

Leviticus 11 - 16

THE NECESSITY OF THE CLEANSING

INTRODUCTION

One of the responsibilities of the priesthood involves their duty to instruct the people on distinguishing between holy and common, and between unclean and clean. With this as a backdrop, Leviticus 11 to 16 deals with the classification of “clean” and “unclean” food (chapter 11) and rites of cleansing (chapters 12-15). It closes with the procedure for celebrating the Day of Atonement by cleansing the people and God’s sanctuary (chapter 16), which is the focal point of the entire sacrificial system of the Israelites.

a) Pollution through Uncleanness – Leviticus 11:1-15:33

- Unclean Animals (11:1-47)
- Uncleanness from Childbirth (12:1-8)
- Uncleanness from Diseases (13:1-14:57)
- Uncleanness from Discharges (15:1-33)

b) Purification through Atonement – Leviticus 16:1-34

- Preparation for the Day of Atonement (16:1-10)
- Cleansing of the Tabernacle through Atonement (16:11-22)
- Cleansing of the Participants after the Atonement (16:23-28)
- The People’s Duty on the Day of Atonement (16:29-34)

PRE-VIDEO READING / PREPARATION

Read Leviticus 10-16

EXTRA READING:

1. What made some animals clean and others unclean?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/animals-clean-unclean.html>

VIGNETTE #2 - Leviticus 11-16

<https://youtu.be/MgqDspGWml8>

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why did God make the distinction between clean and unclean animals in Leviticus 11? What did the separation of clean and unclean animals represent for Israel? (see 'Extra Reading')
2. Jesus abolished the distinction between clean and unclean animals in Matthew 15:11. And through Peter's vision in Acts 10:15, God overturned these food laws. Now no animal is unclean or clean, but why would Jesus abolish this food law?
3. The purity laws in Leviticus 11 to 15 seemed some of the strangest laws for us to read, as they center around food, childbirth, sex and skin disease. What was the purpose of these laws?
4. The Day of Atonement was so important because this was the day the high priest was permitted to go into God's presence in the Holy of Holies (Leviticus 16:2-3) to make the atoning sacrifices for Israel.
 - a. Why must the high priest first make atonement (the sacrifice of the bull) for himself and his own house? (Compare [Heb. 7:26-28.](#))
 - b. What was the significance of the two goats for the Day of Atonement rituals (Leviticus 16:7-10)? How was that fulfilled in Jesus?
5. In the Old Testament, these uncleannesses can only be fixed by the sacrificial system of Leviticus, bearing in mind that these rituals do not heal the person. Unlike the priests in Leviticus who had to wait for an ailment to clear up before they could call anyone clean, Jesus instantly healed discharges of blood and people with unclean skin diseases ([Matthew 8:3](#)). He could declare them as ritually clean and physically healed.

What Leviticus could only perform as a ritual, Jesus performed as a reality. And the good news is, we do not have to wait until our uncleanness clears for us to approach Jesus. We cannot spread our disease to him. In fact, the opposite is true. He comes out to us while we are still in our disease and spreads his holiness to us.

Knowing this, how do we respond to God's grace and His call to be holy (Lev 11:44, 1 Pet 1:16)?

CLOSING REFLECTION

How did you get access to the Presence of God, i.e. what makes you acceptable before God? Are you truly "accepted for who you are"? How does the Gospel reveal God's righteousness?

CONNECTING WITH GOD (Prayer)

End the time with prayer.

Pray that the Holy Spirit would give you eyes to see God who is holy and pure. And you would see Jesus as the holy and pure God that draws the unclean near and gives them His holiness.

Thank God for the great salvation accomplished for us by Jesus Christ. God has provided a way for us to dwell in His presence and He does this finally and fully through Jesus dying for us on the cross - our once-and-for-all atoning sacrifice for our sins. His blood is sufficient for the sin offering.

Spend time in prayer, speaking to the Lord about your response to his grace.

Song for meditation: Holy Forever, by Chris Tomlin

<https://youtu.be/lkHgxCemCRk>