

Leviticus 11 Commentary

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LEVITICUS THE BOOK OF SANCTIFICATION AND WORSHIP <i>Adapted and modified from C. Swindoll</i>	
Leviticus 1-17	Leviticus 18-27
The Way to God Access	The Walk with God Lifestyle
The Approach: Offerings	Practical Guidelines
The Representative: Priest	Chronological Observances
The Laws: Cleansing Physically & Spiritually	Severe Consequences Verbal promises
Ritual for Worship Worshipping a Holy God	Practical for Walking Living a Holy Life
Location: Mt Sinai for one full year	
Theme: How sinful humanity can approach and worship a holy God	
Key Verses: Lev 17:11, 19:2, 20:7-8	
Christ in Leviticus: In every sacrifice, every ritual, every feast	
Time: about 1446BC	

Leviticus 11:1 The LORD spoke again to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them,

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FOODS

Leviticus 11-15 is the next section of this book and deals with various aspects of uncleanness and how to rectify ourselves if we become unclean. In short, this chapter shows the people how to be holy as God is holy.

In Leviticus 7 we saw that "You are what you wear" describing the Priesthood (cp "Clothes Make the Man!") Here in Leviticus 11 we see that "You are what you eat."

As you read and study this chapter, keep in mind that the dietary laws were given to Israel (not the church), that the laws were temporary (cp Col 2:14, Acts 15) and most importantly that keeping these laws did not guarantee that the person's character would be holy.

Allen Ross says...

Because Lev. 11 is a detailed classification of the animals for Israel's food as either clean or unclean, it is unlikely that too many Christians will feel compelled to study the chapter in any detail. This is unfortunate, because this very remarkable chapter formed the basis of the daily dietary regulations for the Hebrews and served to reflect the holiness of God—and its message should not be missed... The principal design of laws like these enabled the Israelites to exist as a distinct people in the land of Canaan. The underlying motive was doubtless to prevent them from being influenced by the beliefs of the neighboring nations and to preserve them from the degrading defilements and vices of the Canaanites. The distinction in foods was of the greatest value in attaining this objective. Close, personal friendships are easily formed over a shared meal, but it is far more difficult to develop a relationship with people with whom one can neither eat nor drink. And if these people have an abhorrence of the food that one eats, then there is even a greater obstacle to a close relationship. (Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus)

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TODAY IN THE WORD (Moody Bible) - Leviticus 11:1-47 - I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. - Leviticus 11:44

Tea is the ubiquitous Chinese drink. In welcoming guests, chatting with friends, and celebrating special occasions, serving tea is a necessary social ritual.

According to legend, tea was discovered when some leaves accidentally fell into an emperor's cup. Since then, tea-drinking has become embedded as part of China's cultural heritage. While Shanghai may have 25 Starbucks coffee stores, the city has 3,000 cafés specializing in tea! Recently, a museum and amusement park dedicated to tea were opened in Fujian Province, a region that grows China's famous oolong tea.

Just as drinking tea is quintessentially Chinese, so the food regulations in today's reading outline dietary distinctives for God's people, the Israelites. So far in our month's study of Leviticus we have focused on the system of worship, including the sacrifices and the priests. We now move on to issues related to daily life and purity. In an outline which conveys a similar idea, **Charles Ryrie has divided the book into two parts: the "Way to God" (Lev 1-10) and the "Walk with God" (Lev 11-27).**

The theme of holiness remains constant here, as illustrated by today's verse and the fact that the word holy appears more times in Leviticus than in any other book of the Bible. We might think of the rules that we'll be reading about as a means for protecting the holiness of God in the daily lives of the Israelites. The Law intertwined ceremonial purity with spiritual purity, so by keeping these rules a person could cultivate the heart of a true worshiper. Some of the rules may have related to hygiene or avoidance of pagan religious practices, but it's the purity or set-apartness of God's people that is the deeper, underlying principle.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

When the Pharisees challenged Jesus on the issue of ritual uncleanness, He responded by teaching them about the true spirit and purpose of the Law in this regard (see Matt. 15). Since we will encounter these concepts a number of times in Leviticus, it might be helpful if you review Matthew 15:18, 19, 20 in particular

Leviticus 11:2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth.'

- Dt 14:3-8 Eze 4:14 Da 1:8 Mt 15:11 Mk 7:15-19 Ac 10:12,14 Ro 14:2,3,14,15 1Ti 4:4-6 Heb 9:10 13:9

To be sure these verses in Leviticus 11 are for most modern readers difficult to navigate, but that should not be viewed as giving one license to attach symbolic means (cf typology) to every detail. Here is an example of such typically interpretation which is simply not what the text teaches...

Typically, animals which part the hoof and chew the cud represent persons who make a distinction between good and evil and who meditate upon God's word (these are regenerated persons). A ceremonially clean animal represents a morally clean person... Typically, water animals which had both fins and scales represent persons who have the spiritual ability to move rapidly through the defiling elements of this world and not be morally affected by them (these are regenerated persons). A ceremonially clean fish represents a morally clean person. (Gingrich, Roy E., The Book of Leviticus)

This genre of interpretation opens one up to say just about anything they want to say about these passages and inaccurate interpretation always makes one vulnerable to inappropriate application. We do best to avoid too much speculation on symbolic meanings of these animals and other specific details, unless we can support such interpretations from other Scripture.

Creatures which you may eat - Relegating certain animals to the category of **unclean** and **abhorrent** (abominable) may in a number of instances involve considerations of health. However the main consideration is that, whatever the reason or however much or little it was understandable to the Israelites, God clearly declared certain foods were forbidden and regarded as detested. This makes one think of God's command to Adam in the Garden of Eden...

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die. (Ge 2:16-17)

And so whether Israel (or us as modern commentators) could understand why one animal was declared unclean and another clean, that was God's instruction. Israel's response was to be "trust and obey." In other words, God's Word was to be received and accepted on the simple basis of trust (faith) which showed itself in obedience.

Warren Wiersbe amplifies this point writing that...

What God says is unclean must be an abomination in our eyes. "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness" (Isa. 5:20, NIV). The first step toward disobedience is often "reclassifying" sin and making it look acceptable instead of abominable. For example, God said that the tree in the midst of the garden was off-limits to the man and woman, but Eve "saw that the tree was good for food" (Gen. 3:6) and took the fruit. God said that all the spoil of Jericho was under divine restriction and not to be touched by the Jewish soldiers (Josh. 6:16–19), but Achan revised that classification and took some of the spoil (7:16–26). It cost him his life. Samuel told King Saul to slay all the Amalekites and their flocks and herds, but the king kept Agag alive and kept "the best of the sheep and of the oxen" to give to the Lord (1 Sam. 15:15). Saul reclassified what God had said was abominable and thought this would make it acceptable, but his folly caused him to lose his kingdom. Today, we live in a society that rejects moral absolutes and promotes a "fluid" morality that isn't morality at all. Like the people described in the Book of Judges, everybody is doing what is right in their own eyes (Jud. 21:25). But society's reclassifying of sin hasn't changed anything; God still calls sin an abomination and still judges it. (Be Holy)

Spurgeon introduces his sermon on this section with these words...

THE MOSAIC LAW ATTACHED great importance to meats and drinks: the Christian religion attaches none. The apostle Peter was shown by the vision of a sheet let down from heaven, not only that all nations were now to receive the gospel message, but that all kinds of food were now clean, and that all the prohibitions which had formerly been laid upon them for legal purposes were now once for all withdrawn. A Christian may, if he pleases, put himself under restrictions as to these matters. You will remember that the apostle Paul says, "I know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him that esteems anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." (Ro 14:14-note) I wot (Old word = "know" in the present tense = "continually know") our apostle was tender of weak consciences; but he could expostulate with the brethren somewhat thus, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye dogmatize—touch not this, taste not that, handle not the other—and all about things which perish with the using?" The doctrine of the New Testament is expressly laid down, "Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." And as for the practice enjoined upon believers, "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." In the example of Paul we have full liberty; he would put no embargo upon the conscience. But in his example we have also fervent charity; he would put no stumbling-block in his brother's way. "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands." The Levitical law enjoined many precepts as to meats and drinks; but those carnal ordinances were imposed until the time of reformation. Since then, this Mosaic institution was not designed to be perpetual, we feel certain that it must have had some use at the time when it was first established, and during the time in which it was sustained. As that was peculiarly a typical dispensation, we feel persuaded that we shall not exaggerate the uses of the text if we show that there was something instructive to us and something typical of the better covenant in the command that the people were to eat no creatures but those which divided the hoof and those which chewed the cud. (To read Spurgeon's entire message click [The Clean and the Unclean](#))

Leviticus 11:3 'Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat.

- **Divides:** Ps 1:1 Pr 9:6 2Co 6:17
- **Chews:** Dt 6:6,7 16:3-8 Ps 1:2 Pr 2:1,2,10 Ac 17:11 1Ti 4:15)

F B Meyer (Our Daily Homily) Leviticus 11:3 Whatsoever parteth the hoof and cheweth the cud. (r.v.)

The animals, in which these two characteristics met, were reckoned clean, and therefore fit for food. It is certain that the minute particularity of these words has some further reference than to the diet of Israel, important though that was, or to accentuate with every meal the necessity of their being a separate people. We, at least, may gather this lesson, that in our daily experience we must combine meditation and separation.

Meditation. — The cattle do not simply browse on the pastures, but they lie down to chew the cud. It is not enough to peruse our allotted Scripture portion; we must ruminate upon it, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and scripture with scripture. The Holy Ghost will take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and He will bring all things to our remembrance.

Separation. — "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the

thoughts and intents of the heart.” We have not meditated to good purpose unless we have felt its keen edge. Detachment from the world must follow on true attachment to Christ. Love to Naomi will draw Ruth from Moab across the Jordan.

The two must be combined. — The swine divideth the hoof, but cheweth not the cud, and was therefore unclean. A man may profess to love his Bible, but the supreme test is his daily separation from evil. On the other hand, our daily life ought to emanate, not from without, which is Pharisaism, but from within, where we chew the cud of holy meditation.

Leviticus 11:4 'Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these, among those which chew the cud, or among those which divide the hoof: the camel, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you.

- Ge 7:1,2 Dt 14:1-29 Isa 52:11 1Co 8:13 1Th 5:22 1Jn 3:4

Unclean (adjective) ([02931](#)) (**tame**) describes that which is (ceremonially) defiled or impure, ritually impure and unfit for use or consumption. It describes that which is not cleansed in a ceremonial sense and that which must be abstained from according to the Levitical law, lest impurity be contracted. **Tame** (used 78x in OT - see below) and its derivatives occur 279 times, about 64% in Lev and Num, and 15% in Ezekiel.

Vine writes that...

The usage of tame in the Old Testament resembles that of tahir, “pure.” First, uncleanness is a state of being. The leper was compelled to announce his uncleanness wherever he went (Lev 13:45); however, even here there is a religious overtone, in that his uncleanness was ritual. Hence, it is more appropriate to recognize that the second usage is most basic. Tame in the religio-cultic sense is a technical term denoting a state of being ceremonially unfit.

Lawrence Richards explains that **tame** “designates ceremonial (ritual) uncleanness in the early books. Later the prophets use the term primarily of moral impurity. In the early books of the OT, cleanness and uncleanness are ritual issues. That is, calling a person or thing “unclean” was not a moral judgment. “Unclean” meant simply that a person or thing was unable to participate in Israel’s worship of Yahweh. During the time of ceremonial uncleanness, one could not attend any worship ceremony or eat meat that had been offered in sacrifice (Nu 5:1-4; 9:6-12). Under certain circumstances an unclean person must be isolated from others in the community (Lev 13:45-46)... The rules concerning the clean and the unclean seem to draw attention to central issues in human experience—to birth, death, sex, health, and food. In so doing, **these ritual issues graphically demonstrated God’s concern for everything in His people’s earthly life...** What we conclude is that Israel’s God sets apart what he chooses for his people, and he sets them apart from whatever he rejects. Israel is God’s people. **Everything in their daily life is to testify to their exclusive commitment to the Lord...** Ceremonial and ritual uncleanness cut off an individual from participation in worship of the Lord. The lesson is clear: **one must be clean to approach a holy God.** (New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words) (Bolding added for emphasis)

Tame - 78x in the OT - defiled(1), ill(1), unclean(83), unclean thing(1), unclean woman(1), who was unclean(1). **Note the first use of tame is in Leviticus which also has 38 of the 78 uses** - Lev 5:2; 7:19, 21; 10:10; 11:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 35, 38, 47; 13:11, 15, 36, 44, 45, 46, 51, 55; 14:40, 41, 44, 45, 57; 15:2, 25f, 33; 20:25; 22:4; 27:11, 27; Nu 5:2; 9:6f, 10; 18:15; 19:13, 15, 17, 19f, 22; Deut 12:15, 22; 14:7f, 10, 19; 15:22; 26:14; Josh 22:19; Jdg 13:4; 2Chr 23:19; Job 14:4; Eccl 9:2; Isa 6:5; 35:8; 52:1, 11; 64:6; Jer 19:13; Lam 4:15; Ezek 4:13; 22:5, 10, 26; 44:23; Hos 9:3; Amos 7:17; Hag 2:13f.

Here are some representative uses of **tame**...

Isaiah 6:5 Then I said, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of **unclean (tame; Lxx = akathartos)** lips, And I live among a people of **unclean (tame; Lxx = akathartos)** lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Isaiah 52:11 **Depart, depart** (commands are in red), **go out** from there, Touch nothing **unclean (tame; Lxx = akathartos)**; Go out of the midst of her, **purify** yourselves, You who carry the vessels of the LORD.

Isaiah 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is **unclean (tame; Lxx = akathartos)**, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

NAS translates tame as - defiled(1), ill(1), unclean(83), unclean thing(1), unclean woman(1), who was unclean(1).

The Septuagint translates **tame** with **akathartos** - **word study** - in fact of the 154 uses of akathartos in all of Scripture, 31 are found

in **Leviticus 11!**

In the NT **akathartos** clearly has an **ethical meaning** as shown by Paul's use in Ephesians...

For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or **impure** (KJV = "unclean" = **akathartos**) person or covetous man, who is an idolater (Note that **coveting** is equated with **idolatry!** Woe! Same association is seen between greed and idolatry in Col 3:5-note), has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (In other words, they are not regenerate, not born again - in other words their practices or deeds are evidence that they have not been "washed," "sanctified," "justified" as described in 1Cor 6:9-11. Yes, believers will still covet, and can still commit immoral acts, but such things are never their lifestyle. They cannot continually practice these things for the Spirit of God is in them and makes them miserable when they sin, so that they are led to confess and repent of their sins). (Ephesian 5:2-note)

As noted a key word in this chapter is "unclean," but this is not the first time this distinction between **clean** and **unclean** is made in Scripture. For example, Noah was aware of clean and unclean animals in Genesis 7:1-10.

Wiersbe comments...

Whether a creature was "clean" or "unclean" had nothing to do with the quality of the beast; it all depended on what God said about the animal. When He gave these laws, no doubt the Lord had the health of His people in mind (Ex. 15:26; Dt. 7:15), but the main purpose of the dietary code was to remind the Israelites that they belonged to God and were obligated to keep themselves separated from everything that would defile them. "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44; see Dt 14:3–20 for a parallel list of clean and unclean foods). Nevertheless, the spiritual principle of separation from defilement applies to the people of God today. The fact that we know God must make a difference in every aspect of our lives. "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20NKJV). "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (10:31NKJV). God hasn't given His church a list of things that are clean and unclean, but He's revealed enough to us in His Word to help us know what pleases Him and what grieves Him. (**Be Holy**)

Leviticus 11:5 'Likewise, the shaphan (coney, rock badger), for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you;

- **shaphan [coney, rock badger]:** Ps 104:18 Pr 30:26)
- **divide:** Job 36:14 Mt 7:26 Ro 2:18-24 Php 3:18,19 2Ti 3:5 Titus 1:16

Leviticus 11:6 the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you;

- Dt 14:7

Leviticus 11:7 and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you.

- Dt 14:8 Isa 65:4 66:3,17 Mt 7:6 Lk 8:33 15:15 2Pe 2:18-22

Leviticus 11:8 'You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

Leviticus 11:9 'These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat.

- Dt 14:9,10 Ac 20:21 Ga 5:6 Jas 2:18 1Jn 5:2-5

Leviticus 11:10 'But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you,

- **they are:** Lev 7:18 Dt 14:3 Ps 139:21,22 Pr 13:20 29:27 Rev 21:8)

Detestable ([08263](#)) (**sheqets/seqes**) - 8x in Leviticus 11 (Lev 11:10, 11, 13, 20, 23, 41, 42, 43)

Eugene Merrill notes that **sheqets** in Leviticus "always in reference to unclean or forbidden foods. In Lev. 11:10-12 the focus is on forbidden seafood, in Lev. 11:13 on unclean birds, in Lev. 11:20, 23 on winged insects, and in Lev. 11:41-42 on animals that were especially close to the ground. The noun signifies abhorrence because of the contamination of the one who eats such foods. The normal adjective for unclean in connection with food, and one that is often juxtaposed to sheqets is tame' (e.g., Lev. 7:21; 11:43-44). However sheqets signifies a more repugnant nuance than does the latter (M. Grisanti, NIDOTTE, 4:243). In Lev. 11, to ignore the food laws makes a man sheqets, detestable, unclean, as specifically stated in Lev 11:11. Later in the Pentateuch the verb form (shaqats - 08262) is used to describe the abhorrence of ("utterly detest") an idol (Dt. 7:26). This denominative verb, which occurs only in the intensive (Piel) stem, is used only 7x in the OT (Lev 11:11, 13, 43; 20:25; Dt 7:26; Ps 22:24). In Leviticus it is used in Lev 11:11, 13, 43; 20:25. They all denote loathing or being loathed due to unclean food... Tragically, there is evidence of the Israelites' ignoring the stipulations to remain separate from such food that would make them unclean (Isa. 66:17; Ezek. 8:10)." ([Bible Knowledge Word Study](#))

Sheqets - 11v - Lev 7:21; 11:10-13, 20, 23, 41-42; Isa 66:17; Ezek 8:10 and is translated abhorrent(3), detestable(4), detestable thing(1), detestable things(3).

Leviticus 11:11 and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest.

Abhorrent ([08263](#)) (**sheqets/seqes**) The English word **abhorrent** means inspiring disgust and loathing; repugnant. The etymology is striking = from Latin abhorrent- 'shuddering away from in horror.' A good description of what Israel was to do related to that which was unclean. It reminds me of Peter's exhortation (combined with an admonition or warning) - "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain (**apechomai** in the **present tense** = continually - Just try to obey this in your "own" power!!! Renounce your power and yield to the Spirit's enabling power! Do this before you encounter the temptation!!! And in the middle voice signifies we initiate the "pushing away" an attitude energized by the Spirit - Php 2:13NLT-note) from fleshly lusts, which wage war (**present tense** = continually = you are in a war the moment you open your eyes in the AM and really even when you are sleeping! No furloughs! Our furlough is called "Glory!") against the soul (And the enemy of your soul does not obey the Geneva Code but seeks to kill prisoners)." (1Peter 2:11-note)

The Septuagint translates **sheqets/seqes** with **bdelugma** (from **bdelusso** [[see word study](#)] = emit foul odor, turn away thru loathing or disgust, abhor <> from bdeo = to stink) and describes that which is extremely hated or abhorred. Not surprisingly this word is used by **Jesus** of the Antichrist in Mt 24:15, the ultimate object of abject repugnance! And in the Book of Revelation **bdelugma** is used to describe those who will not be allowed into Heaven (Read Rev 21:25-27 "no one who practices abomination... shall ever come into it.")

Detest ([08262](#)) (**shaqats**) means to dislike intensely. **Synonyms** would include abhor, hate, loathe, despise, shrink from, be unable to bear, find intolerable, dislike, disdain, have an aversion to;

Shaqats 3x in Leviticus 11 (Lev 11:11, 12, 13). Elsewhere only in Dt 7:26 and Ps 22:24.

Leviticus 11:12 'Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you.

Leviticus 11:13 'These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds; they are abhorrent, not to be eaten: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard,

- Dt 14:12-20 Job 28:7 38:41 39:27-30 Jer 4:13,22 48:40 La 4:19 Ho 8:1 Hab 1:8 Mt 24:28 Ro 1:28-32 3:13-17 Titus 3:3

Leviticus 11:14 and the kite and the falcon in its kind,(

Leviticus 11:15 every raven in its kind,

- Ge 8:7 1Ki 17:4,6 Pr 30:17 Luke 12:24

Leviticus 11:16 and the ostrich and the owl and the sea gull and the hawk in its kind,

- Deut 14:15-18 Ps 102:6 Isa 13:21,22 34:11-15 John 3:19-21 Eph 2:2,3 4:18,19 5:7-11 Php 3:18,19 1Th 5:5-7 Rev 18:2

Leviticus 11:17 and the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl,

Leviticus 11:18 and the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture,

Leviticus 11:19 and the stork, the heron in its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat.(

- Isa 2:20 Isa 66:17

Leviticus 11:20 'All the winged insects that walk on all fours are detestable to you.

- Lev 11:23,27 Dt 14:19 2Ki 17:28-41 Ps 17:14 Mt 6:24 Php 3:18,19 2Ti 4:10 1Jn 2:15-17 Jude 1:10,19

Leviticus 11:21 'Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on all fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth.

Leviticus 11:22 'These of them you may eat: the locust in its kinds, and the devastating locust in its kinds, and the cricket in its kinds, and the grasshopper in its kinds.

- Ex 10:4,5 Isa 35:3 Mt 3:4 Mk 1:6 Ro 14:1 Ro 15:1 Heb 5:11 Heb 12:12,13

Leviticus 11:23 'But all other winged insects which are four-footed are detestable to you.

Leviticus 11:24 'By these, moreover, you will be made unclean : whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening,

- Lev 11:8,27,28,31,38-40 Lev 17:15,16 Isa 22:14 1Co 15:33 2Co 6:17 Eph 2:1-3 5:11 Col 2:16,17,20 Heb 9:26 1Jn 1:7

Touches - The instructions changed from eating to touching.

Carcasses - This speaks of the body of a dead animal. In Lev 11:24-43 we see God's laws for avoiding defilement that results from touching a dead bodies (of both clean and unclean and unclean animals). Clearly this law has some health related benefits, for touching dead bodies could potentially expose one to infectious agents. However, the main purpose was to cause the Jews to recognize something dead as unclean and to make the choice to turn away from it or to "separate" from it, which is the root sense of

the word **holy**.

Made unclean (verb) ([02930](#))(**tame**) means to become unclean or make unclean. To become ceremonially unclean. To defile oneself (Hos 5:3, 6:10, Ezek 20:30). A wife defiles herself by adultery (Nu 5:13, Jer 2:23 = speaks of Israel as God's wife who had defiled herself by her spiritual adultery with idols!, Ezek 23:13 = refers to Judah and in context to the 10 Northern tribes - both had defiled themselves). To defile (violate) a girl (Ge 34:5), a woman (Ezek 18:6)

Qal: To become (cultically or ceremonially) unclean: a) men Lev.11:24-39 Lev.5:3 Lev 13:14, 14:46, 15:5, 17:15, 22:6, Nu 19:7, Hag 2:13 b) things Lev.11:32-38' so that uncleanness arises Eze.22:3 <> **Nif**:: defile, pollute oneself Hos.5:3 by Lev.11:43 <> **Piel**: Lev.13:44. dishonor: ravish (a girl) Ge 34:5; profane Eze.43:7 2. defile, profane: tabernacle Lev.15:31, land Lev.18:28 3. (cultically) defile: oneself Lev.11:44, a nazîr Nu 6:9, altar 2Ki.23:16, house of Yahweh Jer.7:30 4. declare unclean Lev.13:8-59 <> **Pual**: be defiled Eze.4:14 <> **Hitp**:: incur uncleanness, become unclean Lev.11:24 <> **Hotpaal**: be touched by uncleanness Deut 24:4

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **tame** in Lev 11:24, 43, 44 with the verb **miaino**, means literally to dye with another color. As used in the NT figuratively **miaino** describes a mind and conscience that is morally contaminated, corrupted, tainted, tinged and polluted (Titus 1:15-note = "**defiled** and unbelieving"). In a ceremonial or cultic sense **miaino** means to defile, profane, desecrate, make unclean or to become unacceptable. To **defile** something is to sully (damage the purity or integrity of), mar (impair the appearance of; disfigure) or spoil it. Jude uses **miaino** in a physical and a moral sense of the one's flesh defiled by licentiousness and so to corrupt morally. (Jude 1:8-note)

Tame (noun) - 141x in NAS - **Note that 71 of the 141 uses of tame are in Leviticus!**- Gen 34:5, 13, 27; Lev 5:3; 11:24ff, 31ff, 39f, 43f; 12:2, 5; 13:3, 8, 11, 14f, 20, 22, 25, 27, 30, 44, 46, 59; 14:36, 46; 15:4ff, 16ff, 27, 31f; 17:15; 18:20, 23ff, 27f, 30; 19:31; 20:3, 25; 21:1, 3f, 11; 22:5f, 8; Nu 5:3, 13f, 20, 27ff; 6:7, 9, 12; 19:7f, 10f, 13f, 16, 20, 21, 22; 35:34; Deut 21:23; 24:4; 2 Kgs 23:8, 10, 13, 16; 2 Chr 36:14 = defiled the Temple; Ps 79:1; 106:39; Isa 30:22; Jer 2:7, 23; 7:30; 32:34; Ezek 4:14; 5:11; 9:7; 14:11; 18:6, 11, 15; 20:7, 18, 26, 30f, 43; 22:3f, 11; 23:7, 13, 17, 30, 38; 33:26; 36:17f; 37:23; 43:7f; 44:25; Hos 5:3; 6:10; 9:4; Hag 2:13

2Chr 36:14 Furthermore, all the officials of the priests (addressing the southern nation - Judah) and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations (toebah) of the nations; and they **defiled** (tame) the house of the LORD (watch the Shekinah glory depart the defiled House = Ezek 8:4-6, 9-11, Ezek 8:14-15,16-17, Ezek 10:4, 18-19, Ezek 11:23) which He had sanctified in Jerusalem.

Comment: This description is in the final "verdict" and decree of Judah's punishment - read 2Chr 36:15-20. God is serious about spiritual/moral uncleanness beloved. We have lost that fear of the LORD in our modern society. We are exposed to so many defiling words and pictures, that our hearts have become somewhat hardened. We need to confess and repent and ask God to give us tender, trembling hearts, hearts that are repulsed by any uncleanness! This call to prayer and confession and repentance is not a superficial or external "holier than thou" request, but a sincere request based on God's seriousness regarding moral uncleanness and our recognition of a continual propensity to wander from His holy standards and to drift along with the flow of the culture as it progressively declines! This is a subtle but real danger for every one of us. No exceptions. None of us are immune to the temptations of the passing pleasures of sin and the lusts of this world which is passing away!

Tame (verb) is translated in NAS - became unclean(1), become defiled(3), become unclean(6), becomes unclean(13), becoming unclean(1), been defiled(2), defile(25), defiled(38), defilement(1), defiles(5), defiling(2), made unclean(3), make himself unclean(1), make yourselves unclean(1), make... unclean(1), pronounce him unclean(9), pronounced them unclean(1), remain unclean(2), surely pronounce(1), surely pronounce him unclean(1), unclean(44).

The first use in Scripture is instructive as it is in the context of sexual impropriety - the defilement of Dinah, Jacob's daughter...

Gen 34:5 Now Jacob heard that he had **defiled** Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in. Gen 34:13 But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor, with deceit, and spoke to them, because he had **defiled** Dinah their sister. Gen 34:27 Jacob's sons came upon the slain and looted the city, because they had **defiled** their sister.

The clean and unclean animals and the dead bodies would have functioned as Israel's "pop tests" to teach them to respond as God had instructed, to give them opportunities to chose to remain separate. Ultimately a deeper lesson was to teach Israel to separate from (profane or common) things that the pagan (idolatrous) Gentiles around them considered to be acceptable for consumption.

We see a parallel instruction by Paul to the Corinthians saints (immersed in a licentious, pagan, idol worshipping culture)...

Do not be bound (present imperative with negative - stop doing this or do not let it begin) together with

unbelievers; for (term of explanation) what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?15 Or what harmony (symphonia - concord, gives us English "symphony") has Christ with Belial (Name for Satan), or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols (Temples for idol worship were common in the ancient world)? For (term of explanation) we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, **COME OUT FROM** (aorist imperative - "Just do it!" "Don't delay!" "Don't procrastinate!") But do it as you renounce self-reliance and rely on the Holy Spirit!) THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE** (aorist imperative - all these commands are contingent upon reliance on the enablement of the Spirit)," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** (present imperative with a negative) WHAT IS UNCLEAN (akathartos - word study = adjective used in Septuagint of Leviticus 11 to translate "unclean"); And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. (2 Co 6:14-18)

Based on the incredible promises Paul has just recorded he exhorts them...

THEREFORE, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2Cor 7:1-note)

Leviticus 11:25 and whoever picks up any of their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

- Lev 11:28,40 14:8 15:5,7-11,13 16:28 Ex 19:10,14 Nu 19:8,10,19,21,22 Nu 31:24 Ps 51:2,7 Zec 13:1 John 13:8 Ac 22:16 Heb 9:10 10:22 1Pe 3:21 1Jn 1:7 Rev 7:14

Leviticus 11:26 'Concerning all the animals which divide the hoof but do not make a split hoof, or which do not chew cud, they are unclean to you: whoever touches them becomes unclean

Leviticus 11:27 'Also whatever walks on its paws, among all the creatures that walk on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening,

- Lev 11:20,23

Leviticus 11:28 and the one who picks up their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; they are unclean to you.

- Lev 11:24,25
- **wash:** Lev 11:14

Leviticus 11:29 'Now these are to you the unclean among the swarming things which swarm on the earth: the mole, and the mouse, and the great lizard in its kinds,

- **swarm:** Lev 11:20,21,41,42 Ps 10:3 17:13,14 Hag 2:6 Luke 12:15 16:14 John 6:26 John 6:66 Eph 4:14 Php 3:19 Col 3:5 2Ti 3:2-5 Heb 13:5

Swarming things - These are not insects that buzz around your head. They are moles, mice, lizards.

The mole is a weasel (from its gliding motion)

Leviticus 11:30 and the gecko, and the crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand reptile, and the chameleon.

Leviticus 11:31 'These are to you the unclean among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead becomes unclean until evening.

- Lev 11:8,24,25

Leviticus 11:32 'Also anything on which one of them may fall when they are dead becomes unclean , including any wooden article, or clothing, or a skin, or a sack--any article of which use is made--it shall be put in the water and be unclean until evening, then it becomes clean.

- **water:** Lev 6:28 15:12 Titus 2:14, 3:5

Leviticus 11:33 'As for any earthenware vessel into which one of them may fall, whatever is in it becomes unclean and you shall break the vessel.

- **break:** Lev 11:35 14:45 Jer 48:38 2Co 5:1-8 Php 3:21

Leviticus 11:34 'Any of the food which may be eaten, on which water comes, shall become unclean , and any liquid which may be drunk in every vessel shall become unclean .

- Pr 15:8 21:4,27 28:8 Titus 1:15

Leviticus 11:35 'Everything, moreover, on which part of their carcass may fall becomes unclean ; an oven or a stove shall be smashed; they are unclean and shall continue as unclean to you.

- Lev 11:33 Lev 6:28 Lev 15:12 2Co 5:1-7

Leviticus 11:36 'Nevertheless a spring or a cistern collecting water shall be clean, though the one who touches their carcass shall be unclean

- **spring:** Zec 13:1 John 4:14

Leviticus 11:37 'If a part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing which is to be sown, it is clean.

- **seed:** 1Co 15:37 1Pe 1:23 1Jn 3:9 5:18

Leviticus 11:38 'Though if water is put on the seed and a part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.

Leviticus 11: 39 'Also if one of the animals dies which you have for food, the one who touches its carcass becomes unclean until evening.

- Lev 11:24,28,31,40 Lev 15:5,7 Nu 19:11,16

Leviticus 11:40 'He too, who eats some of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening, and the one who picks up its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

- **eats:** Lev 11:25 17:15,16 22:8 Ex 22:31 Dt 14:21 Isa 1:16 Eze 4:14 36:25 Eze 44:31 Zec 13:1 1Co 6:11 10:21 1Jn 1:7

- **wash:** Lev 11:28 Lev 14:8,9 Lev 15:5-10,27 Lev 16:26,28 Nu 19:7,8,19

Leviticus 11: 41 'Now every swarming thing that swarms on the earth is detestable, not to be eaten.

- Lev 11:20,23,29

Swarming - This repeats the rule from Lev 11:29.

Wenham comments that

This single example stands for the whole set of food laws. To ignore them makes a man detestable, polluted, and unclean (Lev 11:43). This is incompatible with Israel's calling. Israel was chosen to be God's holy people (Ex 19:6). ([Book of Leviticus - New International Commentary on the Old Testament - Gordon J. Wenham-highly recommended](#))

Leviticus 11:42 'Whatever crawls on its belly, and whatever walks on all fours, whatever has many feet, in respect to every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, you shall not eat them, for they are detestable.

- **belly:** Ge 3:14,15 Isa 65:25 Mic 7:17 Mt 3:7 23:23 John 8:44 2Co 11:3,13 Titus 1:12

Leviticus 11:43 'Do not render yourselves detestable through any of the swarming things that swarm; and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean.

- **shall:** Lev 11:41,42 Lev 20:25

Unclean - These complicated instructions at first seem redundant and boring, but to ancient Israel they were a constant reminder that they had been separated by God from all the peoples of the world (cf Ex 19:6). Why did He do this? There was nothing in Israel that prompted this separation. In short, Israel's separation and these detailed rules are evidence of amazing grace, God's unmerited favor, motivated by love and lovingkindness and loyalty!

We see this theme of God's bestowal of unmerited favor on Israel in other places in the Pentateuch...

For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deut. 7:6-8)

Wenham comments that these detailed laws...

were perpetual reminders of God's grace to Israel. As the laws distinguished clean from unclean animals, so the people were reminded that God has distinguished them from all the other nations on earth to be his own possession.

Leviticus 11:44 'For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and behold , for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.

- **I am the:** Ex 20:2
- **shall:** Lev 10:3 Lev 19:2 Lev 20:7,26 Ex 19:6 Dt 14:2 1Sa 6:20 Ps 99:5,9 Isa 6:3-5 Amos 3:3 Mt 5:48 1Th 4:7 1Pe 1:15,16 2:9 Rev 22:11

For - Notice this **term of explanation**. What is Jehovah explaining? All the preceding instructions are given because Jehovah is Israel's God (and Israel is His possession). Since He is holy, and He is their God, they are to likewise be holy.

Consecrate ([06942](#)) (**qadash**; Lxx = **hagiazō**) means to be set apart for a specific use by some agency, to consecrate, to separate, set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. Everything consecrated to God was separated from all profane use.

Qadash - 152x - Ge 2:3; Ex 13:2; 19:10, 14, 22f; 20:8, 11; 28:3, 38, 41; 29:1, 21, 27, 33, 36f, 43f; 30:29f; 31:13; 40:9ff, 13; Lev 6:18, 27; 8:10ff, 15, 30; 10:3; 11:44; 16:19; 20:7f; 21:8, 15, 23; 22:2f, 9, 16, 32; 25:10; 27:14ff, 22, 26; Nu 3:13; 6:11; 7:1; 8:17; 11:18; 16:37f; 20:12f; 27:14; Deut 5:12; 15:19; 22:9; 32:51; Josh 3:5; 7:13; 20:7; Jdg 17:3; 1 Sam 7:1; 16:5; 2Sa 8:11; 11:4; 1 Kgs 8:64; 9:3, 7; 2 Kgs 10:20; 12:18; 1 Chr 15:12, 14; 18:11; 23:13; 26:26ff; 2Chr 2:4; 5:11; 7:7, 16, 20; 26:18; 29:5, 15, 17, 19, 34; 30:3, 8, 15, 17, 24; 31:6, 18; 35:6; 36:14; Ezra 3:5; Neh 3:1; 12:47; 13:22; Job 1:5; Isa 5:16; 8:13; 13:3; 29:23; 30:29; 65:5; 66:17; Jer 1:5; 6:4; 12:3; 17:22, 24, 27; 22:7; 51:27f; Ezek 7:24; 20:12, 20, 41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 37:28; 38:16, 23; 39:27; 44:19, 24; 46:20; 48:11; Joel 1:14; 2:15f; 3:9; Mic 3:5; Zeph 1:7; Hag 2:12. **NAS** = become consecrated(2), become defiled(1), become holy(1), consecrate(43), consecrated(37), consecrates(7), consecration(2), declare holy(1), dedicate(2), dedicated(8), dedicating(1), holier(1), holy(5), keep(1), keep holy(5), made holy(1), manifest(2), prepare(2), prove holy(2), proved holy(1), purified(1), regard as holy(1), sanctified(9), sanctifies(10), sanctify(12), set apart(5), show holy(1), transmit(2), treat as holy(3), treated as holy(1), vindicate(1), wholly dedicate(1).

Your God - Since He is their God, they are obligated to be different and distinctive. They are His possession (cp 1Cor 6:19, 20; Titus 2:14)

Be holy - The highest charge and responsibility on the live of Israel (and now in the New Covenant on every believer) is to imitate God, an instruction which Jesus slightly rephrased in His famous Sermon on the Mount...

Therefore (conclusion based on Mt 5:47) **you are to be perfect (teleios), as your heavenly Father is perfect.** (Mt 5:48-note)

Holy (06918) (**qadosh**) means sacred, pure, holy, consecrated, pious, sanctuary, Holy One. Qadosh pertains to being unique and pure in the sense of superior moral qualities and possessing certain essential divine qualities in contrast with what is human

Qadosh - 105x - Ex 19:6; 29:31; Lev 6:16, 26f; 7:6; 10:13; 11:44f; 16:24; 19:2; 20:26; 21:6ff; 24:9; Num 5:17; 6:5, 8; 15:40; 16:3, 5, 7; Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21; 23:14; 26:19; 28:9; 33:3; Josh 24:19; 1 Sam 2:2; 6:20; 2Kgs 4:9; 19:22; 2Chr 35:3; Neh 8:9ff; Job 5:1; 6:10; 15:15; Ps 16:3; 22:3; 34:9; 46:4; 65:4; 71:22; 78:41; 89:5, 7, 18; 99:3, 5, 9; 106:16; 111:9; Pr 9:10; 30:3; Eccl 8:10; Isa 1:4; 4:3; 5:16, 19, 24; 6:3; 10:17, 20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19, 23; 30:11f, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14f; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 57:15; 58:13; 60:9, 14; Jer 50:29; 51:5; Ezek 39:7; 42:13; Dan 8:13, 24; Hos 11:9, 12; Hab 1:12; 3:3; Zech 14:5 **NAS translates qadosh** as consecrated(1), Holy(8), holy(50), Holy One(44), holy one(3), holy ones(6), one is holy(1), saints(2).

Leviticus 11:45 'For I am the LORD Who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy , for I am holy .''

- **brought**: Ex 6:7 Ps 105:43-45
- **be holy**: Lev 11:44 Ex 6:7 Ex 20:2 Ps 105:43-45 Hos 11:1 1Th 4:7

Brought you up from the land of Egypt - He is reminding them of His redemption of Israel from their bondage in slavery.

The NT parallel is seen in several passages (see Mt 5:48 above)...

For this is the will of God, your **sanctification (holiness -hagiasmos)**; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality... For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in **sanctification**. (1Thess 4:3-note, 1Thes 4:7-note)

As obedient children, **do not be conformed (suschematizo** in the present imperative with a negative = stop doing this or don't let it begin) to the former lusts (strong desires that emanate from our fallen flesh, seeking self gratification in one way or another) which were yours in your ignorance (before they were born again), 15 but (note the strong contrast - calling for a dramatic, radical life in the opposite direction from how we formerly lived when we were dead in our trespasses and sins!) like (term of comparison the Holy One who called you, **be** (this verb is not a suggestion but a command in the aorist imperative ~ "Just do it!" Don't delay [that's disobedience!] Don't procrastinate! But don't try this in the strength of your old nature! You will surely fail!

Jettison self reliance and truth totally in the Spirit Who indwells you to give you both the desire and the power to be holy - cf Php 2:12-note = "work out what God works in" in the next verse > Php 2:13NLT-note) **holy** (**hagios**) yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because (and this truth should serve to motivate us to obey in love for) it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY (think about the privilege this conveys and then the responsibility we have under grace not law), FOR I AM HOLY." (1Pe 1:14-note, 1Pe 1:15-16-note)

Leviticus 11:46 This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth,

- Lev 7:37 Lev 14:54 Lev 15:32 Eze 43:12

This is the law -- This phrase occurs 21x in 20 verses in the Bible, most often in Leviticus - (Lev 6:9, 14, 25; 7:1, 11, 37; 11:46; 12:7; 13:59; 14:32, 54, 57; 15:32; Num 5:29; 6:13, 21; 19:14; Deut 4:44; Ezek 43:12; Matt 7:12) It is a phrase which should always grab our attention as we recall that law is "holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Ro 7:12-note) and "spiritual" (Ro 7:14-note) It should serve as reminder that "We can't (keep it), but He can (His Spirit living in us)!" And so we can live in the law of liberty, in the power of the Spirit, for the glory of the Lamb Who kept the Law perfectly!

Leviticus 11:47 to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.

- Lev 10:10 Eze 44:23 Mal 3:18 Ro 14:2,3,13-23

MAKING A DISTINCTION

Make a distinction - This is one reason why the Law is "holy and righteous and good" as well as "spiritual!" It draws a line in the sand, on one side distinguishing the "things" our flesh desires, but on the other side demarcating that which is holy and which the Spirit in us desires. Our daily "job" (even that enabled by the Spirit) is to die to self, to die to our will and wants and to submit to the Spirit of Jesus, allowing Him to lead us into God honoring "green pastures" for His Name's sake.

The English dictionary defines **distinction** as - (1) a difference or contrast between similar things or people. "there is a sharp distinction between domestic politics and international politics" (**Which begs the question beloved saint -- does my life shine as a holy [supernaturally, Spirit energized] light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, which essentially has no "lines in the sand" but sees everything as "relative?"**) (2) excellence that sets someone or something apart from others. "a novelist of distinction" (**Which also begs a similar question as above -- Am I living a supernatural life, a life of distinction, an aroma of life to those who are being saved, but an aroma of death to those who are perishing? Would my associates say now he or she is a "Christian of distinction?" Are you as convicted as I am?**)

The Christian Value of Leviticus 11 - The NT teaches that the OT food laws are no longer binding on the Christian. **These laws symbolized God's choice of Israel. They served as constant reminders of God's electing grace.** As He had limited His choice among the nations to Israel, so they for their part had to restrict their diet to certain animals. At every turn these laws reminded them of God's grace toward Israel. In the new era when salvation was open to all men, and Israel was no longer the only object of divine grace, the laws lost their particular significance. They could only serve to divide mankind into Jew and Gentile, whereas in the age which has now begun God's further purpose is revealed "in Christ ... to unite all things in him" (Eph 1:10). The distinction between clean and unclean foods is as obsolete as the distinction between Jew and Gentile.

This is not to say that these laws have nothing to teach the Christian. As we have seen, they were constant reminders to Israel that they were chosen to be a holy people, that they were called to imitate God, and that the laws were a reminder to give thanks for this calling. The NT believer is in a very similar position. The Church is now "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1Pet. 2:9). They are bidden to set their "minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth" (Col. 3:2), to "give thanks in all circumstances" (1Th 5:18). Though the Christian is so much more privileged than ancient Israel, it is easy to take for granted the grace that has been given him and fail to acknowledge it. The ancient food laws were designed to curb such forgetfulness.

These laws were not only reminders of Israel's redemption, they were "like signs which at every turn inspired meditation on the oneness, purity and completeness of God. By rules of avoidance, holiness was given a physical expression in every encounter with the animal kingdom and at every meal. Observance of the dietary rules would then have been a meaningful part of the great

liturgical act of recognition and worship which culminated in the sacrifice of the temple." [39] Douglas, Purity and Danger, p. 57. Douglas has showed that there is a connection in biblical thinking between wholeness, holiness, and integrity. God demands integrity of character and wholeness of physical form in his worshippers. These rules were symbols of a moral order. Only the normal members of each sphere of creation, e.g., fishes with fins, counted as clean. This definition, which identified "perfect" members of the animal kingdom with purity, was a reminder that God looked for moral perfection in his people. Carrion-eating birds and carnivorous animals were unclean because they also typified a man's sinful, destructive, and murderous instincts. In a real sense, then, Jesus was drawing out the meaning of the symbolism of the Levitical laws in insisting that it was what comes out of man that defiles him, "evil thoughts, murder, adultery, etc." These rules in Leviticus served not only as reminders of redemption but of moral values. With the law of God written on his heart by the Spirit, the Christian ought not to need such tangible reminders of God's will and character. He also has ready access to the Bible, which holds up a mirror to his conduct. Let us follow James' advice to look into that perfect law, the law of liberty, and act (Jas. 1:25). ([Book of Leviticus - New International Commentary on the Old Testament - Gordon J. Wenham-highly recommended](#))

G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible Lev. 11:47 To make a difference between the unclean and the clean..

These words refer to the food of the people of God. Here we come to the laws which touch the ordinary and everyday life of the people. Those Already enunciated have had to do with worship, the whole subject of the people's approach to God. The people for whom such rights and privileges are created are never away, either from God's thought and will for them, or from their obligations to Him. He is interested in every detail of their lives. He issues His commands as to what they may eat, and what they may not eat. They are not permitted to choose for themselves in the matter of that food which is to sustain their physical strength. There is no doubt at all that these regulations were all fundamentally sanitary. They were by no means capricious. We may not be able to discover the scientific reasons for the classification. Moreover, they may have been regulated largely by the climate, and the particular period in which men were then living. Possibly, therefore, some of them may not apply to those living in other lands and in other times. All that being granted, the permanent value of these enactments consists in their revelation of the fact of the Divine interest in, and care for, all these details. If to-day we are not to be governed by the actual rules of this Hebrew law, the principle involved in it finds expression for us in the words of Paul: "Whether there-fore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (i Cor. to. 31). To eat or drink anything which harms the body, which is the instrument of the spirit, is not to glorify God. Therefore into this whole question of food, the fact of our relationship with God enters, and each is called upon to act for himself or herself accordingly.

THE DIVINE DERMATOLOGIST

Leviticus 11-15

Rob Morgan

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him, and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper, then the priest shall command to take for him who is cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field. (Leviticus 14:1-7).

Here in Nashville, the highways all seem to be under construction at once. Briley Parkway, the major artery leading to our church, is under construction. They're building an eight-lane highway right to our church, and it will be wonderful when it is finished. But for right now, you can be cruising down the highway at a good rate of speed, and suddenly you have to put on your brakes and the next thing you know, you're crawling along at ten miles an hour.

The book of Leviticus is sort of like a construction zone. When we start down the Route 66 of Scripture, we cruise along at a pleasant clip through Genesis and Exodus, but the pavement breaks up, as it were, in Leviticus, and we slow down to a crawl. But in preparing this series of messages from Leviticus, I've had two presuppositions.

First, Leviticus isn't meant to be read, but studied. We don't get a lot out of this book if all we do is read through it. Oh, here and there we find a good verse, and it is still a worthwhile project; but Leviticus yields its best secrets to those who study it.

Second, when we do study Leviticus, we find it full of information about Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. I've realized that Leviticus is one of the most Christ-centered and Messianic books of the Old Testament. It is packed with pictures and prophecies about the Lord Jesus Christ. We primarily see this in three ways: First, the sacrifices on the Tabernacle altars speak of Christ. Second, the office and duties of the priests speaks of Christ. And third, the feasts and festivals of ancient Israel teach us various aspects of our Lord's person and work.

For the last couple of Sundays and again today we are focusing on the subject of the priesthood of Israel. What can we learn about Jesus Christ by studying the instructions given to Aaron and his sons, the priests of Israel?

This may sound boring and recondite, but it's really a very important topic—so important that the major theme of the New Testament book of Hebrews is devoted to explaining how wonderfully Jesus Christ fulfilled the type of the Old Testament priesthood.

Let's thumb through this section of Leviticus and I'll survey it for you in that way; and then we'll narrow down our study to our passage today. As we've already learned in this series, chapters 1-7 describe the five types of sacrifices and offerings that served as the heart and core of the worship of ancient Israel.

Now look at Leviticus 8. My Bible has headings at the top of the chapter supplied by the editor, and at the top of chapter 8, it says: "Aaron and His Sons Consecrated." This chapter and the next tell of the inauguration of the high priesthood of Israel and of the installation of Aaron and his four sons as priests of Israel.

Chapter 10, as we saw last week, describes one of the greatest tragedies in Israeli history. On the very day that the priesthood was inaugurated and the priests were installed in office, two of them—the two oldest sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu—offer profane fire before the Lord and are struck by a bolt of fire from heaven.

Now today I would like to deal with Leviticus 11-15. These five chapters give us the duties of the priesthood in the mundane everyday affairs of ancient Israel. It's very easy to outline, and even though these chapters are rather tedious to read, there is nothing so very difficult about this.

- Leviticus 11 is devoted to dietary regulations – the foods that the Israelites could and could not eat.
- Leviticus 12 is devoted to issues of childbirth.
- Leviticus 13-14 are devoted to infectious skin diseases.
- Leviticus 15 is devoted to various discharges from the body relating to sexual activity.

As I have studied these five chapters, three wonderful truths came to me rather forcibly. I just took a little walk, mulling over these chapters, and it seemed to clarify in my mind with great simplicity and meaning. What do these five chapters in the Bible tell us?

God Wants Us to Be Healthy

First, God wants us to be healthy. I'll admit that these chapters are rather tedious to read, but there is one thing that intrigues me very much about them, and it is this—the regulations given here display a knowledge of science that is many, many centuries ahead of its time. In some cases, we've only learned in the last hundred or two hundred years how scientifically advanced these regulations are. Let me give you a couple of examples.

Chapter 11 deals with dietary requirements. Look at the way it begins: 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 animals that are on the earth...'"

Eating is obviously a very important aspect of life. There's an old adage that is absolutely true: You are what you eat. It's remarkable how prone we are to fuel our body on fast food and junk food, and here in chapter 11 of Leviticus, God is warning the Israelites against a diet of junk food. There's the famous prohibition, for example, forbidding the Israelites from eating pork. Why? What's wrong with pork chops? In that day and age, without refrigeration and modern food preservation techniques, pork was more prone than other meats to harbor bacteria and transmit disease.

Leviticus 12 is devoted to the matter of childbirth. Notice Leviticus 12:3 regarding the birth of little boys: And on the eighty day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. The Old Testament prescribed circumcision for male babies on the eighth day. We now know that in a primitive, nomadic society like that of the Old Testament, circumcision prevents infection. In fact, even in our modern United States, circumcision prevents more than ten thousand infant urinary tract infections a year. In our more advanced society, circumcision is optional, but when God gave the ancient command to the Israelis, no one knew about antibiotics, so these infections would have been far more serious.

But when to circumcise? It was not until 1900 that scientists began to understand the chemistry of blood clotting. The human body

needs vitamin K to make clotting proteins. Newborn babies don't start making vitamin K until they are five days old. Three days later, on the eighth day, one clotting protein jumps up to 110% of the adult level. Doctors now know that the eighth day is the safest day for circumcision in a baby's life.

Leviticus 13 and Leviticus 14 are devoted to infectious disease, especially to skin diseases like leprosy. Look at Leviticus 14:46: He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

In the Middle Ages, leprosy killed countless millions of people in Europe. Dr. George Rosen, a Columbia University professor, wrote, "Leprosy cast the greatest blight that threw its shadow over the daily life of medieval humanity. Fear of all other diseases taken together can hardly be compared to the terror spread by leprosy. Not even the Black Death in the fourteenth century or the appearance of syphilis toward the end of the fifteenth century produced a similar state of fright. Early in the Middle Ages, during the sixth and seventh centuries, it began to spread more widely in Europe and became a serious social and health problem. It was endemic particularly among the poor and reached a terrifying peak in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."

The medical professionals of that age were powerless to stop the spread of the disease, and finally they gave up and turned to the medieval church. The leaders of the church searched the Scriptures for the answer and they found this passage of Scripture in Leviticus in which God told the Israelites to isolate and quarantine the infected person.

In other words, the book of Leviticus introduced the medical necessity known as the quarantine. As soon as the European nations rediscovered the biblical insights about the quarantine, they brought leprosy under control, and they later applied the same principle to the Black Death, with the result of saving thousands and, I suppose, millions of lives.

S. I. McMillen wrote, "If the lethal plagues had continued unabated, many celebrities of the Renaissance might never have been born, or they might have died untimely deaths. Thus, European history was greatly influenced because men began to practice the words of God to the Israelites."

It was not until 1873, just over 100 years ago, that Dr. Armauer Hansen looked through a microscope at a slide from a leprosy patient and discovered leprosy bacteria. Finally we realized that leprosy was an infection spread from person to person. We now know that millions of leprosy bacteria can live in the nose of one person infected with the disease, and a single sneeze can infect many others.

In the earliest books of the Old Testament, Moses told the Israelites that leprosy was an infectious disease that could be controlled by something we now call the quarantine.

So Leviticus 11 deals with dietary regulations. Leviticus 12 to childbirth. Leviticus 13-14 to infectious diseases. And Leviticus 15 is devoted to... well, the heading at the top of the chapter in my Bible says, "Laws Concerning Bodily Discharges." I'm not going any further than that; but suffice to say that these five chapters have to do with issues relating to the health of the body and the soul. God gave to the Israelites laws for their own good, and we now know that these laws presupposed medical knowledge many centuries in advance.

I remember seeing an old book on the bookshelf of our home as I was growing up, and I remember my father mentioning how intrigued he had been in reading it. It was entitled, None of These Diseases by Dr. S. I. McMillen. I don't know what happened to my dad's copy, but I recently came across that same book in a used bookstore, and I've been as intrigued in reading it as my father was. I've also read the updated version, and today I'd like to bring a message based, in part, on this old book entitled, None of These Diseases.

Here is the premise of my message: How do we know that God's Word is true? How can we be reassured of the reliability of His promises to us? Well, there are many ways; the Bible offers many evidences of its authenticity. But among them are the amazing examples of what sometimes we call "prescience."

By prescience, we mean the occurrence in Scripture of accurate statements reflecting an in-depth knowledge of scientific concepts far before mankind had laid the technological base for such things to be known.

The priests were to be the spiritual leaders of Israel as well as the dietitians and the medical health experts of the ancient nation; and these regulations were given to keep the children of Israel healthy.

God Wants Us to Be Holy

But there's another, deeper, richer underlying truth here as well. God wants us to be healthy but even more, He wants us to be holy. As we've already seen, the grand theme of Leviticus is the holiness of God; and holiness is to infiltrate everything we do. We're to be holy in our diet and lifestyle. We're to be holy in childbirth and family living. We're to be holy in our hygiene and physical habits.

We're to be holy in the way we deal with illness, and we're to be holy in the area of our sexuality.

This is borne out all through these passages. For example, look at Leviticus 11:44 having to do with a prohibition against eating certain creepy-crawlies: For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate 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 the Lord 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 animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of 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.

Now, let me say that we as Christians are not under the exact same dietary regulations that controlled ancient Israel. The book of Acts makes that clear. But the principle is the same. Even down to dietary matters, God wants us to be healthy and holy.

Now remember that the word for **“holy”** in both the Old and New Testaments primarily means “different” or “separate.” Here’s the way one commentary put it: “God is supremely holy because God is totally different from all else in creation and is always to be regarded as separate from every aspect of the created order. The Sabbath is called holy because it is different from the other six days, and it is to be treated separately as a special day. The temple was holy because it was different from all other buildings and was used only for special and separate functions. A sacrificial animal was regarded as holy because it was different from all of the others and was separated from them.”[1]

The Lord wants us and me to be holy, to be different and separate from every other group of people on earth. We're to be distinctive. The Bible says, “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.”

When someone at school or work watches your life, how long does it take them to realize that you are different, separate, and distinctively a Christian?

God Wants Us to Be Happy in Jesus

The third lesson in these chapters is that God wants us to be happy in Jesus. These chapters are full of little predictors as well as big predictors of the person and work of Jesus Christ. For example, let's go back to our initial Scripture reading at the beginning of Leviticus 14. Here is a man with leprosy. He's condemned. He's diseased. He's been forced to leave his wife and children and grandchildren. He's been driven outside the camp. He is quarantined and isolated, sick and suffering. He is a picture of a poor sinner, lost and sick and diseased of soul.

But there is healing, and when the healing occurs a little ceremony takes place there, outside the camp. Two birds are brought out by the priest. One bird is killed in a clay pot over running water, and the other bird is dipped in that bloody water and set free to fly into the heavens and to make his home in the fresh thin air.

It's a beautiful picture of you and me. We're diseased of soul with the leprosy of sin, outside the camp of God, without hope, lonely in the world. But Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, died for us and we are washed in His blood. Our souls are set free to soar in life, to mount up with wings like eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not be faint.

The 2004 Summer Olympic Games are underway now in Athens, and one of America's brightest young athletes is diver Kimiko Soldati. She had originally wanted to be a gymnast, but a serious knee injury in the ninth grade ended that dream. Her dad suggested she change over to diving, and now she's on the Olympic Team.

In a recent interview, she said that, looking back, she is so thankful for that knee injury, because otherwise she would not have gone into diving; and if she had not gone into diving, she would not have met the other divers on the American team, a remarkable number of which are Christians.

As she began working with these American divers, she noticed that she was tense and prone toward depression; but the Christians on the team were more relaxed and seemed to be much happier. Here's what she said:

“My anxiety level was off the charts. Then when I suffered shoulder injuries and had multiple surgeries a few years ago, I was an absolute mess. This was before I became a Christian and diving wasn't just something I did. It was who I was. When the injuries took diving away from me for awhile, I went into a tailspin and suffered deep depression. When I recovered and began training with my new Christian teammates, who seemed peaceful no matter what, I took notice. I wanted that kind of peace. I needed that kind of peace. And they said it came from knowing Jesus.”[2]

Gradually she began wanting what they had. Gradually she began attending church. And eventually she and her husband asked Jesus Christ to become their Lord and Savior.

Now, Kimiko says that winning a gold medal is still very, very important; but it is not the most important thing about diving. “I used to think I was in this sport to win a gold medal,” she said, “but I don't believe that anymore. I believe there's a reason why I have these

abilities—to be able to travel across the world for diving competitions and share my faith. The Bible tells us to go to the nations with the Good News. At our competitions, the nations are there. What an opportunity!”

God wants us to be healthy. He wants us to be holy. And He wants us to be happy in Jesus. Do you need to give your life to Him today?

[1] Gary Demarest, *Mastering the Old Testament: Leviticus* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1990), p. 114.

2 “Taking the Plunge” by Cameron Courtney at www.christianitytoday.com/tcw/2004/004/1.30.html.

Leviticus 16

THE GREATEST DAY OF THE YEAR

Rob Morgan

“This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It is a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” And he did as the Lord commanded Moses. (Leviticus 16:29-34)

Today we are finishing our summertime series of messages from the book of Leviticus. If I had it to do over, I think I would have kept preaching through Leviticus to the end of the book; but in anticipating this series of messages, I wasn’t sure it would hold the interest of my listeners for more than eight weeks. And so, Lord willing, I will come back next year and finish the book—especially the portions of Leviticus having to do with the Feasts and Festivals of ancient Israel.

I think I can make a solid case that the book of Leviticus is simply a long series of adumbrations and types of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus once said, “If you want to learn about me, go to the books written by Moses in the Old Testament. He spoke of me.” Right here, at the heart of the five books of Moses, is the book of Leviticus, and it speaks of Him.

There are three major ways in Leviticus in which we learn of Jesus Christ. First, through the sacrifices and offerings prescribed in Leviticus 1-7. Second, through the duties of the High Priest who prefigured Christ. Third, in the Feasts and Festivals of ancient Israel, which are described later in this book.

Today we are coming to the very heart of the matter—the day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16.

You may remember that several years ago, on October 6, 1973, the combined forces of Egypt and Syria attacked the nation of Israel, intending to destroy it. The war began at noon, and it was a well-chosen time and date, because it was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the year to the Jews. The nation of Israel was caught off guard, and for a little while it looked very bleak for Israel. Within a few days, however, the United Nations was screaming for the war to stop because Israel had recovered and its troops were pressing to within a few miles of Cairo and Damascus. Suddenly it was the aggressor nations who found themselves threatened.

From that point on in modern day history, the words Yom Kippur have been in the vocabulary of the world. The Hebrew word “Yom” means “Year.” And “Kippur” means “Atonement.” This is the most solemn day of the year for the Jews. All their other Feasts and Festivals are times of rejoicing and celebrations, but Yom Kippur is a day of fasting and self-denial, a time when they afflicted their souls. The people of Israel have been observing this holy day every year since the ancient times of Moses, ever since the details were described in Leviticus 16. And it is very important in our Christian theology and beliefs as well. Today, I’d like for us to look at this subject from both an Old Testament and a New Testament perspective.

The Old Testament instructions for the observing of Yom Kippur are found here in Leviticus 16, as well as later in Leviticus 23. Rather than read this entire chapter, let me list for you the major elements. To make things as simple as possible, let me use three words to sum up the contents of Leviticus 16.

The Clothing

The first word is clothing. The entire nation of Israel with all its work and busyness came to a complete halt as the High Priest of Israel took a ritual bath and clothed himself in some unusual clothing. Look at Leviticus 16:1ff:

Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the Lord, and died; and the Lord said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat, which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water and put them on.

These garments were not the usual articles of clothing for the High Priest. The raiment for the High Priest was exceedingly ornate. It was colorful and expensive and bedecked with jewels. But on this day, all that fancy garb was left behind, and the High Priest appeared dressed himself using only four pieces of clothing: White pants (the Hebrew word indicates that it was akin to our shorts), a white shirt or top, a white sash, and a white turban for the head.

What was the significance of this? Well, it seems that there is a two-fold importance. First, on this day the High Priest became a servant. He clad himself in garments akin to those worn by servants—white shorts and a white top. Simple white garments. He removed his ornate garments that spoke of the dignity of his standing before God and clad himself in the garments of a servant.

It speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, on the Day of Atonement, laid aside His glorious garb, his raiment of light, and took upon Himself the form a servant, becoming in likeness like a man. He said, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many."

At the funeral of Ronald Reagan, the senior George Bush spoke of that horrible day in March of 1981 when President Reagan was shot. Later, as he recovered from his wounds in the hospital, an aide entered his room and was shocked to find him on his hands and knees wiping water from the floor. He explained that he had spilled some water from the sink, and he was afraid his nurse would get into trouble

All of us, hearing that story, were moved at the humility of a great man. But how can we ever visualize or conceptualize the humility of the King of Heaven, getting down in His knees and wiping away our sins with His own blood? It is beyond my abilities as a public speaker to bring that home to us as I would like to.

Second, the white clothing spoke of holiness, which was the real emphasis of the day. What does the word "atonement" mean? What was the purpose of the day? The word "atonement" means "at-one-ment." It signifies that God is on one side as a holy and righteous God, and we are on the other side as benighted and defiled sinners. And Jesus Christ, the Perfect Man, stands between us, ready to forgive our sins and to clothe us, as it were, with His own righteousness that we might be reconciled to God.

The Clouds

The second thing to notice about Yom Kippur in Leviticus 16 are the clouds. Look again at Leviticus 16:1ff: Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the Lord, and died; and the Lord said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they paused at Mount Sinai, and there the Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments and also the architectural blueprints, as it were, for the building of a portable worship center called the Tabernacle. This is one of the most fascinating portraits and adumbrations of Christ in the entire Old Testament, Fifty chapters in the Bible are devoted to this Tabernacle. The whole plan of salvation and redemption can be seen in its structure and function.

At the heart of the Tabernacle Complex was a tent which was divided into two rooms. The first room was called the Holy Place, and the various priests of Israel could enter that room at various times. When you entered it, you saw to your left the golden seven-branched candlestick. On your right, you saw the table of showbread. And right in front of you was a little altar on which incense was burned.

Just behind the altar of incense was a very beautiful tapestry into which were woven images of angels. Behind that tapestry was the inner room of the Tabernacle, the Sanctum Sanctorum, the Holy of Holies. There was a special sense in Old Testament days in which this Holy of Holies represented the very dwelling place of the very essence of God among His people. The cloud of God's Glory resided in that little room. There was only one piece of furniture there—the fabled Ark of the Covenant, which represented the earthly footstool of God's heavenly throne. The lid to this Ark of the Covenant was called the mercy seat or the mercy covering. It

was there, into that room, that the High Priest was to bring the blood of the sacrifices to atone for sin and to sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant.

But how could the High Priest enter the very presence of the Almighty? How could he survive the pure holiness of the essence of God Himself? Well, he—the High Priest—was to create another cloud, as it were. Look at verses 11ff:

And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself. Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony lest he die.

The altar of incense represents the prayers, the intercessory ministry, of the High Priest. Before parting the veil and stepping into the Holy of Holies, the High Priest had a special concoction of incense which he threw on the coals of the altar of incense, creating a cloud. I don't think it was necessarily a thick cloud, but it was symbolic. It represented the intercession of the Son of Man for us. It represented a plea for mercy. And thus the High Priest, Aaron, could enter the Sanctum Sanctorum.

The Cleansing

What did he do there? Well that leads to the third word that sums up this chapter—cleaning. He offered the blood of the sacrifice for the cleansing of himself and of the people. Now, this was a rather elaborate process and it involved more than just making atonement for the sins of the people. Aaron had to first make atonement for his own sins and for those of his family. He also had to cleanse the Tabernacle itself from the defilement of the people who had worshipped there during the past year. But the most important elements involved three animals—a bull and two goats.

It was the blood of the bull and one of the goats that atoned for sin. It was symbolic of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. For some reason unknown to us God wove an immutable law into the moral fabric of the universe at the time of the creation: Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

But it's the two goats that I want to end with.

Leviticus 16:7ff: He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness...

Leviticus 16:15: Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel...

Leviticus 16:20: And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all the iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

The goat that was slain represents our Lord Jesus Christ. And the goat that bore the sins of Israel into the wilderness areas to be seen no more is a graphic depiction of how Jesus Christ removes our sins and our guilt and our shame and bears it far away, never to be seen again.

When I was a child, we used to sing a little song in Sunday School that said: "Gone, gone, gone, gone! Yes my sins are gone! Now my soul is free and in my heart's a song!"

That's the meaning of this. Just think of it. Jesus Christ likens himself to a goat to be killed, and he likens our sins to the scapegoat—removed from us forever.

Not long ago I read a fascinating story in the newspaper. In a small town in the western regions of India is a small pool. The Hindus believe that a drop of nectar fell from heaven into that pool, giving it mystic powers. One plunge into that pool, said this article from CNN, and the devout Hindu believes that all his sins will be washed away. Millions of Hindus travel to that little town and line up for hours waiting to take the plunge that will remove their sense of guilt.

Yet no muddy pool can do that. No bloody animal can do that. But...

There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins.

And sinners plunged beneath that flow lose all their guilty stains.

The Day of Atonement is simply a foreshadowing of the old rugged cross of our Savior whose blood alone can atone for sin and set the prisoner free.

Suppose you were on trial for your life, and one little sin would damn you. Imagine the prosecutor, frothing at the mouth, confident of his case, spun around and pointed his finger in your face and said:

Have you ever insulted your parents? Yes.

Have you ever acted out of pride and arrogance? Yes.

Have you ever hurt another human being? Yes.

Have you ever entertained evil thought? Yes.

Have you committed immorality?

Have you broken the laws of the land?

Have you done things of which you are ashamed?

Have you done things that no one knows about?

Have you condemned yourself to hell by the thoughts of your heart and the words of your mouth? Have you?

How do you plead? What do you have to say for yourself?

I have no other argument.

I have no other plea.

It is enough that Jesus died,

And that He died for me.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but should have everlasting life.

The New Testament

And that brings us to the New Testament teaching on this subject. The Levitical Day of Atonement is so important to the whole Biblical story that God devoted two chapters in the book of Hebrews to explaining to us what it meant. Those two chapters—Hebrews 9 and 10—must be studied if we're to understand Leviticus 16 and the significance of Yom Kippur to our own lives.

Hebrews 9:1-5 begins with the writer describing the furnishings for the Tabernacle.

Then indeed, even the first covenant (the Old Testament) had ordinance of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary (The Holy Place); and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak in detail.

I certainly wish that the writer of the book of Hebrews had paused long enough to speak of these things in detail, because every one of them (as we've seen in previous sermons) speaks of aspects of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the writer is on a mission—he wants to go right to the significance of the Holy of Holies and of the Day of Atonement. So he continues in verse 6:

Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance, the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was not standing.

In other words, the Holy Spirit, who was the inspiration-power behind the Old Testament, was giving us advance previews of holy things. He was setting up a type which illustrated the greatest event in biblical history, in world history, and in divine history. Continue in verse 9:

It was symbolic for the present time.

That might just be the best definition of a biblical type that we have in the Bible. A “type” of Christ is any person, thing, or event in the Old Testament that foreshadows a New Testament truth. The Tabernacle is the greatest “type” of Christ in the Old Testament, not only in its arrangement, architecture, and furnishing; but especially in its ritual such as the Day of Atonement.

It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to conscience—concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

That’s talking about the book of Leviticus. The dietary requirements, the ritual offerings, the oblations and offerings—none of those things could really cleanse the human conscience. They were simply symbols of something that was to come. Look at Heb 9:11:

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with human hands, not of this creation.

In other words, the earthly tabernacle was simply modeled and patterned after the real tabernacle in the highest heavens that serves as the dwelling place of God. And the High Priest of Israel was simply modeled and patterned after the real High Priest—the real Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

This is a very important verse about our salvation because it involves all three members of the Trinity in the redemption process. Christ—God the Son—offered Himself to God the Father through the eternal Spirit, God the Holy Ghost. It was with the anointing and empowering of the Spirit that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, made His sacrifice. Drop down to verse 24:

For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

By ages, I think it means at the end of the age of the Old Testament, at the end of the Old Testament era, Christ appeared to fulfill all the Old Testament types and prophecies.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Now, going on to Hebrews 10:1-4—and remember, these chapter divisions were not in the original text, so there is really no breakage in the flow of the content.

For the law—the book of Leviticus—having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Verse 5: Therefore, when He (Christ) came into the world, He said (and now he is going to quote from Psalm 40): “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, “Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do your will, O God.”

Now the writer recaps in Hebrews 10:11-12:

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made his footstool.

If you want to know what Jesus Christ is doing right now, this verse gives us a partial answer. He is enthroned in heaven, waiting for

that coming moment when His enemies will be made His footstool.

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified....

Now, what does this mean to you and me? Well, if I had been writing the book of Hebrews, I would have said, "Therefore, let us visualize this. Let us internalize this. Let us make sure we've accepted this grace and forgiveness."

But the Holy Spirit took a different approach. This section about the High Priestly ministry of Jesus Christ on Yom Kippur ends with a series of practical exhortations, beginning in Hebrews 10:19:-22

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

So far, that is just as I have said, only better put. Since Jesus Christ has fulfilled these types and done this for you and me, let's make sure we have received it. But he goes on in Hebrews 10:23: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

In other words, let's keep growing stronger and stronger in faith, not weaker and weaker. Let's grow in our confidence in the One who has promised and who is faithful.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Let's grow closer to Lord and closer to His people. Let's keep growing in this abundant life that He has provided for us.

I'd like to close by pointing out what a phenomenal thing this is. I love this line of teaching. To me, it confirms the brilliance and the infallibility of Scripture. To think that God previewed for us in advance—1400 years before Christ—the very ministry that redeems the human race. To think that it was all pictured out for us, like pictures in a children's picture book. To think that down to the last details, the types and adumbrations were given. To think of the wonders of the theology. To think of how perfectly our Lord fulfilled each and every detail of the types.

Jesus my great High Priest
Offered Himself and died.
My guilty soul now needs no sacrifice besides.
His powerful blood for sin atoned
And now it pleads before the throne.

It is the greatest display of love in all the human story.

Dr. Karl Barth, who was one of the most brilliant and complex theologians of the twentieth century, was once asked if he could summarize what he had said in all his arcane books of theology. Dr. Barth thought a moment, then said: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

This week I received a e-mail from a woman who told me about her son, Bo, who was ten. He had been riding his bicycle in front of their house when he was hit by a truck going fifty miles an hour. Witnesses who were working on the roof of a neighbor's house said that the boy flew over power lines, landed on a concrete sewer pad, rolled over 100 feet, and came to rest in the yard across the street.

As they were rushing to the hospital in the ambulance, it became clear that Bo was going into shock. He was puffy all over and getting pale. The color drained from his face. Instinctively, the woman and her husband, who were with Bo in the ambulance, began singing "Jesus loves me, this I know; for the Bible tells me so."

Bo's lips began to move, and he began to sing, weakly at first, then stronger. The color returned to his face, and they could only describe it as miraculous. In the emergency room, the CT scan found no head injuries, no internal injuries, and nothing life threatening. His major injury was to his knee, and that later required a number of surgeries.

But the woman said in the letter to me, "To make a long story short, Bo is now 21 and a junior in college. God has put it on my heart to make certain that every child in the world has an opportunity to learn that life-saving hymn."

One of the most incredible truths in the Bible is that Jesus loved us so much that He became our great High Priest according to the Old Testament principles of redemption, He offered Himself once for all at the end of that ancient era, and He entered into the heavenly tabernacle for us, to plead on our behalf with His own wounds. And the moment we receive Christ as our Savior is our own

personal Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement.

As the old hymn puts it: Nothing can for sin atone. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.