

The Book of Leviticus

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Section Outline

- I. **Sacrificial System (Leviticus 1–7)**
- II. **Ministry of the Priesthood (Leviticus 8–10)**
- III. **Laws of Purification (Leviticus 11–15)**
 - A. Purity with regard to Food (11:1–47)
 - B. Purity with regard to Childbirth (12:1–8)
 - C. Purity with regard to Infectious Disease (13:1–14:57)
 - D. Purity with regard to Personal Hygiene (15:1–33)

Principles of Purity

- The laws concerning clean and unclean emphasize the following three principles:
 - ◆ *Identification:* The Israelite, by observing the laws of the clean and unclean, would be identifying himself/herself with the God Who gave those laws. Each Israelite also would be demonstrating a visible distinction setting them apart from the heathen peoples living around them.
 - ✓ “For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God” (Lev 11:45a).
 - ✓ See Deuteronomy 14:2 (this statement is placed at the head of the parallel enumeration of clean and unclean animals).
 - ◆ *Consecration:* To “be holy” (Lev 11:45; 19:2; 20:7) is to be set apart unto God and from sin and from that which hinders service. Even that which is amoral must sometimes be given up in order not to hinder one’s service for

God. This was a vital lesson for Israelites as much as it is for New Testament believers. Separating cases of infectious disease and a variety of bodily emissions from the congregation was as much for preventing the spread of disease as for a cure. Sin is not involved in all cases, as can be seen regarding the mildew found in the structure of a house (Lev 14:33-53).

- ♦ **Dedication:** For the Israelite to keep the minutiae of such laws required personal dedication. It required that one recognize the sovereign authority of the God Who gave the laws — *He* has the right to place such demands upon His people and to change those demands any time He chooses (see Acts 10–11, especially 10:15).

Lessons from Leviticus

- ♦ We must yield totally to the sovereign authority of God in our lives. The ultimate reason for these purity laws in Leviticus was simply that God decreed them.
- ✓ **Example:** The Scripture, by divine authority, commands us to give out of our earnings to the work of the local church. Failure to obey places us in a weakened spiritual condition and hinders the work of the church.
- ♦ We must be willing to be different when God demands it. These laws passed away because the division between Israel and the nations is removed (Acts 10:28; Eph 2:11-22).
- ✓ **Example:** Our speech should not contain the crudities and swearing that the world uses. We should dress modestly even while others around us are not.
- ♦ We must remain alert to those things that are not sinful, but that hinder us and those around us from consistent service for God. If we fail to act to remove the hindrance, we have sinned.
- ✓ **Example:** Bringing sick children into the congregational meetings or its associated classes and nurseries can make others ill and thus hinder their service and the service of the congregation as a whole.

NOTE: It is unfortunate that many English Bible translations have followed the Septuagint in translating the term for infectious skin disease as “leprosy.” Leprosy might be involved as one of the potential diseases, but it is not involved in every case described in Leviticus 13–14.