

Leviticus Chapter 11

- Leviticus Chapters 1-10 describe how to worship the Lord; this chapter begins a new section that describes how to walk or live with the Lord on a daily, practical basis.
- Holiness extends to every part of our lives, including our diet.
- John Wesley is generally credited with the saying “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” – Something that the Jews would identify with because godliness and cleanliness were so completely intertwined in every part of their lives.
- This may seem like a complicated chapter, but when you break it down it is actually fairly simple:

V: 1-24 are about what can and cannot be eaten. This section is broken down into 4 sub-sections: land animals, water animals, birds, and insects.

V: 25-43 Is about what can and cannot be touched.

V: 43-47 Is an exhortation to holiness and gives the reason or justification for all of the prohibitions.

Dietary laws: (3 reasons) The main reason for the dietary laws wasn't simply because of health or hygienic related issues.

1. The main reason for the dietary laws was to distinguish the Jews from all the peoples around them, to set them apart – part of their consecration.
 2. As a secondary issue, in a sense as a side effect or related issue was a health related benefit, the fruit of their obedience.
 3. To give us illustration as NT believers.
- Two important things to keep in mind:
 1. God gave these laws to the nation of Israel only, not to the Gentiles. As Gentile believers we are no more holy or spiritual for any attempt to keep the kosher laws. We're made holy by the blood of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit within us – nothing tops that.
 2. These laws were temporary:

Speaking of Jesus:

Colossians 2:14 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.”

1 Timothy 4:3-5 “¹Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. ²Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain

from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. ⁴For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: ⁵For it is sanctified / holy by the word of God and prayer.”

- These laws do not apply to us today, because we are not under the Law, thus we can enjoy our clam chowder, our lobster tails, and our Alaskan king crab legs.
- There were and possibly still are good reasons for not eating some of these animals as we'll see.
 1. S.I. McMillen, M.D. wrote a book back in the 70's entitled None Of These Diseases; looking at the various practices in the Bible that have directly affected peoples health for having observed what the Bible said, or for having forsaken the same.

The theme or inspiration for his book came from:

Exodus 15:26 “And said, if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.”

2. He records that: In the early 1900's Dr. Hiram Wineberg studied the records of patients at the Mayo Clinic in New York and discovered that of the many hundreds of women who suffered from cervical cancer, there was not a single Jewish woman among them, even though they were 7% of the local population. This was later attributed to Jewish males being circumcised, which later lead to the practice of circumcising baby boys soon after birth, a practice that was routine up until just the last few years.
 3. Basically Dr. McMillen was describing how adherence to God's word with regard to certain foods, dead body's, running sores, and various types of contaminations – if adhered to resulted in healthier people, less disease, less death.
 4. Adherence to Levitical laws stopped the black plague during the dark ages, through quarantine, the separation of the sick from the healthy.
 5. The following of God's word, led to doctors washing their hands before moving on from examining one patient to another – and the infant mortality rate, along with the mortality rate of women in child birth both dramatically dropped – simply by adhering to God's word.
- Again, we are not under the Law. God did not put the same prohibitions upon the Gentile believers. As the Gentiles / non-Jews began to believe in the Lord Jesus, there were those within the church that supposed that the Gentiles must essentially become Jews, or adhere to the Law.

- The church held a council about this, which is recorded in Acts Ch. 15, the result of which they told the Gentile believers:

Acts 15:28-29 “²⁸For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; ²⁹that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”

Matthew Ch. 15 / Mark Ch. 7 “It isn’t what goes into a man that defiles him, it is what comes out...”

V: 1 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron – Aaron being included.

- This is not an entirely new revelation:

Genesis 7:1-2 “¹And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation. ²Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.”

- Because the idea of clean or unclean animals pre-date the Mosaic or Levitical law, the issue isn’t the animal – it is clean or unclean simply because God says that it is or it isn’t, it’s a sovereignty issue.

V: 2 “... *these are the beasts which ye shall eat...*”

Genesis 9:3 “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb (garnish) have I given you all things.”

- Vegetarianism, veganism...? Personal preference is one thing (☺) but there is no increase in spirituality as a result, not necessarily closer to God. Most people need protein for healthy lives.
- These listings in our Bibles are representative as opposed to complete, intended to give us the general idea of things.

V: 3 Whatever has the divided hoof and chews the cud is good to eat – oxen, cattle, sheep, goats, and deer: cows are good to eat, lamb chops are good to eat.

- The determining factor was the way in which it walked and how it received nourishment, these criteria were used to determine if it was clean or unclean.

Psalm 1:1 “Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly...”

Ephesians 5:15-16 “¹⁵See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

- Chews the cud – what are we taking in? How are we receiving it?

Matthew 4:4 “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

- Are we chewing on the word of God? It’s not just about reading it, it’s also about digesting it, chewing on it...considering it, digesting it.

Psalms 1:2 “But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate both day and night.” (Chewing the cud)

Joshua 1:8 “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

- How we walk, and what we do with the word of God, these things determine if we are clean or unclean.

V: 4-8 If it only chews the cud but doesn’t have cloven hooves, or the opposite then it’s unclean.

1. Camels = no (drats!) (smell!) salmonella / food poisoning. Jesus would later rebuke the religious leaders, the Pharisees for straining at a gnat, then swallowing a camel – which were forbidden – basically majoring in the minors.
2. Coney = rock hyrax / rabbits without ears = no.
3. Hare = rabbit = no. With wild rabbits there is a real danger of getting tularemia.
4. Swine = pigs = no. Unless cooked properly you can get trichinosis. Swine have cloven hooves, but don’t chew the cud.

- Considering again the determining factors, how they walk, do they chew the cud:
 - They look like their walking the right way, but they don’t chew on the word. Moral lives apart from God.
- Besides not eating these animals, they were not to touch their carcasses.
- In each case they are declared to be “unclean” – a word that is used 32 times in this chapter.
- Unclean: (H2931) tame', taw-may'; foul in a religious sense; defiled, infamous, polluted, unclean.
- Kosher = clean

V: 9-12 Covers what can and cannot be eaten from out of the oceans, rivers, and lakes.

- Whatever has both fins and scales is good to go; everything else is unclean.
- This eliminates as an example shrimp, clams, sea slugs, seals, manta rays, giant octopus, jelly fish, and the monster from the blue lagoon... amongst others. Basically all trash eating bottom feeders.
- There are certain times of the year when clams and shell fish are actually excrete a deadly poison, they are poisonous to humans – actually in the months that have an “R” in them – September, October, January, February, March, April, they are ok – but in May - August they are deadly ...

V: 10 Abomination (10X's)

- Abomination: (H8263) sheqets, sheh'kets; detestable, filthy, unclean, an idolatrous object:--abominable, un-fit for use.

V: 13-19 Takes us through which birds not to eat:

- NKJV does a good job with the names of these birds on the don't eat list:
- The eagle, and the vulture, and the buzzard – so far so good. The kite, the falcon, the raven and the ostrich, the short-eared owl, seagulls, hawks, little owls, fisher owls, screech owls, white owls, jackdaws, carrion vultures, storks, herons, hoopoe's, and bats. (These names are not all exact.)
- Notice what is not there, and essentially ok: chickens, ducks, geese, quail, pheasant, and doves amongst others.
- There is a commonality here with the birds that are listed on the don't eat list: they all eat carrion; dead animals, road kill... which defiles.

V: 20 All fowls that creep, flying insects that walk on 4 legs are an abomination – like flies & mosquito's. Consider what they eat...

V: 21 – 22 Flying creatures which have legs over their feet, meaning that they are “jointed” which means they can jump or hop – like grasshoppers, locusts, and certain beetles like crickets are ok to eat.

- The distinction here is that these creatures eat living or fresh things; they eat the grass of the field, or leaves off of trees.
- The previous group partakes of dead things & blood; whereas this group eats from living things.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is quick and powerful...” - it's alive!

Jeremiah 2:13 “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

Jesus said:

John 7:37-38 ³⁷In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. ³⁸He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

V: 23 But all these other things like flies – are an abomination.

V: 24-26 **Touching:** These things make a person unclean, whoever touches them will be unclean until even.

- People who became defiled from touching a carcass were considered unclean until the end of the day.
- They had to wash themselves and their clothes and couldn't enter the camp until sunset.
- This kept them from spreading to others any contamination that they might have picked up from touching the dead animal.
- Touching their dead bodies, defiles. Touching animals that divide the foot, but is not cloven hooved, or doesn't chew the cud – simply touching these animals, like pigs & raccoons, makes one unclean.

V: 27-28 Dogs, cats, lion's, tigers, and bears... oh my. Bears also transmit trichinosis. How they walk & what they eat...

“Unclean until the even” The Jewish day ended at Sunset, and the new day began.

- They were unclean until the beginning of the new day.

Lamentations 3:22-23 ²²It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. ²³They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”

V: 29-30 Weasels, mice / rats, turtles, ferrets, chameleons, lizards, snails, and moles are all unclean.

V: 31-33 Touching these animals when they are dead makes one unclean, if they fall into a wooden vessel or a clay jar, they become unclean.

- A principal that is working throughout this chapter is: that which is clean / holy cannot make something that is already unclean – clean or holy, but that which is unclean or unholy can make something that is holy or clean to be unclean. We can be defiled, so we need to be careful of those things that would defile us.
- If you take a little bit of clean water and drop it into a vessel of muddy water, the muddy water isn't made clean.
- Take a little bit of muddy water and drop it into a vessel of clean water and the whole vessel is polluted, it is defiled.
- Often times with movies, people will say – it was a good movie except for that one part, or that one word, or their lyrics are mostly ok.
- A wooden vessel or a cloth sack or one made of animal skins can be washed, but a clay jar or vessel must be broken.
- **When a defilement, or for our purposes – sin, is introduced into a clay vessel; that is us – then the only way to clean it is to break it – in other words brokenness!**

V: 34-35 The water that was used to wash these things out, if it came onto any food or upon any other vessel containing food would become unclean.

- If the carcass was found amongst the cooking utensils or on the stove, which was basically a fire ring, it had to be broken down and destroyed. Thinking about the diseases spread by rats and other rodents, this would seem to be good sound counsel.

V: 36 A pit full of water / cistern, like a well, or fountain into which one of these dead animals falls is still clean, just the person who removes the carcass becomes unclean.

V: 37-38 If a mouse dies in seed before its sown, the seed is still clean. But if it dies on seed that has been watered, meaning the seed has opened up or germinated, then it is unclean.

V: 39-40 If any of the animals that are clean and can be eaten die of themselves as opposed to being killed or slaughtered, then when they touched them or removed them, or ate of them, they became unclean until the evening.

V: 41-43 Creepy crawly things are not to be eaten, worms, spiders, centipedes, roaches, snakes, lizards – they are an abomination – they are to be avoided.

- What this all amounts to is adopting God's perspective on things: if God says it is good, then it is good. If God says it is bad then it is bad.
- Then it's a matter of purposing in our heart to love the things that are good, and to hate the things that are bad.

Amos 5:14-15 “¹⁴Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. ¹⁵Hate the evil, and love the good...”

Isaiah 5:20 “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

- The first step towards 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, but Eve “saw that the tree was good for food.”
- Society rejects moral absolutes; we embrace humanism, humanistic theology, relativism, situational ethics, situational Christianity.

Judges 21:25 “In those days there was no king in Israel: (no authority, including God) every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

V: 44-47 Because God is holy we are to be holy, we are to be sanctified, consecrated for His use and purposes – we are not to be defiled.

- The reminder: “*I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God:*”.
- Never forgetting who delivered them, never forgetting who saved them!
- There is a difference between clean and unclean – and it is to be evident.
- The way to holiness is through obedience to God's word:

Psalms 119:9 “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

- If the Jewish people were to keep themselves clean and pleasing to the Lord, they had to exercise discernment; this meant knowing God's word, respecting it, and obeying it.

Parents were to teach these things to their children, and warn them:

Deuteronomy 6:7 “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

- The Jews had to remind themselves every hour of every day that they belonged to Jehovah, the true and living God – and that this was a privilege.

Paul exhorts us:

Ephesians 4:1 “... walk worthy of the vocation / calling wherewith ye are called.”

Ephesians 4:17-20 “¹⁷This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ¹⁸having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: ¹⁹Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰but ye have not so learned Christ.”

- What all this chapter boils down to is that when God says something is good, then it is good or clean, when God says something is bad or unclean then it is unclean simply because God says that it is.
- We then choose to love that which God says is clean or good, and we choose to hate that which is evil or unclean.
- Holiness is about the attitude of our heart
- Keeping “kosher” doesn’t necessarily change our character, or our spirit – only faith in Jesus can do that.