, the large lizard after its kind, the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard and the chameleon. These are all unclean to you among all that creep.

Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. Now, it says anything on which any of them falls, like if a lizard falls off your wall and lands on something in your house, then that lizard is an unclean thing. If a mouse jumps from a ledge and falls onto your bed or something like that, if one of these things falls on something, then that thing becomes unclean also.

That's verse 32. Anything on which any of them falls when they're dead shall be unclean. Like, I guess, if you swat a fly on the wall and its carcass falls down on something, it makes that thing unclean.

It says whether it's any item of wood or clothing or skin or of sack or whatever item it is in which any work is done, it must be put in water and it shall be unclean until evening. Then it shall be clean. Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls, you shall break and whatever is in it shall be unclean.

In such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. Now, in an earthen vessel, because it's porous, I suppose, it would be considered impossible to clean it adequately after uncleanness has come into it. This would reflect, from God's point of view, hygienic concerns.

From the Israelites' point of view, they wouldn't have any reason for coming up with a rule like this. They wouldn't know the scientific reasons for being more concerned about an earthen vessel than some other kind of thing because the earthen vessel is porous. And everything on which a part of any such carcass falls shall be unclean.

Verse 35 says, whether it's an oven or a cooking stove, it shall be broken down for they are unclean and shall be unclean to you. Now, an oven or cooking stove was different for them than for us. Probably it was just made of mud and it was just an earthen thing made out of earthen blocks or something that they put a grill on.

And if it became unclean, they had to tear it down and build a new one from scratch, apparently. Nevertheless, a spring or a cistern in which there is plenty of water shall be

clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean. So, if a dead carcass of an unclean animal falls into, let's say, a river or a spring or something where there's fresh water coming up behind it, that means the unclean shall be washed downstream.

The entire source of water has not been considered unclean. Although, of course, you don't want to drink the water below the carcass because you may get giardia. But presumably this means when there's so much water, it washes away the uncleanness and then you don't have to just consider the whole thing perpetually unclean.

Verse 37, if part of any such carcass falls on any planting seed, which is to be sown, it remains clean. But if any water is put on the seed and a part of any such carcass falls on it, it becomes unclean to you. That is, if the seed has sprouted, if it's gotten wet and sprouted, then, of course, the protective shell of the seed has been cracked open and uncleanness can penetrate into the plant.

Whereas if the seed is dry and you find a dead mouse in your grain stack, you don't have to throw out all the grain. You just get rid of the grain that was touching the dead mouse, the dead thing. Verse 39 says, if any beast which you may eat dies, he who touches the carcass shall be unclean till evening.

That is, a beast that is clean, but it dies on its own, apparently, then it may be sick or something. And so it should be considered to be unclean. He who eats with its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. Verse 41, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth shall be an abomination. It shall not be eaten.

Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on all fours or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth. These you shall not eat for they are an abomination. You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps, nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them.

For I am the Lord, your God. You shall therefore sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

For I am Yahweh who brings you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy for I am holy. This is the law of the beasts and the birds and every living creature that moves on the water and every creature that creeps on the earth.

To distinguish between the unclean and the clean and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten. So everything that pretty much is alive in all the categories, things that creep, things that swim, things that fly, things that are running through the woods or out in the field. God has given sort of a standard for

deciding whether you can eat it or not.

And apparently, if someone did eat something unclean, they would remain unclean until evening. So it wouldn't be the end of the world. It just would be something where they are not observing the laws of cleanness and they're supposed to.

God says, I want you to be holy. I want you to be separated. I want you to eat according to the diet that I mentioned, because that will be a daily way in which you are set apart in ordinary ways of life from the rest of the people who are not holy.

And chapter 12, then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel saying, if a woman has conceived and born a male child, then she should be unclean for seven days. As in the days of her customary impurity, she should be unclean. And on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin should be circumcised.

She shall then continue in the blood of her purification 33 days. So that'd be like 40 days altogether, seven plus 33. And she shall not touch any hallowed thing nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

Now it's twice as long if she has a female child. If she bears a female child, then she should be unclean two weeks as in her customary impurity. And she shall continue in the blood of her purification 66 days.

So a total of 80 days on the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter. She shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtle dove as a sin offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her and she shall be clean from the flow of her blood.

This is the law for her who is born a male or female. And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtle does or two young pigeons, one as a burnt offering. The other is a sin offering.

So the priest shall make atonement for her and she shall be clean. Now, this almost treats childbirth as if it's a bad thing. You know, she has to make atonement for herself because of having a child.

Having a child makes her unclean. Well, this is probably for symbolic reasons because human beings are sinners. And although the Bible indicates that having children is a good thing, it's a blessed thing for people to have children.

Yet, bringing a child into the world is bringing another sinner into the world. It's adding to the sum total of sins that are going to be committed in the world. Of course, if the child turns out to be righteous, it may also add to the sum total of righteous things done in the world.

But nonetheless, it's guaranteed it'll be a sinner. There's no guarantee that the child will be righteous, but there is a guarantee that it'll sin. And therefore, bringing another sinner into the world is something that is commemorated by, you know, this condition of defilement.

And therefore, offerings have to be offered to counteract that defilement. Now, it's not clear why a male child and a female child are not treated the same way in terms of how long the mother's defiled. Certainly, in the case of the mother's physical condition, it wouldn't be any different.

A woman does bleed for some weeks after having a child. The assumption here seems to be that after 40 days, probably the average woman would no longer be bleeding. If she was still bleeding, she'd have to remain unclean until she stopped.

And some women have conditions where the bleeding just doesn't ever stop, like the woman who had a flow of blood for 12 years that was healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment. She'd been unclean the whole time. But the average woman is going to stop bleeding within a few weeks after having a child.

The healing of the womb and the placenta and so forth has, you know, it's just got to, it takes some time to take place. But see, if 40 days is long enough for the average woman to stop bleeding, in the case of a male, it would be long enough in the case of a female child, too, because female child's are not more hard on the system of a woman bearing the child than the male child is. And so, the uncleanness is more than just a practical issue of waiting for her to stop bleeding.

It's more than that. There's symbolism in it, as in all these rituals. And the male child has to be circumcised on the eighth day, so the 40 days is broken up into 7 days plus 33.

She's unclean for 7 days, and then she can be clean enough to go perform the necessary ritual of circumcision. And then she returns to the blood of her uncleanness, or the condition of uncleanness because of her continual bleeding, for another 33 days. And presumably, her bleeding will be over by then.

But with a girl child, it's like 14 days and then 66. There's not anything in particular done after the 14 days that I know of. I mean, the female child is not circumcised, and there's no, you know, there's no particular difference between the first 14 days and the last 66.

It's just that it's twice as long. Commentators really don't have very many creative suggestions as to why the female child made the mother unclean longer, except they suggest perhaps because the female child, it will herself become a mother and will bring more babies into the world, more defiling human beings into the world. And therefore, that is commemorated by the fact that a girl child is going to be, probably grow up to have more babies.

And therefore, the sinners that she will someday bring into the world are suggested by this extra period of defilement after she's born. Ordinarily, at the end of the period of defilement, whether it is 40 days or 80 days, the woman would bring a lamb for a burnt offering, and then a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering to the temple or tabernacle, and there the priest would offer these things as her atonement. But it does make special provision for the poor.

If the poor can't afford to bring a lamb, they can bring two birds. One, as in the first case, would be a sin offering. The other would be a burnt offering.

And therefore, instead of a lamb and a bird, you got two birds. It's a lot cheaper. A bird is a lot cheaper than a lamb.

And this is the law that is actually referred to in Luke chapter 2, which speaks of what Mary did. Jesus, of course, like any other child, when he was born, subjected his mother to this ritual of uncleanness. Although bearing Jesus was actually bearing someone clean rather than unclean, not bearing a sinner into the world, but it still led to the same condition of bleeding and things like that, which would make a woman unclean for the time being.

And at the end of that time, Mary would bring the proper sacrifice to end her ceremonial uncleanness. You read about it in Luke 2.22 and following. It says, now when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were completed, that means the 40 days, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. Now, Jesus was presented on this occasion for two reasons. One, well, he was presented because he was the firstborn.

All the firstborn had to be presented to the Lord. And then she also had to offer these other sacrifices for her own purification. This was done at the same time.

And it says in verse 24, to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, which shows, of course, that she did not bring a lamb and a bird. She brought two birds, thus taking advantage of the special provision that was made for the poor in Israel in these hardship cases. So, having a baby, having a human, bringing a human into the world was considered to be defiling.

And, of course, so was bleeding. As we'll see in chapter 15, a woman with an issue of blood was one of the conditions that would be unclean. And every woman who bears a child has an issue of blood.

There's also reference in Leviticus 15 to a woman's customary bleeding, which would be her monthly period. But there are special circumstances where the bleeding is not the customary monthly bleeding. And so they are treated here.

The Bible actually does, in these places, talk about what we might call intimate matters. A man having a seminal discharge or a woman with bleeding obviously is talking about a malfunction, I suppose we could say, of the reproductive tract. And perhaps what is being suggested here is that because of sin, all human reproduction is malfunctioned.

That is to say, we bring sinners into the world instead of non-sinners. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, their children would have been innocent and pure like they were. But after they sinned, what they brought into the world was defective.

What they brought into the world was a sinner, like themselves. In a sense, the whole process of human procreation and reproduction was damaged and was made unclean. Not that there is something sinful about reproduction, but rather that it brings defilement into the world.

And as the food, eating unclean food, might speak of influences that come into you from outside, but spiritual influences that come into the heart, not those that go into the stomach. So these issues of the issue of blood, the issue of semen, the bleeding after childbirth, all of these things have to do with reproductive organs and the reproductive system. And the cases that are mentioned are the cases where there is something that is not quite right.

Even a woman's bleeding after childbirth, although it is normal, it is not probably quite right. If there had not been the fall, she would not have had the same complications in childbirth. Probably there would not be this period of bleeding afterwards.

We do not know what it would have been like, because no human beings ever bore a child before the fall. But we do know that as a result of the fall, she would have greater pain and greater difficulty in childbirth. And so we might assume that if not for the fall, there would not be this bleeding, this uncleanness and so forth, associated with bearing children.

And so just the sinfulness of humanity, even from birth in a sense, that every baby is a new sinner in the world, is apparently commemorated by these unclean states associated with reproduction. Of course, we then come to the leper. We are going to take a break here and come back to the leper separately.

It is a very long treatment, and I think it has its own features of spiritual interest. Once we get past just all the rigmarole of diagnosis and the sacrifices and so forth, there are things about leprosy that I think provide a spiritual type that is worth considering. We will take a break, though, before we do that.

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