

Leviticus 15 - Thursday, December 3rd, 2009

- In Leviticus 15 God gives the Israelites laws concerning bodily fluids and discharges. I know you're really excited to study about this.
- Here again we have one of those chapters that, at first glance, can seem to have no meaning or application to our lives today.
- However, what we're learning, in our study of this book, is that there is a reason why this and the chapters like it are in the Bible.

- God wants His people healthy and holy, and the laws and practices in this chapter are given to protect the Israelites from disease.
- By the way, perhaps I should hasten to say that tonight's teaching is rated PG13 because it deals with sexually transmitted diseases.
- Suffice it to say, this chapter has profound and even practical truth that applies to our lives today like it did for the Israelites back then.

"God told the Israelites in Exodus 15:26 that if they did what He said, He wouldn't bring any of the diseases brought on the Egyptians. It's no secret: unhealthy lifestyles are killing us! Elevated stress hormones are toxic to our systems. Grief and bitterness, like wounds to the soul, cause spiritual concerns of anger and depression. Unhealthy habits lead to a myriad of diseases. Can faith produce better health? Can corporate worship reduce hospital visits? Can prayer replace pills? Modern medical research reveals in 80 to 90 percent of studies what Christians have known for centuries: Weekly church attendance, daily Bible reading, and a constant attitude of prayer is the prescription for healthy living—mind, body, and soul". S.I. McMillen, M.D. & David E. Stern, M.D - "NONE OF THESE DISEASES"

"There were doubtless great sanitary reasons for many of these enactments. This book is one of the greatest sanitary codes in existence. God made religious duty enforce regulations essential to the physical health and well-being of his people. But there were deeper reasons yet. The whole of these arrangements were contrived to teach profound lessons to us all of the nature and evil of sin, and of the need of being continually cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ."

F.B. Meyer Devotionals on Leviticus (http://preceptaustin.org/leviticus_sermon_illustrations_2.htm)

15:1 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,² "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean.³ And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge -- whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness.⁴ Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean.⁵ And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. ⁶ He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

- The Lord is likely describing a sexually transmitted disease because it's an unclean discharge that seems to be from the genital area.
- When this would happen, they would have to be sort of quarantined so as to not spread the infection to anyone else.

"On this ground the person was declared unclean and all commerce and connection with him strictly forbidden. The Septuagint version renders [it]; 'the man with a gonorrhoea,' no less than nine times in this chapter..." Adam Clarke

7 And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.⁸ If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.⁹ Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean.¹⁰ Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries any of those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.¹¹ And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.¹² The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

- Anything he touches, wears, sits on, rides in or on, and anything or anyone he makes contact with, was to be unclean as well.
- Any earthen vessel that was touched by the discharge had to be broken. This speaks to how sin breaks us when we break God's laws.

13'And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean.¹⁴ On the Eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest.¹⁵ Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge.

- Notice that its seven days, (completion), before he's clean, then on the eighth day, (new beginnings), he was able to make atonement.
- Also, it's interesting to note that once he had been cleansed of the disease, he was to bring both a burnt offering and a sin offering.
- The burnt offering speaks of consecration and the sin offering of confession, which indicates that the disease was the result of sin.

16'If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening.¹⁷ And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening.¹⁸ Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

- If a man were to have a discharge of semen, he was to wash his entire body in water and remain unclean until the evening.
- This included any garment and any leather on which the semen came into contact with because it was the result of a venereal disease.
- Also, a husband and wife who had sexual intercourse where there was an emission of semen would wash and be unclean till evening.

19'If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.20 Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean.21 Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.22 And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.23 If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening.24 And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

- This had to do with a woman during her period. If she was menstruating she would be unclean for seven days.
- Also, if she were to have sexual intercourse with her husband, he would become unclean for seven days as well.
- I'm going to go ahead and address this now, because we'll see it come up again in chapter 18, and then again in chapter 20.

Leviticus 18:19 "Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period. NIV

Leviticus 20:18 "If a man lies with a woman during her monthly period and has sexual relations with her, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them must be cut off from their people." NIV

- In other words, they were forbidden to have sexual relations during menstruation, but if they did, they were to be cleansed as a result.

25'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean.26 Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity.27 Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 28'But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.29 And on the Eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.30 Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness.

- Here the woman was unclean as long as she had a flow of blood. When it was complete she would take sacrifices to the Tabernacle.
- Again, the requirement of a sin offering would seem to indicate that the woman had contracted a sexually transmitted disease.

31'Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.32 This is the law for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby,33 and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean."

- It's important to know that none of these discharges made a man or a woman "sinful," but, it would make them ceremonially unclean.
- There is nothing wrong with discharges of semen and menstruation in and of themselves. It's just what they represent.
- The blood, or menstruation symbolizes redemption and the seed, or semen, symbolizes life.

- The thought here is that God wants His people to be set apart. In the ancient world, there was no separation between sex and worship.
- Pagan gods were worshipped by having sex with the temple prostitutes. God established this for both physical and spiritual reasons.

- Perhaps this is a good time to bring up the question of whether or not these laws apply to us today?"

- The answer is no because in Acts 15 it was decided that we could be a follower of Jesus without conforming to this Mosaic Law.
- If that's the case, then why did we have to study this chapter? There are a number of reasons why, consider the following:

1. This deals with the hidden and private uncleanness in our lives, the way chapters 13-14 dealt with leprosy as an outward uncleanness.

Psalms 19:12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. KJV

Psalms 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. KJV

2. The remedy for this inward disease was washing and cleansing, just as we are cleansed from secret and private sins by God's Word.

John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. NIV

Psalms 119:9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. NKJV

3. This hidden uncleanness would infect anything or anyone it came into contact with, just as our hidden sin affects other people.

"The unclean soul spreads uncleanness. Whatever the ceremonially unclean touched, used, or sat on, was polluted. Even those who came into contact with him were defiled. How wary all true Israelites must have been of their associates, lest they should contract pollution! Let us adopt similar precautions, and not voluntarily associate with the unholy or unclean. ..."

F.B. Meyer Devotionals on Leviticus (http://preceptaustin.org/leviticus_sermon_illustrations_2.htm)

4. No matter how egregious and even hideous the disease, there was a new beginning after there was a complete cleansing.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. NKJV

"Though hid from sight, yet He is ever near the child of God. His grace, and blood, and cleansing, are always requisite, and ever ready. Amidst and after every act, incident, and episode of life, we should be quiet before God, considering if we have ought to confess, and asking to be ever kept from staining our white robes."

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