

Leviticus Chapter 11 Second Continued

Leviticus 11:37 "And if [any part] of their carcase fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it [shall be] clean."

That which is selected from the other seed in order to be sown, and which is laid by and laid up for that purpose.

Should the carcass, or any part of the carcass of a creeping thing fall upon a heap of it, into a vessel in which it was put, as a dead mouse or the like.

"It shall be clean":

Be fit for use and sown in the earth; because being cast into the earth, and dying and quickening there, and then springing up again in stalk and ear, it would go through various changes before it became the food of man.

The Targum of Jonathan describes it, such as is sown in its dryness.

Or being dry; for if it was wetted it was unfit for use, as follows.

We know that when a seed falls into the ground, it dies. and the new plant which comes from the seed, can produce beautiful fresh products.

It is amazing to me, that a seed can be planted in a place covered with fertilizer, and the fruit the plant brings forth is clean and sweet.

There is a process of death and life here that mortal man does not understand.

The reason the seed above is not unclean, is that it will never be eaten in its present form.

The new seed that comes from this dead seed will be perfectly clean.

Leviticus 11:38 "But if [any] water be put upon the seed, and [any part] of their carcase fall thereon, it [shall be] unclean unto you."

Either accidentally or on purpose.

Whether on sowing seed, and with water with which they water the field, as Aben Ezra interprets it.

Or on seed used for food, by steeping it in water, as sometimes wheat is, and boiled.

And whether it is water or the rest of the liquors, and whether they are put on the seed, or the seed falls into them, it matters not.

As Jarchi says:

"And any part of their carcase fall thereon":

That is, on the seed.

Though Aben Ezra observes, some say upon the water.

The Targum of Jonathan adds, in its moisture, or while it is wet.

And so may be thought to be more susceptible of impurity from the touch of a dead reptile, or any part of it, and which would render it unfit for sowing or eating, until it was dried and cleansed.

Yea, Jarchi says, if it falls thereon, even after it is dried:

"It shall be unclean unto you":

Unfit for use.

If water got on the seed, it would probably cause it to sprout, and the contamination would be soaked into the seed.

Leviticus 11:39 "And if any beast, of which ye may eat, die; he that toucheth the carcase thereof shall be unclean until the even."

Any clean beast, as the ox, sheep, goat, deer, etc.

What, if rightly killed, is very lawful to eat of.

But if it died of itself through any distemper, or was torn by the wild beasts, so the Targum of Jonathan:

"He that toucheth the carcass thereof shall be unclean until the even":

Not the bones, nerves, horns, hoofs, or skin, as Jarchi observes.

These might be handled, because some of them, at least, were wrought up into one instrument or another, by artificers, for use and service, but the flesh of them might not be touched.

Whoever did touch it was ceremonially unclean, and might not go into the sanctuary, or have conversation with men, until the evening of the day in which this was done.

Leviticus 11:40 "And he that eateth of the carcase of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: he also that beareth the carcase of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even."

For though it might be eaten, if rightly killed, yet not if it died of itself, or was strangled, or torn to pieces by wild beasts.

"Shall wash his clothes":

Besides his body, which even he that touched it was obliged to.

"And be unclean until the even":

Though he and his clothes were washed, and he might not go into the court of the tabernacle, or have any concern with holy things, or conversation with men.

"He also that beareth the carcass of it":

Removes it from one place to another, carries it to the dunghill, or a ditch, and there lays it, or buries it in the earth.

"Shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even":

From whence, as before observed by the Jewish writers, uncleanness by bearing is greater than uncleanness by touching, since the former obliged to washing of clothes, not so the latter.

So Jarchi here; and yet still was unclean until the evening, though he had washed himself in water, as Aben Ezra notes.

And so says Jarchi, though he dips himself, he has need of the evening of the sun.

Even clean animals have a possibility of carrying diseases when they die, and in that case, the people would not be permitted to eat them.

This then, has to be an animal that was killed on purpose for some reason or other.

It would also be an animal where someone quickly cut its throat, so the blood would drain.

Hebrews were forbidden to eat blood.

Even if all these things were done, the person who was preparing the meat would get very nasty in the process.

They would need to wash themselves and their clothes to get rid of the dirt they had gotten preparing it.

Leviticus 11:41 "And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth [shall be] an abomination; it shall not be eaten."

Nothing is called a creeping thing, as Jarchi says, but what is low, has short feet, and is not seen unless it creeps and moves.

And "every creeping thing" comprehends, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom observe, the eight creeping things before mentioned (Lev. 11:29).

And mention is made of them here, that they might not be eaten, which is not expressed before.

And being described as creeping things "upon the earth", is, according to Jarchi, an exception of worms in peas, beans, and lentiles.

And, as others observe, in figs and dates, and other fruit.

For they do not creep upon the earth, but are within the food.

But if they go out into the air, and creep, they are forbidden.

This would include snakes, lizards, in fact all reptiles.

These are such an abomination to God, that the devil was in the form of a snake in the garden of Eden.

We will see in the next few verses from Genesis that God cursed the serpent above all other animals.

Genesis 3:14 "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou [art] cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:"

Satan (symbolized by the serpent), is the enemy of mankind and will be always.

Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

We realize that the spiritual meaning of that Scripture is speaking of the followers of Jesus being the enemy of the devil and his crowd.

Leviticus 11:42 "Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon [all] four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat; for they [are] an abomination."

Jarchi's paraphrase is, "whatsoever goeth", as worms and beetles, and the like to them, "upon the belly".

This is the serpent; and to go upon the belly is the curse denounced upon it (Gen. 3:14).

This and every such creature are forbidden to be eaten.

As there are others who either have no feet, or what they have are so short, that they seem to go upon their belly.

And yet, as horrible and detestable as the serpent is, it has been the food of some, and accounted very delicious.

"And whatsoever goeth upon all four":

That is, whatsoever creeping thing.

For otherwise there are beasts that go upon all four that are clean and fit to eat.

But this is observed to distinguish this sort of creeping things from those that go upon their belly, and from those that have more feet, as in the next clause.

Jarchi particularly instances in the scorpion.

"Or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth":

Such as caterpillars, and particularly the Scolopendra, which the eastern people call Nedal.

So Jarchi says, this is Nedal, a reptile which hath feet from its head to its tail, called Centipedes; and the Targum of Jonathan is, "from the serpent, to the Nedal or Scolopendra, which has many feet."

Some of them, have seventy-two, thirty-six on a side, and others eighty-four; some fewer, but all have many.

"Them ye shall not eat, for they are an abomination":

Abominable for food, and to be had in the utmost aversion.

As I said, this includes all vermin that crawl on their belly.

It seems, to crawl on the belly, was part of the curse God put on the serpent.

Leviticus 11:43 "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby."

With any creeping thing that flies in the air, excepting the four sorts of locusts (Lev. 11:22).

And with any creeping thing in the waters (Lev. 11:10).

Or with anything that creeps on the land, by eating any of them.

Which being abominable for food, would make the eater of them so to God, he thereby breaking a command of his.

"Neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them":

By touching and bearing them, as with dead beasts, so with dead flies and the like.

"That ye should be defiled thereby":

In a ceremonial sense.

This is just a broader statement about not eating, or coming into contact with abominable things.

Sometimes by association, they could become abominable themselves.

It is broad enough to cover all the things in detail that were possibly not mentioned above.

Verses 44-45

Sanctify yourselves ... be Holy, for I am Holy”:

In all of this, God is teaching His people to live antithetically.

That is, He is using these clean and unclean distinctions to separate Israel from other idolatrous nations who have no such restrictions, and He is illustrating by these prescriptions that His people must learn to live His way.

Through dietary laws and rituals, God is teaching them the reality of living His way in everything.

They are being taught to obey God in every seemingly mundane area of life, so as to learn how crucial obedience is.

Sacrifices, rituals, diet, and even clothing and cooking are all carefully ordered by God to teach them that they are to live differently from everyone else.

This is to be an external illustration for the separation from sin in their hearts.

Because the LORD is their God, they are to be utterly distinct.

In verse 44, for the first time the statement “I am the LORD your God” is made, as a reason for the required separation and holiness.

After this verse, that phrase is mentioned about 50 more times in this book, along with the equally instructive claim, "I am holy".

Because God is holy and is their God, the people are to be holy in outward ceremonial behavior as an external expression of the greater necessity of heart holiness.

The connection between ceremonial holiness carries over into personal holiness.

The only motivation given for all these laws is to learn to be holy because God is holy.

The holiness theme is central to Leviticus (see 10:3; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:6-8).

Leviticus 11:44 "For I [am] the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I [am] holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Their LORD, and therefore had a right to enjoin them what laws he pleased concerning their food.

And their God, their covenant God, and therefore would consult their good, and direct them to what was most proper, convenient, and wholesome for them.

"Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy":

That is, separate themselves from all other people, and be distinct from them, by using a different diet from theirs.

As their LORD and God was different from all others, so called.

And thus, by observing his commands, and living according to his will, and to his glory, they would be holy in a moral sense, as they ought to be.

Who were under the peculiar care and notice of a holy God, and so highly favored by him.

And particularly by attending to the above laws concerning food, they would be kept from mixing with, and having conversation with the Gentiles.

And so be preserved from falling into idolatry, and continue a holy people.

Serving and worshipping the LORD their God, and him only.

And which seems to be a principal view as to religion, in delivering out the above commands.

"Neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth":

Which is repeated to keep them at the utmost distance from these things, and to fill them with an aversion to them, that they might be careful to avoid them.

There is no penalty annexed to these laws, but the breach of them making them unclean.

Thereby they were debarred the use of the sanctuary, and of holy things, and of the conversation of men, for that day.

But, according to the Jewish writers, such transgressions were punishable with stripes.

Jarchi observes out of the Talmud, that he that eateth "putitha" (a small water reptile), was to be beaten four times.

And if an ant or pismire five times, and if a wasp or hornet six times.

God repeats, in no uncertain terms, who He is and that the people will conform to His wishes.

We have said numerous times, that sanctify means to set aside for God's purpose.

They should be glad to do these things, that they might be called His.

God expected no more from them, than He did of Himself.

He said, I AM HOLY.

He shows them the way they can be holy, and then tells them they must be holy.

These people were being taught to be clean.

It is important for the body to be clean, but the real cleanliness God was trying to teach them and us, is cleanliness of the spirit.

Cleanliness of the inner man, was the real message.

Man was made in the image of God, that He might fellowship with man.

These Hebrews, here, were descended from Abraham in the flesh.

Christians are descendants of Abraham through faith.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

This is their Father, and our Father, giving instructions on how to live pleasing unto Him.

Defile, in the verse above, means to pollute or make unclean.

God wants His family to be a separated people, not caught up in the things of the world.

There is a message in this for Christians, as well.

We are to separate ourselves from the world.

Let's take a look at what the Christians must be like for our Savior to come back for us.

Ephesians 5:27 "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Leviticus 11:45 "For I [am] the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy."

He had brought them out of it, and was now bringing them on in the wilderness towards Canaan's land, in order to settle them there.

And this is observed, to show what obligations they lay under to him to observe his commands.

For since he had done such great things for them, it became them to be obedient to him in all things.

And the more, since his end herein was, as he observes to them;

"To be your God":

To make it appear that he was their God, and they were his special people, whom he had chosen for himself above all people upon the earth.

That he was their King and their God, to protect and defend them, to provide for them, and take care of them, and bestow all good things on them proper for them.

"Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy":

Separate from all others as he was, living holy lives and conversations, agreeably to his will made known to them.

In imitation of him who had chosen and called them to be his people.

For, since holiness is his nature, it becomes them who are his house and family, his subjects and people.

This statement here could be because in Egypt, nearly every animal was worshipped.

My own thoughts on this however, is that God has brought them out of the world, that they might serve Him.

Egypt is a type of the world.

He took them out of the world, that He might take them to the Promised Land.

The very same thing is true with believers today.

When we decide to follow Jesus, we are no longer of this world.

We have no permanent dwelling place on this earth.

To head for the Promised Land with God, we too must leave Egypt.

Abraham was looking for a city made by God.

We, too, must look for that city that cometh down from God out of heaven (New Jerusalem).

Have you left Egypt (the world), yet?

When you do, God will lead you to the Promised Land.

Leviticus 11:46 "This [is] the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth:"

Clean and unclean, what were to be eaten, and what not.

"And of the fowl":

Lev. 11:2.

The unclean ones, which are particularly mentioned that they might be avoided.

All others excepting them being allowed (Lev. 11:13).

"And of every living creature that moveth in the waters":

All sorts of fish in the sea, rivers, ponds, and pools, such as have fins and scales.

These were to be eaten, but, if they had neither, were forbidden (Lev. 11:9).

"And of every creature that creepeth upon the earth":

Eight of which are mentioned particularly, which, when dead, defiled by touching.

And all others are forbidden to be eaten (Lev. 11:29).

Together with such creeping things that fly, excepting those that had legs above their feet to leap with (Lev. 11:20).

This is a recapitulation of the several laws respecting them, though not in the exact order in which they are delivered in this chapter.

Leviticus 11:47 "To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten."

Whether of beasts, fish, fowl, and flying creeping things.

"And between the beast that may be eaten, and the beast that may not be eaten":

The former clause takes in all in general, this instances in a particular sort of creatures.

And the first mentioned of which, that might be eaten, are, that part the hoof, are cloven footed, and chew the cud.

And that might not, that chew the cud, but divide not the hoof, or divide the hoof, but chew not the cud.

And now, by such like descriptions and distinctions of the creatures treated of, the Israelites would be able to make a difference between the one and the other, and know what was to be eaten, and what not.

The one thing we must see in these laws of the diet, God had the welfare of His people in mind when He gave these restrictions.

Sometimes it seems as if the restrictions God has made are unfair; don't you believe it.

God loves you.

He loved you so much, He sent His son to save you.

Every restriction is for our benefit.

GOD LOVES YOU, HE WANTS TO SAVE YOU, LET HIM!

Leviticus Chapter 11 Second Continued Questions

1. Why was the sowing seed clean, even though something unclean touched it?
2. What happens to a seed when it falls into the ground?

3. What did the author find amazing about plants, and where they grow?
4. There is a process of what here, that mortal man does not understand?
5. Why did the seed become unclean, if it got water on it?
6. What must immediately be drained from an animal, for it to be allowable for food?
7. Why is this so?
8. Verse 41 tells us that what is an abomination?
9. What are included in these creeping things?
10. What was cursed above all the animals?
11. What was the devil in the form of in the garden of Eden?
12. When God cursed the serpent to crawl on its belly, what else felt the same curse?
13. What are these Israelites cautioned of in Leviticus 11:43?
14. What does the word, sanctify, mean?
15. "Be ye _____, for I am _____."
16. What is the real cleanliness God is trying to teach here?
17. If ye are Christ's, then are ye _____ seed.
18. What does defile mean?
19. We are to present ourselves a glorious church without what?
20. What was worshipped in Egypt?
21. God has brought them out of the world that they might _____ Him.
22. What must we believers do, before we can head for the Promised Land?
23. What is the one message we must see loud and clear in these dietary laws?
24. Every restriction is for whose benefit?