

Leviticus 12 Commentary

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[Overview Chart of Leviticus](#)

LEVITICUS THE BOOK OF SANCTIFICATION AND WORSHIP Adapted and modified from C. Swindoll	
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 12:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying

REGULATIONS FOR CHILDBEARING

Hyatt - This message was very likely given during Aaron's days of fillings. However, it is not stated that this message was spoken to Aaron as well as to Moses. No reason is given for Aaron's not being included, and it is useless to speculate as to why..

George Bush - [Leviticus 12 Commentary](#) Laws relative to the Purification of Women after Child-birth

The ordinances contained in this chapter having, like most of the code to which they belong, been abolished under the gospel, can have little practical relation to us; yet the perusal of them cannot but be interesting to the Christian reader from their connexion with some of the incidents of the gospel history. We learn from one of the evangelists, that when the mother of our Lord went up to the Temple with her offering in obedience to this law, she was not able to offer a lamb, but was obliged to accept the alternative allowed to the poor, of offering two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. Thus an interesting evidence is furnished of the low circumstances of

the family into which the Savior was born. While the Israelites remained in the wilderness, it is probable that the women brought their offerings immediately after the period of their separation had expired. But when they were settled in Palestine, and many families lived at a distance from the Temple, it may be presumed that they were allowed to consult their convenience on this point. It is at least certain that after the birth of Samuel, 1 Sam. 1:21, his mother Hannah did not go to the tabernacle until the child was weaned.

1. The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, &c. The directions in this chapter are given to Moses alone, whereas those in the preceding were delivered to him and Aaron conjointly, as are those which follow, ch. 13, respecting the Leprosy. The reason of this was, that it peculiarly devolved upon Aaron and his sons to discriminate in this matter between the clean and unclean; and as it was a matter attended with some difficulty, they are especially charged by God in respect to it. But as the legal purification of a woman was a ceremony of very obvious import and easy execution, it was sufficient that they received their instructions respecting it from Moses.

Brian Bell -

1. POSTNATAL UNCLEANNES! (1-5)

1. The theme of this chapter is not personal holiness but ceremonial purification for the mother.
2. So, this does not teach that human sexuality is “dirty”, or that pregnancy is defiling, or that babies themselves are impure.
 1. Human Sexuality - Our 1st parents were told to “be fruitful & multiply.” (given in Eden, & right after the flood; Gen.1:28; 9:1)
 1. One whole book of the bible(S.of Sol.) is given over to, & thus affirms, intimate relations as God’s idea & His gift to mankind.
 2. Pregnancy & Babies – In spite of contemporary negative attitudes toward children, Scripture presents children as blessings from God.
 1. (NIV) **Ps.113:9** “He settles the barren woman in her home **as a happy mother of children**. Praise the LORD.”
 2. **Ps.127:3-5** “Behold, children are a **heritage** from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a **reward**. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth. **Happy** is the man who has his quiver full of them;”
 3. **Prov.17:6** “Children’s children are the **crown** of old men, And the **glory** of children is their father.”
 4. **Mt.19:14** “But Jesus said, “Let the little **children** come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”
 3. So, **fruitfulness** was seen as God’s favor, & **barrenness** considered a reproach.
 1. **Gen.30:22-24** “Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son, and said, “**God has taken away my reproach**.” So she called his name Joseph, ...”
 4. The **mother** was “ceremonially unclean” for a time, not because of the **child**, but because of the **blood & fluids** associated w/childbirth.
 1. It’s because sinful man begets sinful man!
 5. So, she was “unclean” for **7 days**(w/male), then she could resume normal activities, except she wasn’t permitted to enter the **Sanctuary** or **touch any hallowed thing** for **40 days**.
 6. “unclean” can also mean “*not to be touched*”. So this could actually be telling the husbands to be **gentle & considerate** to his wife. (*Barclay*)
 1. There are periods when a women is in her monthly cycle or after she has given birth when the husband **must** not force himself upon his wife.
 2. “It is possible, unfortunately, for a man to **rape** his wife.”
 1. Such a **debased** relationship is wholly excluded here.
 3. What is sought is a relationship of **tenderness**, of **thoughtfulness**, & of **reverence** by the one for the other.
 4. The husband **must** give his wife ample time to recover from the major & traumatic experience of childbirth which she has undergone.
 3. Time differences between a boy(40 days) & a girl(80 days)?
 1. No, not degrees of “uncleanness”. (girls aren’t doubly dirty!)
 2. **Perhaps** health reasons?
 3. **Perhaps** a longer time of “bonding” with her daughter is needed?
 4. **Perhaps** God was given the mother extra time to care for her daughter in a masculine society that preferred sons.
 5. **Perhaps** God was giving her time to recuperate before her next pregnancy.
 1. A husband to whom she bore a daughter might be anxious to “try again” for a son.

6. **Perhaps** relates to the 40 years of cleansing that Israel underwent before she could enter the Holy Land?
7. The text doesn't say, so we can only speculate!
4. The Mosaic Law recognized the "sanctity of marriage" as divinely ordained.

TODAY IN THE WORD (Moody Bible) - Leviticus 12:1-8 - [The priests] are to teach the difference between the holy and the common and distinguish between the unclean and the clean. - Ezekiel 44:23

A recent British national survey found that most women are "terrified" of giving birth and find it "more painful than they ever imagined." Sixty percent said their prenatal classes had failed to prepare them for the reality of childbirth, and 75 percent mentioned the pain was far worse than they had imagined it would be.

Nearly half of the women surveyed said postnatal care was inadequate. Eighty-six percent added that they continued to experience pain for up to several weeks after the birth, and feelings from general sadness to depression were also common.

Nonetheless, 99 percent of these women said that motherhood gave them more happiness than their careers!

Although since the Fall women have suffered pain in childbirth (Gen. 3:16), a new baby remains one of life's greatest joys and God's greatest blessings: Children are "a reward from him... Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them" (Ps. 127:3, 4, 5).

Why, then, did the Law regard a woman as unclean after giving birth? Theological speculation generally centers around two possible reasons. First, she might be unclean because of the postnatal discharge of blood. Since blood is a symbol of life and forgiveness, all matters involving blood were treated with great care and seriousness in the Law. Also, women who had unusual discharges of blood were required to offer the same sacrifices as listed here for a woman who had given birth (see Lev. 15:25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

A second possible reason for the uncleanness might be to remind the Israelites of the Curse—that is, of Adam and Eve's original disobedience and the fact that pain in childbirth was one of the resulting punishments. In this way, the "unclean" designation reminded the people of history (after all, Moses wrote Genesis), of the universality of sin and of the urgent necessity of obedience.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY One theme we have been tracing so far in the book of Leviticus is holiness or purity—both God's perfect righteousness and our calling to live righteous lives before Him.

[William MacDonald](#) Notes on Leviticus 12 - This chapter deals with uncleanness connected with childbirth.

A woman giving birth to a boy was unclean for seven days, just as the days of the uncleanness of her menstruation (Lev 12:2). On the eighth day, the boy was circumcised (Lev 12:3). She then remained at home for an additional 33 days so as not to touch anything holy or enter the sanctuary—i.e., the court surrounding the tabernacle.

In the case of a baby girl, the mother was unclean for two weeks, and then remained home for an additional 66 days.

At the end of the time of purification, the mother was commanded to bring a yearling lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a sin offering. If she was too poor to afford the lamb, she could bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for the sin offering and one for the burnt offering. The mother of our Lord brought two birds (Luke 2:22-24), an indication of the poverty into which Jesus was born.

It may seem strange that uncleanness is connected with the birth of a baby, since marriage was instituted before sin entered the world, since the Scriptures teach that marriage is holy, and since God commanded men to reproduce. The uncleanness is probably a reminder that, with the exception of the Lord, we are all born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Ps 51:5). The extended time of uncleanness in the case of a baby girl was perhaps an intended reminder that man was created before woman, that the woman was created for the man, that the woman is given a place of positional subjection (not intrinsic inferiority) to the man, and that the woman was the first to sin.

Williams sees in this legislation the tender care of God in protecting the mother from visitors during a time when her weakness and the danger of infection were greatest.

Leviticus 12:2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean.'

- **woman:** Ge 1:28 Ge 3:16 Job 14:4 15:14 25:4 Ps 51:5 Lu 2:22 Ro 5:12-19
- **as in the days of her menstruation** Lev 15:19

Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child,The message was to be taught to all of Israel. It described a practice that contained important teachings for the whole nation, not just for a woman giving birth to a baby. First, Jehovah described how uncleanness was to be practice after the birth of a boy baby.

NET NOTE on **gives birth** (bears offspring) - Heb “produces seed” (Hiphil of זָרָע, zara’; used only elsewhere in Gen 1:11–12 for plants “producing” their own “seed”), referring to the process of childbearing as a whole, from conception to the time of birth (H. D. Preuss, TDOT 4:144; cf. J. E. Hartley, Leviticus [WBC], 164–65; and J. Milgrom, Leviticus [AB], 1:742–43). Smr and LXX have Niphal “be impregnated” (see, e.g., Num 5:28); note KJV “If a woman have conceived seed” (cf. ASV, NAB, NRSV; also NIV, NLT “becomes pregnant”).

NET NOTE on **male child** - The regulations for the “male child” in vv. 2–4 contrast with those for the “female child” in v. 5 (see the note there).

Then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean- See Lev 15:19–24 for the standard purity regulations for a woman’s menstrual period.

MacArthur on **uncleanness** - **Uncleanness** is related to the mother’s afterbirth, not the child. ([The Macarthur Study Bible](#))

NET NOTE on **days of her menstruation** - tn Heb “as the days of the menstrual flow [nom.] of her menstruating [q. inf.] she shall be unclean” (R. E. Averbeck, NIDOTTE 1:925–26; the verb appears only in this verse in the OT). Cf. NASB “as in the days of her menstruation”; NLT “during her menstrual period”; NIV “during her monthly period.”

Reformation Study Bible note The flow of blood after childbirth made a mother unclean (vv. 4, 5, 7). Loss of blood could lead to death, thus illustrating the equation of uncleanness with death or the threat thereof

Henry Morris - There were certain health reasons for these seemingly stringent rules, but probably the main factor was to foster continued recognition that the sin of the first woman has been transmitted to all her descendants (Psalm 51:5). All, therefore, are born to be sinners so that even their mothers need purification. It is noteworthy that Mary, the mother of Jesus, obeyed these laws for the purification of women after her divine Son was born. Even though He was born by miraculous conception free of sin, Mary recognized that she herself was not sinless and thus needed to obey the rules of purification (Luke 2:21-24). ([KJV New Defenders Study Bible](#))

The Believer’s Study Bible - The laws of purification laid down in the O.T. were not just sanitary regulations; they were also designed to impress upon the mind of the Israelite the total depravity of man, and to engender a deep abhorrence of everything symbolic of sin. No specific explanation is given as to why the birth of a girl made the mother unclean for 80 days, whereas the birth of a boy made the mother unclean for only 40 days. Several possible suggestions have been made: (1) this distinction reflects the relative status of the sexes in ancient times (cf. Lev. 27:2-7, where the redemption price of women is about half that of men); (2) it mirrors the apparent belief in antiquity that the postnatal discharge lasted longer for a girl than for a boy; and (3) it demonstrates that the rite of circumcision of the male child incorporated the idea of cleansing, as well as the obvious meaning of inclusion in the covenant people of God. The 80 days might have been necessary to purify the mother and the baby (40 days for each); the latter was unnecessary if the baby had been circumcised.

J Vernon McGee - The mother is unclean because she has brought a sinner into the world. Eve thought she had brought the Savior into the world when Cain was born, but she had brought into the world only a sinner—the first murderer. Now this Levitical ritual is to remind women that they were bringing into the world the same kind of a baby that Eve had brought into the world. They cannot do good. They can only sin.

Her uncleanness is divided into two periods. The first period was seven days. We shall see in the next verse that the male child was circumcised on the eighth day. Circumcision was the badge given to Abraham.

I realize that the idea of uncleanness of motherhood conflicts with the popular notion of motherhood and the little baby, but we need to emphasize that the babies we are bringing into the world are sinners. They are going to run undisciplined. They will be revolutionaries. They will adopt the new morality, which is just old-fashioned sin. The whole philosophy of life has been entirely wrong. We need to start raising children by the Scripture and not by Dr. Spock. This has been the cause of deep problems during my entire time in the ministry—I have seen parents after parents raise their children in this way.

George Bush - [Leviticus 12 Commentary](#) Laws relative to the Purification of Women after Child-birth

2. If a woman have conceived seed and borne a man-child. Heb. תזריע, tazria, hath seeded, or yielded seed, equivalent to conception, as it is rendered in the Chal. and other version, though the usual word to express this idea is חרה 'hârâh, and not זָרָע zâra. The prescribed period of uncleanness on the birth of a male child was to be seven days, on that of a female fourteen. The reason of the distinction is not obvious. Perhaps the most probable suggestion is, that it was intended to conciliate greater respect

toward the mother of a male child, having reference to that studied recognition of the superiority of this sex which pervades the Mosaic institutions.

According to the days of the separation for her infirmity. Heb. כִּימֵי נִדְתָּ דוֹתָהּ kimē niddath devothah, according to the days of the separation of her sickness. On this point the reader may consult ch. 15:19–25. Throughout this first period of her legal uncleanness she neither partook of any thing that was holy, nor enjoyed intercourse with any person. Even her husband did not eat or drink with her, and those who attended upon her became thereby unclean. After seven days the rigor of this separation was relaxed, as we shall see below. As to the rite of circumcision which was to follow on the eighth day, see Note on Gen. 17:12.

Leviticus 12:3 'On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.'

- Ge 17:11,12 Dt 30:6 Luke 1:59 2:21 John 7:22,23 Ro 3:19 4:11,12 Ga 3:17 5:3 Php 3:5 Col 2:11

GOD'S PERFECT TIMING FOR CIRCUMCISION

On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised -Circumcision on the eighth day is not just random. God, the Creator, knew that the infant's coagulation factors would be low in the first 7 days of life and that circumcision in that time could result in uncontrollable bleeding and loss of the infant's life. Below is a diagram which demonstrates the progressive rise in prothrombin levels which are produced in the liver and are dependent on Vitamin K. Notice that the prothrombin levels reach 100% range on day eight. This is just another piece of the puzzle to support that the Bible is fully inspired, word for word!

NET NOTE - This rendering, "the flesh of his foreskin," is literal. Based on Lev 15:2–3, one could argue that the Hebrew word for "flesh" here (בָּשָׂר, basar) is euphemistic for the male genitals and therefore translate "the foreskin of his member" (see, e.g., J. Milgrom, Leviticus [AB], 1:748). A number of English versions omit this reference to the foreskin and mention only circumcision, presumably for euphemistic reasons (cf. NIV, NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

Gen 17:11 "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.

Comment: Circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. Egyptians are known to have practiced circumcision, but as a puberty rite marking the passage of a boy into manhood.

Circumcised - Literally the Hebrew could read "the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

It is surprising that this is the only use of "circumcision" in Leviticus and even here it is mentioned almost incidentally since the focus was not on the child but on the purification of the mother after childbirth.

Brian Bell -

1. CIRCUMCISION! (3)

1. Circumcision was usually done in the parents' home, and was also the occasion when the child was officially named.
 2. This rite was an external sign indicating that a covenant relationship had been established between the individual & the Lord, w/all the privileges & responsibilities entailed by such relationship. (from Gen. 17:10-14)
 1. The operation also symbolized the "**spiritual surgery**" that God wants to perform on the human heart.
 1. **Deut.10:16** "Therefore circumcise the foreskin **of your heart**, and be stiff-necked no longer."
 2. **Deut.30:6** "And the LORD your God will circumcise **your heart** and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (also Jer.4:4)
 2. Note this isn't NT application from Deut!
 3. Unfortunately they ignored the **spiritual** principle of the ceremony, & considered the **physical** operation alone!
 1. Q: Isn't that what happens when any **spiritual** application is given to a **physical** event? People like leaning heavy on the **physical** event alone!
 2. **Like Baptism** - when it is promoted as bringing about salvation itself, that "it" washes away sins.
 1. Thus many people will be Baptized for "fire insurance!"
- (ED: SEE FALSE TEACHING - [baptism as being necessary for salvation](#)) ([Is the Church of Christ](#)

[a good biblical church?](#))

2. **Mt 3:7-9** "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"Therefore **bear fruits worthy of repentance**, "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."
3. **Like Communion** - when it is taught as actually becoming the body & blood of our Lord.
4. **Aristotle** taught, in simple terms, that every object(entity) is made up of *substance & accidents*. (*R.C.Sproul; pg.235; Essentials of the Christian Faith*)
5. **The Substance** = The deepest essence, or "stuff" of a thing.
6. **The Accidents** = The outward surface appearance of an object.
7. The 2 were normally inseparable, taught Aristotle, for something to have the Substance of one thing, & the Accidents of another, would require a **miracle**(*thus the miracle of transubstantiation*).
 1. The bread & wine thus keeping the "**Accidents**" of bread & wine, yet its very "**Substance**" being the body & blood of Jesus.
8. **One argument** - Since "the Mass" is celebrated in different parts of the world, at the same time, can the body & blood of Jesus, which belong to His **humanity**, not to His **deity**, be at more than 1 place at a time?
 1. His **human nature** is localized in heaven(sitting at the right hand of the Father). His **Divine nature** still has power of omnipresence.
 9. Q: So, how would this be possible?
4. People like leaning heavy on the **physical** event alone!
5. So **physical Circumcision** was done often times w/o the spiritual aspect of the ceremony...see Ro 2:25-29.

CIRCUMCISION

- **LITERAL**: Ge 17:10,14, 24, 25, 21:4 Ex 4:25,26,12:44, 48 Lv 12:3 Jn7:22,23; Acts 7:8; Ro 4:11; Gal 5:11; Phil 3:5
- **SPIRITUAL**: Dt 10:16,30:6, Jer 4:4, 9:26, Eze 44:7, Col 2:11; Ro 2:28,29, Phil 3:3 -**See Israel's problem** - Acts 7:51+
- **PROPHESIED**: Eze 11:19,20,36:26,27, Jer 31:31-34, Jer 32:39,40
- **FULFILLED**: New Covenant

Uncircumcised ear cannot hear & respond to Lord (Je 6:10)

uncircumcised lips cannot speak (Ex 6:12).

Circumcision = external sign of internal singular devotion > God

Cp to Jesus admonition: Mt 23:26

Related Resources:

- Circumcision - Greek word is peritome
- Scriptures on Circumcision
- Excursus on Circumcision Of the Heart
- [What is circumcision of the heart? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is baptism the New Covenant equivalent of circumcision? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about circumcision? What is the Christian view of circumcision? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why do some cultures practice female genital mutilation \(FGM\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Leviticus 12:4 'Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.

- Lev 15:25-28 Hag 2:13 Luke 2:22,23

Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days- NET "in blood purity"

NET NOTE on **remain** - Heb "sit, dwell" (יָשָׁב, yashav) normally means "to sit, to dwell", but here it means "to remain, to stay" in the same condition for a period of time (cf., e.g., Gen 24:55).

she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.

NET NOTE on the days of her purification are completed - The initial seven days after the birth of a son were days of blood impurity for the woman as if she were having her menstrual period. Her impurity was contagious during this period, so no one should touch her or even furniture on which she has sat or reclined (Lev 15:19–23), lest they too become impure. Even her husband would become impure for seven days if he had sexual intercourse with her during this time (Lev 15:24; cf. 18:19). The next thirty-three days were either “days of purification, purifying” or “days of purity,” depending on how one understands the abstract noun טְהוֹרָה (toharah, “purification, purity”) in this context. During this time the woman could not touch anything holy or enter the sanctuary, but she was no longer contagious like she had been during the first seven days. She could engage in normal everyday life, including sexual intercourse, without fear of contaminating anyone else (B. A. Levine, Leviticus [JPSTC], 73–74; cf. J. Milgrom, Leviticus [AB], 1:749–50). Thus, in a sense, the thirty-three days were a time of blood “purity” (cf. the present translation) as compared to the previous seven days of blood “impurity,” but they were also a time of blood “purification” (or “purifying”) as compared to the time after the thirty-three days, when the blood atonement had been made and she was pronounced “clean” by the priest (see vv. 6–8 below). In other words, the thirty-three day period was a time of “blood” (flow), but this was “pure blood,” as opposed to the blood of the first seven days.

J Vernon McGee - We have mentioned that the mother’s period of uncleanness is divided into two periods. The first was seven days, and then the male child was circumcised on the eighth day. Being born an Israelite did not include him in the covenant until the baby was circumcised. Each Israelite was first of all a son of Adam and was born outside the covenant. This is what Paul means in Romans 9:6–7: “... For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children ...” Natural birth does not bring a man into a right relationship with God. Natural birth separates a man from God! God owes us nothing. He sent His Son out of His grace to us.

The second period of the mother’s uncleanness was for thirty-three days so that the total time was forty days. This reaffirms the fact that the rite of circumcision had a meaning of cleansing. It was God’s way in the Old Testament of saying, “... Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me ...” (Matt. 19:14). The circumcision of the male child removed some of the sin from the mother. His acceptance meant her acceptance also. She is reminded that she is still a sinner, and thirty-three more days are required for her cleansing.

It is interesting to note that Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day. Then Jesus was brought to the temple when the days of Mary’s purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished (Luke 2:21–23). Mary was a sinner even though she brought the sinless Savior into the world. His birth did not save her. Only her new birth by accepting Jesus as her own Savior could save her.

Jesus was circumcised to fulfill the law of Moses. He came to fulfill, not to destroy the Law. He was made (born) under the Law. Thus he identified Himself perfectly with His people.

Sanctuary (04720) (miqdash) means "Holy Place" and refers to that which was uniquely separated, consecrated or dedicated to God. This physical area was sacred because it was the place where God dwelled among His people (Ex 25:8) and its sanctity was not to be profaned (Lev. 12:4; 19:30; 20:3; 21:12, 23). In this verse miqdash is used in the general sense to refer to the entire tabernacle, both the "tent" and the courtyard. Later in Lev. 16:33 this same Hebrew word refers to the inner sanctuary (holy sanctuary or "Most Holy Place") where the priests would atone for the people’s sin. To have respect for the sanctuary would include not entering it when unclean (Lev. 21:12) but would also include approaching it with a contrite, worshipful attitude.

George Bush - Leviticus 12 Commentary Laws relative to the Purification of Women after Child-birth

4. She shall then continue. Heb. תֵּשֶׁב tēshēb, shall sit; a common term to express abiding or continuing in a particular place or state. This ‘continuance’ in the blood of her purifying was to be reckoned from the end of the seven days above-mentioned, so that the whole time amounted to forty days. During this latter portion of the time, though she was by no means doomed to an utter separation from all society, yet she was to be debarred from the sanctuary, and from all participation in the sacrifices of the Passover and the Peace-offerings, of which she would otherwise be permitted to eat.

QUESTION - What does it mean to be ceremonially unclean?

ANSWER - The concepts of “clean” and “unclean” are prevalent in the Bible, most often in ceremonial or ritualistic contexts. Ceremonial cleansing was a removal of defilement that resulted in someone or something being declared “pure” in a formal, religious sense. To be ceremonially unclean was to be defiled in some way or causing defilement in something else.

Under the Old Testament Law, [animals](#) were either “clean” or “unclean” based on their suitability for sacrifice and for eating (Leviticus 11). Places could be ceremonially “clean” or “unclean” (Numbers 19:9; Leviticus 14:44; Nehemiah 13:9), and the same was true for things (Leviticus 11:32–35) and people (Leviticus 17:15; 22:6; Ezra 6:20). In the gospels, Jesus linked ceremonial cleansing to actual, physical cleansing from disease, telling a leper, “Be clean!” (Luke 5:13) and then, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing” (verse 14). In this way, Jesus proved Himself to be the

source of true cleansing.

According to the [Mosaic Law](#), a person could become ceremonially unclean for numerous reasons. Those who were ceremonially unclean were separated from worship in God's temple, and any person or thing they touched was made unclean as well. The time a person remained unclean—one day, one week, or forty or fifty days—depended on the cause of the uncleanness, and God provided purification rituals to restore cleanness.

God set His chosen people, Israel, apart from all other nations. Because they were His own people, the Lord commanded, "You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am [holy](#), and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own" (Leviticus 20:26). Distinguishing between animals, practices, and conditions that were clean and unclean was an essential part of maintaining Israel's relationship with a holy God.

Some practices that caused a person to become ceremonially unclean included the following:

1. **Childbirth (Leviticus 12:1–2, 5)**
2. Infectious diseases, like leprosy (Leviticus 13:9–11)
3. Unusual bodily discharges (Leviticus 15:2–15)
4. Bodily discharges related to reproduction—e.g., a man's emission of semen (Leviticus 15:16–18) and a woman's menstrual cycle (Leviticus 15:19–30)
5. Touching a corpse (Numbers 19:11)
6. Handling the ashes of a red heifer used in the water of cleansing (Numbers 19:1–10)
7. Contact with anyone or anything that was unclean (Leviticus 5:3)

Some of the laws related to ceremonial uncleanness seem related to public health and hygiene, such as the laws addressing skin diseases, [mold growth](#), and bodily discharges. Understanding there was a distinction between "the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean" (Leviticus 10:10) not only set the Israelites apart from other nations, but it served as a visceral reminder of God's holiness and mankind's sin. Ceremonial uncleanness made a person realize he needed cleansing and purification to approach the Lord. Unclean Israelites were separated from the temple worship for a time, a symbol of their spiritual uncleanness before God. To be clean, they had to wait a period of time, wash, and, most of the time, offer sacrifices (Numbers 19:11–12; Leviticus 14:19).

In the New Testament, the [Pharisees](#) were scrupulous in making distinctions between unclean and clean, but they missed the heart of God's commands. For instance, the Pharisees placed a major emphasis on ceremonial washing before meals, and they openly rebuked Jesus' disciples for not cleansing themselves in this way (Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:2–4). Jesus responded to the rebuke by announcing to the crowd that "a man is not defiled by what enters his mouth, but by what comes out of it" (Matthew 15:11, BSB).

Over time, Jewish religious leaders had added their own traditions and regulations to the Mosaic Law. When the Pharisees scolded Jesus' disciples for breaking the traditions of the elders, Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? . . . You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules'" (Matthew 15:3, 7–9). In seeking to keep themselves from ceremonial uncleanness, the Pharisees overlooked the greater need of spiritual cleansing from sin. They saw themselves as "clean" in their keeping of the law, and they rejected the only One who could truly make them clean before God.

Scripture uses the concept of clean vs unclean throughout as an illustration of one's spiritual standing. God is holy, and He requires cleanness in those who approach Him:

"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:2, 7NKJV).

"Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin'?" (Proverbs 20:9NKJV).

"We are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6NKJV).

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (Ezekiel 36:25NKJV).

"You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

"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" (Hebrews 10:22NKJV).

Note that in all the passages quoted above, the cleansing comes from God. What we need is not a ritualistic, external cleansing; we need a heart that has been spiritually cleansed from sin.

When Jesus walked the earth, He showed us the holiness of God that is able to overcome our innate uncleanness. Jesus touched an unclean leper; rather than becoming unclean Himself with that touch, Jesus made the [leper](#) clean (Mark 1:40–42). A woman, ceremonially unclean due to an [issue of blood](#), touched the edge of Jesus' cloak; rather than making Jesus unclean, the woman was instantly healed (Luke 8:43–48). In these miracles, Jesus proved His power over all that makes us unclean. His purity is greater than our [impurity](#).

Jesus Christ “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5,NKJV). This is the washing that makes one truly clean: “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?” (Hebrews 9:13–14,NKJV).

Having now been cleansed by faith (Acts 15:9), “we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). We no longer need worry about ceremonial cleanness or ceremonial uncleanness. To the New Testament believer, “[all food](#) is clean” (Romans 14:20), and we should be “persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself” (Romans 14:14, ESV). Christ has moved us beyond the regulations that said, “Touch not; taste not; handle not” (Colossians 2:21, KJV).

Through the act of turning water used for ceremonial washing into wine, Jesus showed how a new covenant was being initiated, which was better than the old (John 2:6–11). Christ's sacrifice is the basis for our cleansing from sin and from all uncleanness (see Revelation 7:13–14).[GotQuestions.org](#)

Leviticus 12:5 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of her purification for sixty-six days.

- Lev 12:2,4 Ge 3:13 1Ti 2:14,15

DIFFERENT INSTRUCTIONS IF GIVE BIRTH TO A FEMALE

But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of her purification for sixty-six days - NET = 66 days in blood purity.

NET NOTE on **66 days** - The doubling of the time after the birth of a female child is puzzling (see the remarks in J. Milgrom, *Leviticus* [AB], 1:750-51; and G. J. Wenham, *Leviticus* [NICOT], 188). Some have argued, for example, that it derives from the relative status of the sexes, or a supposed longer blood flow for the birth of a woman, or even to compensate for the future menstrual periods of the female just born. Perhaps there is a better explanation. First, a male child *must* be circumcised on the eighth day, so the impurity of the mother could not last beyond the first seven days lest it interfere with the circumcision rite. A female child, of course, was not circumcised, so the impurity of the mother would not interfere and the length of the impure time could be extended further. Second, it would be natural to expect that the increased severity of the blood flow after childbirth, as compared to that of a woman's menstrual period, would call for a longer period of impurity than the normal seven days of the menstrual period impurity (compare [Lev 15:19](#) with [15:25-30](#)). Third, this suggests that the fourteen day impurity period for the female child would have been more appropriate, and the impurity period for the birth of a male child had to be shortened. Fourth, not only the principle of multiples of seven but also multiples of forty applies to this reckoning. Since the woman's blood discharge after bearing a child continues for more than seven days, her discharge keeps her from contact with sacred things for a longer period of time in order to avoid contaminating the tabernacle (note [Lev 15:31](#)). This ended up totaling forty days for the birth of a male child (seven plus thirty-three) and a corresponding doubling of the second set of days for the woman (fourteen plus sixty-six). See R. E. Averbeck, *NIDOTTE* 2:368-70. The fact that the offerings were the same for either a male or a female infant (vv. 6-8) suggests that the other differences in the regulations are not due to the notion that a male child had greater intrinsic value than a female child (J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus* [WBC], 169).

MacArthur -Apparently mothers were unclean twice as long (80 days) after the birth of a daughter as a son (40 days), which reflected the stigma on women for Eve's part in the Fall. This stigma is removed in Christ ([The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Reformation Study Bible Note **sixty-six days**. The text does not explain why the birth of a daughter made a mother unclean for twice as long as the birth of a son. Perhaps a daughter, as a potential mother, was subject to uncleanness in a way a son was not.

J Vernon McGee - The time is doubled for the cleansing at the birth of a female child. I don't know why this was so, but obviously the circumcision of the male child had something to do with the reduction of the days and it relieved some of the curse.

Grace brings us to a new day. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29).

George Bush - [Leviticus 12 Commentary](#) Laws relative to the Purification of Women after Child-birth

5. But if she have a maid-child. In the case of the birth of a daughter, the time of strict separation was just double that prescribed at the birth of a son, and so also was the time of their subsequent purification, it being sixty-six days before she was admitted to the sanctuary. During this time she was said to 'continue in the blood of her purifying,' by which it is not to be understood that there was any thing physically impure in the state of the blood at this time. On the contrary, the blood is perfectly pure as to its quality, though somewhat excessive in quantity, for reasons well known to physiologists. The purification enjoined was wholly of a ceremonial, and not at all of a physical, kind.

Leviticus 12:6 'When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering.'

- **lamb:** Lev 1:10-13 5:6-10 14:22 15:14,29 Nu 6:10 Luke 2:22 Jn 1:29 2Co 5:21 Heb 7:26 1Pe 1:18,19

When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering.

NET NOTE on **lamb** - *Heb* "a lamb the son of his year"; *KJV* "a lamb of the first year" (*NRSV* "in its first year"); *NAB* "a yearling lamb."

MacArthur - Though the occasion was joyous, the sacrifices required were to impress upon the mind of the parent the reality of original sin and that the child had inherited a sin nature. The circumcision involved a cutting away of the male foreskin, which could carry infections and diseases in its folds. This cleansing of the physical organ so as not to pass on disease (Jewish women have historically had the lowest incidence of cervical cancer), was a picture of the deep need for cleansing from depravity, which is most clearly revealed by procreation, as men produce sinners and only sinners. Circumcision points to the fact that cleansing is needed at the very core of a human being, a cleansing God offers to the faithful and penitent through the sacrifice of Christ to come. ([The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

J Vernon McGee - vv6-8 - The mother brought a burnt offering and a sin offering to God and the priest offered it for her. She certainly was not saved just by bringing children into the world, as some claim. She had to have a sacrifice. A mother must trust the Lord Jesus Christ. With that in mind, she is prepared to raise her child as a sinner who needs to accept Christ. Oh, how the home needs that today!

You remember that when the Lord Jesus was born, his mother brought turtle-doves because the poor could bring them as an offering. She had to have an offering because she was a sinner; she was not sinless. She brought an offering. But there was no offering for the Lord Jesus. No offering was ever made for Jesus or by Jesus. He is the sinless One. He was the offering for the sin of the world. He is the Lamb of God.

Friends, think on these things. We live in a world that has gone crazy, has gone mad. This world has turned its back upon the Almighty God, and the judgment of God is beginning to fall upon the world. We are demonstrating the fact that only sinners are born into this world and that all people need the saving grace of God. All people need the shed blood of Christ to pay the penalty for their sins.

Burnt offering ([05930](#)) '**olah** rom '**alah** = to ascend and thus the picture of **going up** in smoke) refers to a whole burnt offering (one which **goes up** in smoke), which was voluntary, was understood as a sacrificial gift to God, resulting in a pleasing aroma acceptable to Jehovah (Lev 1:9). The presenter laid hands on the sacrifice which many feel signifies they saw the animal sacrifice as their substitute. The blood was sprinkled on the altar (Lev 1:6) When this offering was properly carried out (including a right heart attitude not just a "going through the motions," [which was not pleasing to God - Jer 6:20, Jer 7:21, 23, 24, see David - Ps 51:16-17-[note](#)] not just an external "work," but an internal submission and obedience to Jehovah), they made atonement and were acceptable before Jehovah. The total burning indicated (or should have indicated) total consecration of the presenter's heart and soul and life to

Jehovah.

Sin offering (02403) **chattat/chattath** means wrong, iniquity, sin. **Chattat**, like it's NT counterpart (**hamartia**), means to miss or fall short of the mark, which ultimately is the will and plan of God as revealed in Scripture. Sin is whatever misses the will of God for man doctrinally or morally. The result of chattat/chattah is that man misses the goal God has for him by failing to observe the requirements of holy living and thus falls short of spiritual wholeness. We are all sinners. We all miss the mark, and none of us are perfect nor will we ever be perfect in this life. This is why Christ had to die for our sin so we might have His righteousness (see 2Cor 5:21). In Ex 29:14 we see that **chattat/chattath** can refer not only to sin but also to the **sin offering**. This latter meaning takes on special significance in Leviticus 16 which describes in detail the annual **Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)**. **chattat** is used 8 times to describe the **sin offering** (Lev 16:3, 5-6, 9, 11, 15, 25, 27). How fascinating that the same word **chattat/chattath** describes not only the problem but also the remedy for the problem. Indeed, it was the blood of the **sin offering** that brought atonement (Lev 16:6,11, 27)! **Mounce** writes that this "has profound implications for understanding Paul's statement in 2Cor 5:21 **note**, that the One Who knew no sin was made sin for us, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. Did Jesus become sin, or did He become a sin offering? Given Paul's thorough acquaintance with the OT, perhaps both are implied." (**Ed comment:** See Ro 8:3-**note** = "in the likeness of sinful flesh and [as an offering] for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh")

George Bush - [Leviticus 12 Commentary](#) Laws relative to the Purification of Women after Child-birth

6. And when the days of her purification are fulfilled, &c. We have here the divine ordinance as to the manner in which the close of this period of purification should be celebrated. On the forty-first day from the birth of the child, if a male, or the eighty-first, if a female, the mother was to appear at the tabernacle, with the present of a twofold offering, by way of testimony to her grateful sense of the mercies vouchsafed to her;—the one a burnt-offering of a lamb of the first year, and the other a sin-offering of a young pigeon or a turtle-dove. We notice, however, in the connexion a kindly provision in behalf of those who were not able, from extreme poverty, to bring a lamb on this occasion. They might commute the offering by doubling the oblation of birds; and this we learn from the Evangelist, Luke 2:24, was done by the mother of our Lord. What a striking view does this afford us of the circumstances in which He was ushered into life, who was not only heir to the throne of David, but appointed also to be 'Lord of lords and King of kings!'

Brian Bell -

1. SACRIFICES! (6-8)

1. Burnt Offering – A lamb.
2. Sin Offering – A turtle dove, or pigeon.
 1. In the case of the **poor**, a 2nd turtle dove or pigeon was acceptable.
 2. See Lk.2:22-24
 1. Jesus was obviously born into a family of poverty.
 2. **2 Cor.8:9** "...for your sakes He became **poor**, that you through His poverty might become **rich**."
 3. **Ex.13:2** "**Consecrate** to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine."
 4. Consecrate = The word {*kadash*} is to consecrate, separate, and set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use; because everything offered or consecrated to God was separated from all earthly uses."
3. The **Burnt offering** symbolized her dedication to God as she returned to her normal life. - The **Sin offering** took care of the defilement involved in the birth process.
4. It also reminded them that every child, no matter how beautiful or delightful he or she might be, is born in sin & must one day trust the Lord for Salvation.
 1. **Ps.51:5** "Behold, **I was brought forth in iniquity**, And in **sin** my mother **conceived me**."
 2. **Ps.58:3** "**The wicked are estranged from the womb**; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."
 3. **Rom.5:12** "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death **spread to all men**, because **all sinned**;"

Leviticus 12:7 'Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female.

- **he shall offer** Lev 1:4 4:20,26,31,35 Job 1:5 14:4 Ro 3:23,26 1Co 7:14 Heb 9:12-14
- **be cleansed** Lev 15:28-30
- **a male** Gal 3:28

MAKING ATONEMENT FOR THE MOTHER

Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female.

NET NOTE on **make atonement** - The purpose of sin offering "atonement," in particular, was to purge impurities from the tabernacle (see Lev 15:31 and 16:5-19, 29-34), whether they were caused by physical uncleanness or by sins and iniquities. In this case, the woman has not "sinned" morally by having a child. Even Mary brought such offerings for giving birth to Jesus (Luke 2:22-24), though she certainly did not "sin" in giving birth to him. Note that the result of bringing this "sin offering" was "she will be clean," not "she will be forgiven" (cf. Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13). The impurity of the blood flow has caused the need for this "sin offering," not some moral or relational infringement of the law (contrast Lev 4:2, "When a person sins by straying unintentionally from any of the commandments of the Lord").

NET NOTE on **the flow of her blood** - *Heb* "from her source [i.e., spring] of blood," possibly referring to the female genital area, not just the "flow of blood" itself (as suggested by J. Milgrom, *Leviticus* [AB], 1:761). Cf. ASV "from the fountain of her blood."

Make atonement (forgive, appease) (See "mercy seat") (03722) **kapar** means to make atonement, to make reconciliation (to reconcile), to purge, to make propitiation (to propitiate), to pacify, to cancel. There are two main ideas regarding the meaning of **kapar** - (1) **Kapar** means to cover over sin (2) A number of resources however favor the idea that **kapar** means to wipe away. These ideas are discussed more below.

Richards notes that "It is often said that the idea expressed (in **kapar**) is one found in a possibly related Arabic root that means "to cover or conceal." **Atonement** would then denote a *covering* that *conceals* a person's sin and makes it possible for him to approach God. Although this relationship is possible, the language link is not at all certain. What is certain is the role that atonement played in the religion of Israel—a role given to atonement by God to carry a vital message about our faith."

As might be surmised the verb **kapar** is found most often in the Pentateuch, especially in Leviticus. In Leviticus, **kapar** is especially prominent in Leviticus 16, occurring 16 times in the great chapter that describes the annual Day of Atonement.

Vine writes that "Most uses of **kapar** involve the theological meaning of "covering over," often with the blood of a sacrifice, in order to atone for some sin. It is not clear whether this means that the "covering over" hides the sin from God's sight or implies that the sin is **wiped away** in this process."

The **NET Bible Note** states that the primary sense of the **kapar** is "to wipe [something off (or on)]" (see esp. the goal of the sin offering, Lev 4, "to purge" the tabernacle from impurities), but in some cases it refers metaphorically to "**wiping away**" anything that might stand in the way of good relations by bringing a gift (see, e.g., Ge 32:20, "to appease; to pacify" as an illustration of this). The translation "**make atonement**" has been retained in Leviticus 1:4 because, ultimately, the goal of either **purging** or **appeasing** was to maintain a proper relationship between the LORD (Who dwelt in the tabernacle) and Israelites in whose midst the tabernacle was pitched.

Leviticus 12:8 'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

- **if she cannot afford a lamb** Lev 1:14 5:7 Lev 14:22 Lev 15:14,29 Luke 2:22-24 2Co 8:9
- **make atonement:** Lev 4:26

Related Passage:

Exodus 13:2+ "**Sanctify** to Me every firstborn (AS WAS JESUS BELOW), the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me."

Luke 2:22-24+ And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."

Leviticus 4:26+ 'All its fat he shall offer up in smoke on the altar as in the case of the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin, and he will be forgiven.

YAHWEH'S PROVISION FOR THE POOR

But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Lev. 1:14–17; 5:7–10) the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean."

Criswell - The bringing of two turtledoves or two young pigeons (one for a burnt offering, the other for a sin offering) by the mother to make atonement and to effect her cleansing became known as the "offering of the poor." When the Lord Jesus was born, this is what Mary brought (Luke 2:22-24). This not only emphasizes the poverty of Mary and Joseph, but it also shows that Mary did not consider herself to be sinless.

F B Meyer (Our Daily Homily) Leviticus 12:8 Two young pigeons.

These were the offerings of the poor, of those whose means did not suffice to buy a lamb. All these offerings pointed to the one great Sacrifice which was to be offered on Calvary.

The blood of Christ is within the reach of the poorest and feeblest. — None can say that it is beyond them, that they cannot afford to procure it, that they are too poor. To the poor the Gospel is preached. The Divine call is to those who have no money. Salvation is to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly. "It is nigh thee."

The faith that apprehends but a part of the Savior's work saves. — The pigeon may stand for the meager apprehension of Christ that is the portion of the faltering and timid; but it saves equally with that fuller conception of his saving work, which might be compared to the bullock of the priest. The question is not as to the quantity but the object of faith. Is it fixed on Jesus? All faith directed to Him cannot but be genuine. It may but touch his garment's hem, yet it saves.

The beneficence of God's law. — What tender touches there are through this strong ancient code! There is such a one here, framed partly in anticipation of the mother of our Lord, who gladly availed herself of its provision. What a glimpse into our Masters humiliation! He owned the cattle on a thousand hills, yet He so emptied Himself that his parents were compelled to bring the poorest offering the law allowed. He stooped that we might rise; emptied Himself that we might be full; became poor that we might be made rich; was made human that we might be made Divine.

G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible - Lev. 12:8 The priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

This is a brief chapter in our Bibles, as it was a brief section in the Hebrew laws. It is none the less one full of suggestiveness. It is the law of Motherhood, and it fences it round in the most sacred way, physically and spiritually. On the purely physical side it will bear close and reverent consideration, providing as it did for the perfect repose of the new mother; and it has been suggested that in the difference of time in the case of male and female children, it had an important bearing on the regulation of the sexes. On the spiritual side, its requirements are very full of importance. Motherhood is one of the most sacred and beautiful things in the whole realm of human experience. This needs no argument. But motherhood is exercised in a race which is defiled. When the great singer of Israel, in his penitential psalm, said: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51.5), he was casting no reflection upon his own mother, but rather stating a racial fact, from which no human being escapes. Here then is the value of this law. God provided that Motherhood should be sanctified by sacrifice. To us, Motherhood has been for ever made holy by the Seed of the woman, through Whom woman is saved in child-bearing. It is always a sad thing, to say nothing stronger, when mothers forget to remember this, and to recognize it in the sacred service of the sanctuary.