

# Leviticus 8-15

## God's Holiness calls for perfection in body

THE BIBLE HOUR  
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## Torah Review – where are we?

**Genesis** – book of beginnings (man is ruined); covenant given

**Exodus** – book of redemption and wilderness (man is rescued and redeemed); tabernacle constructed

**Leviticus** – book of atonement and a holy walk (man is cleansed); tabernacle service

**Numbers** – book of wanderings (man fails to trust); wilderness; tabernacle becomes mobile

**Deuteronomy** – the law is repeated, (preparation for Canaan); the covenant is renewed

▶ **LEVITICUS:**

- ▶ One month at the foot of Mt. Sinai
- ▶ First month of Tabernacle operation
- ▶ God takes up residence in the midst of His people

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## Key theme: HOLINESS

Holiness is a central attribute of God, reflecting His absolute purity, moral perfection, and separation from sin. It is both awe-inspiring and fearsome. It is both a defining characteristic of God's nature and the standard by which He calls His people to live.

<p><b>RITUALS</b></p> <p>Animal sacrifices Festivals Celebrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ personal holiness is obtained thru proper atonement, which means the sin of the people is 'covered over' by the ritualistic sacrificial death of animals, which serve as a substitute penalty for the people's sin.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRIESTHOOD</b></p> <p>Ordination Standards Duties and Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ representatives of the people to go into God's presence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PURITY</b></p> <p>Standards of behavior Clean vs. unclean Ritual and moral purity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ God's holiness should affect every part of life including what we eat.</li> </ul>
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## Leviticus in 7 sections

CHAPTERS

▶ RITUAL

▶ PRIESTHOOD

▶ PURITY

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## Key Topics of Leviticus Chs. 8 - 15

### Ch 8-10: Consecration of Priests

- Ordination ceremony
- Beginning of ministry
- Tragic results of unauthorized rituals

### Ch 11-12, 15 Laws of Cleanliness

- Regarding Food/animals
- Childbirth
- Bodily discharges and other cringy subjects

### Ch 13-14, Diseases

- Skin issues
- Mildew

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## Chapter 8:1-7

**8** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread. <sup>3</sup>And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” **4 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him**, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

<sup>5</sup>And Moses said to the congregation, “This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done.” <sup>6</sup>And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. <sup>7</sup>And he put the coat on him and tied the sash around his waist and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him and tied the skillfully woven band of the ephod around him, binding it to him with the band.

- ▶ This is a public event
- ▶ “all the congregation” likely the elders and leaders, representing the tribes and clans
- ▶ Note: Moses did as the LORD commanded
  - ▶ Commanded: 20x
- ▶ Washed: in the laver of the courtyard
- ▶ Oil was special, set priests apart

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## Ch. 8:8-13

<sup>8</sup> And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. <sup>9</sup> And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses.

<sup>10</sup> Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. <sup>11</sup> And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them. <sup>12</sup> And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. <sup>13</sup> And Moses brought Aaron's sons and clothed them with coats and tied sashes around their waists and bound caps on them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

- ▶ Urim and Thummim: likely ‘the curses and the perfections’: sacred lots used to determine the will of God. Urim (curses) = no; Thummim (perfections) = yes.
- ▶ Ornate priestly garments are a visible reminder of the glory and honor of the invisible LORD
- ▶ Unique anointing oil not to be used by anyone else but priests
- ▶ Sons also consecrated, dressed in linen (not as fancy but still representative of holiness)

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## Ch. 8:14-17

<sup>14</sup> Then he brought the bull of the **sin offering**, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering. <sup>15</sup> And he<sup>bl</sup> killed it, and Moses took the blood, and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar around it and purified the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it to make atonement for it. <sup>16</sup> And he took all the fat that was on the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses burned them on the altar. <sup>17</sup> But the bull and its skin and its flesh and its dung he burned up with fire outside the camp, as the LORD commanded Moses.

- ▶ Oil may consecrate to service, but alone is insufficient to purify from sin
- ▶ Bull for sin offering makes possible the cleansing of the sins of Aaron and his sons
- ▶ Laying hands on head: identification, laying the guilt on the animal, transfer
- ▶ Blood on part sanctifies the whole altar

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## Lev. 8:18-24

<sup>18</sup> Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. <sup>19</sup> And he killed it, and Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar. <sup>20</sup> He cut the ram into pieces, and Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat. <sup>21</sup> He washed the entrails and the legs with water, and Moses burned the **whole** ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering for the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

<sup>22</sup> Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. <sup>23</sup> And he killed it, and Moses took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. <sup>24</sup> Then he presented Aaron's sons, and Moses put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar.

### ► 2 rams of sacrifice

- Whole burnt sacrifice, a symbol of total devotion and surrender, offered in whole to the Lord.
- Ram of ordination –in place of fellowship offering; symbolized communion with each other and God
- Ear, thumb and toe consecrated - to hear God's voice; do God's work; walk in God's ways

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## Lev. 8:30, 33-36

<sup>30</sup> Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his garments, and also on his sons and his sons' garments. **So he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.**

<sup>33</sup> And you shall not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting **for seven days**, until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take seven days to ordain you. <sup>34</sup> As has been done today, the Lord has commanded to be done to make atonement for you. <sup>35</sup> At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, performing what the Lord has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded." <sup>36</sup> **And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the Lord commanded by Moses.**

- Both Aaron and sons are 'all in.' Neither the priests nor what they wear can be used for any 'common' purpose
- 7-day ordination: practice repeating the rituals every day without leaving

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## Lev. 9 – The LORD accepts Aaron's offering

<sup>9</sup> On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, <sup>2</sup> and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. <sup>3</sup> And say to the people of Israel, "Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering, <sup>4</sup> and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you." <sup>5</sup> And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And Moses said, "This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you." <sup>7</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

### ► Service begins!

- Priests offer sacrifices for themselves first before offering sacrifices for the people, order is important
- Sin (purification/cleansing), burnt (atonement/covering), grain (thanksgiving for provision) and fellowship meal (peace) offerings
- Peace offering blesses the people
- We are off to a good start!

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## Lev. 9:22-23

<sup>22</sup> Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. <sup>23</sup> **And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.**

### 1st blessing: High priest blessing of Num 6:22-27

<sup>22</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>23</sup> "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

<sup>24</sup> ""The LORD bless you and keep you;

<sup>25</sup> the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

<sup>26</sup> the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.'"

<sup>27</sup> "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

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## Lev. 9:24

<sup>24</sup> And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

- ▶ 'Fire'; supernatural fire - theophany (manifestation of God tangible to human senses)
- ▶ Symbolic of God's acceptance of the offerings
- ▶ 'Shouted': rejoice, sing for joy
- ▶ The God who was once unapproachable is now approachable

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## Ch. 10 – Things immediately go wrong

**10** Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup> And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.

- ▶ The wrong authority (not commanded)
- ▶ The wrong people (should be Aaron)
- ▶ The wrong instruments (own censers)
- ▶ The wrong time (not the Day of A. for High Priest to burn incense in HOH)
- ▶ The wrong fire (not from brazen altar; common coals?)
- ▶ The wrong motive (pride)
- ▶ The wrong influence? (alcohol)
- ▶ Aaron held his peace: acknowledges God's justice in judgement of their sin

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## Lev. 10:8-11: Very important duties

(summary of vv 4-7): Moses does not permit Aaron to leave the tent of meeting to mourn his sons. Cousins will carry the bodies of Nadab and Abihu outside the camp for burial.

<sup>8</sup> And the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying, <sup>9</sup> "Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. <sup>10</sup> You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, <sup>11</sup> and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them by Moses."

- ▶ Not recorded that they were drunk. May be implied
- ▶ Sober mind is required to properly carry out duties
  - ▶ Think clearly for duties and teaching
  - ▶ No mistakes in the rituals
- ▶ 3 critical duties assigned, with upcoming laws associated
  - ▶ Food and animals, childbirth, sex, skin disease

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## Lev. 10:12-20

<sup>12</sup> Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his surviving sons: "Take the grain offering that is left of the LORD's food offerings, and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. <sup>13</sup> You shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due, from the LORD's food offerings, for so I am commanded..."

<sup>16</sup> Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned up! And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the surviving sons of Aaron, saying, <sup>17</sup> "Why have you not eaten the sin offering [...] as I commanded."

<sup>19</sup> And Aaron said to Moses, "Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and yet such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved?" <sup>20</sup> And when Moses heard that, he approved.

- ▶ V. 12-13: instructions to eat their portions remind the priests that they have not been rejected
- ▶ Aaron could not eat the offering with a good conscience due to his sorrow.

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## Clean and Unclean (Pure and Impure)

- ▶ Chapters 11-15 are about the ritual purity required of the Israelites
- ▶ The language of “unclean,” “clean,” and “holy” are used differently than today.
  - ▶ These terms refer to ritual states.
  - ▶ “Unclean” and “clean” do not mean “nonhygienic” or “hygienic.”
  - ▶ It is wrong to approach God’s holy space in an unclean state.
- ▶ The unclean must undergo specific rituals, including washing, waiting periods, and offering sacrifices to purify from defilement to become clean
- ▶ These ritual states guide the community to understand the types of actions a person may (or may not) engage in, or the places that a person may (or may not) go. Those who are unclean, e.g., may not partake of a peace offering (Lev. 7:20), while those who are clean may (Lev. 7:19).

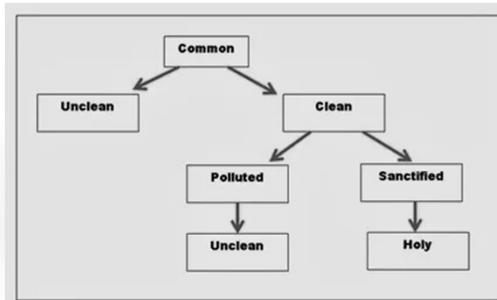
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## Holy vs. Common

- ▶ ‘Holiness’ refers to the unique, one-of-a-kind status of Yahweh, who is the source of all life, goodness, beauty, and light.
- ▶ Everything that does not directly share in the life and holiness of Yahweh is ‘common.’ Humans are considered common because they are made from the earth, but we do have the ability to become holy.
  - ▶ Things considered ‘common’ may not be used in worship
  - ▶ Someone/something ‘common’ can be clean or unclean (like sick or healthy.)
    - ▶ Clean is the ideal state (healthy and whole) but is NOT the same as being holy.
- ▶ The ceremonial laws help make the distinction between what’s holy vs. common. These laws included dietary restrictions, purification rituals, and guidelines for worship. Certain animals were deemed clean and could be eaten, while others were unclean and forbidden (Leviticus 11). These laws served as daily reminders of the need to maintain purity and holiness in all aspects of life.

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## A visual guide



- ▶ Ways to become unclean:
- ▶ Eating or touching an unclean animal
- ▶ Contact with anything dead
- ▶ Contact with blood or bodily fluids (sex, childbirth)
- ▶ Contact with mold/mildew
- ▶ Having a skin disease

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## Chapter 11:1-23 – Dietary Regulations (NIV)

**11** The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, <sup>2</sup>“Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: <sup>3</sup>You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud.

<sup>4</sup>“There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. <sup>5</sup>The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. <sup>6</sup>The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. <sup>7</sup>And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. <sup>8</sup>You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

Some creatures listed in Ch. 11 are unknown to us.

The law named representative creatures and didn't give an exhaustive list.

Moses gave the general characteristics of what was allowed/prohibited

These make up Kosher food laws as we know them

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## Water and air creatures, insects, others

Water Creatures: vv. 9-12

must have both fins and scales  
Shellfish, catfish, eels prohibited  
Scavengers prohibited

Birds/Fowl: vv. 13-19

Birds of prey (eat the decaying flesh of dead animals) are prohibited – blood still in the flesh

Flying insects: vv. 20-23

All forbidden except jointed hind legs for jumping (locusts, crickets, grasshoppers)

Other creatures: vv. 27-31

<sup>27</sup> Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who picks up their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. These animals are unclean for you.

<sup>29</sup> “Of the animals that move along the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, <sup>30</sup> the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink and the chameleon. <sup>31</sup> Of all those that move along the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening.

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## Why the dietary laws?

- ▶ God desires to extend His holiness to daily life of people and train them in righteousness and sanctification at home and daily activity
- ▶ Constant reminder that Israel should be separate and distinct from other nations: consumption or refusal of food reflects who they are as God's set-apart people
- ▶ Keep themselves in ritual cleanness so they can come into God's holy presence

What reasons have been suggested for clean/unclean classification?

Hygiene of foods (God is concerned about physical health of Israelites)

Prohibited animals were associated with chaos/the 'underworld' in ancient pagan cultures

Neither are stated in scripture; God's reasons are not spelled out explicitly

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## Peter's Vision (Acts 10:9-35)

<sup>9</sup> About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup> He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. <sup>11</sup> He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup> It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. <sup>13</sup> Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

<sup>14</sup> “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

<sup>15</sup> The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

<sup>16</sup> This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

<sup>28</sup> [Peter] said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.

<sup>34</sup> Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism <sup>35</sup> but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

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## Purification instructions when unclean (10:24-35)

▶ <sup>24</sup> “You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches [animal] carcasses will be unclean till evening. <sup>25</sup> Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.

▶ <sup>33</sup> If a [dead ground-moving creature] falls into a clay pot, everything in it will be unclean, and you must break the pot. <sup>34</sup> Any food you are allowed to eat that has come into contact with water from any such pot is unclean, and any liquid that is drunk from such a pot is unclean. <sup>35</sup> Anything that one of their carcasses falls on becomes unclean; an oven or cooking pot must be broken up. They are unclean, and you are to regard them as unclean.

▶ Not sinful to remove a dead animal from your land, property or storage; but it renders you unclean until evening

▶ Corpses pollute and contaminate (obvious) but cause uncleanness because **DEATH AND DECAY ARE NOT NATURAL TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD.**

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## Ch. 12-15: Keys to understanding uncleanness

1. Death and decay were never a part of God's original creation. These are a result of the curse. Anything symbolic of death and decay or mortality are automatically 'unclean.'
2. Blood is a big deal. The only blood allowed in the tabernacle is blood of sacrifice.
3. Blood and body fluids outside the body are a symbol of death.

### Leviticus 17:11

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

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## Purity Law Chiasm in chapters 12-15

- A. Reproduction discharges: childbirth (ch. 12)
  - B. Leprosy laws for flesh and garments (ch. 13)
    - C. Restoration after healing (14:1-32)
  - B. Leprosy laws for houses (14:33-55)
- A. Reproduction discharges: conception/sexuality (15:1-33)

Chiasm places the emphasis on the center point: in this case, the restoration after healing.

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## Purification after Childbirth (Ch. 12)

**12** The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Say to the Israelites: ‘A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. <sup>3</sup>On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. <sup>4</sup>Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. <sup>5</sup>If she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding

- ▶ Next, bring burnt offering and sin offerings to entrance to the tent of meeting for atonement, result is ritual cleanness.

### Luke 2:21-24

Records Mary and Joseph fulfilling this purification ritual

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## Key reasons childbirth symbolizes mortality/death

- ▶ Blood and Life/Death: Blood loss during birth, even in a healthy process, embodies mortality
- ▶ Fragility of Life: Each birth introduces another mortal being through a risky childbirth process
- ▶ Echo of the Fall: The painful "labor" in childbirth reflects the consequences of Adam's sin in Genesis 3, tying the physical process to humanity's fallen condition.
- ▶ Potential for Future Life: A girl's longer period of impurity (14 days vs. 7 for a boy) is linked to her greater potential to bear life, thus a greater potential for future mortality and a longer period to ritualize this cycle.
- ▶ 33 days/66 days: Some scholars suggest these laws also served as ancient public health measures, enforcing quarantine and hygiene after childbirth

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## Chapters 13-14: Leprosy and cleansing

- ▶ 'Leprosy' per Strong's concordance:
  - ▶ in people, a malignant skin disease
  - ▶ In clothing, a mildew or mold
  - ▶ In buildings, a mildew or mold
- ▶ Not necessarily the literal leprosy we know today ("Hansen's Disease")
- ▶ General term that may include ringworm, psoriasis, leucoderma, as well as 'Hansen's disease'; plus scaly, moldy-type infestations
- ▶ **Not a common cause, but similar symptoms: decay and flaking that spreads and destroys**

▶ Illnesses such as smallpox, measles, and scarlet fever might start out with a skin condition considered to be leprosy —isolation until the condition cleared up helped prevent the spread of these kinds of diseases among the people of Israel.

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## Chapter 13: Leprosy laws

Bodily diseases are incompatible with the presence and glory of God – no entering God's presence in a state that is not whole

Priests are appointed to investigate each potential and established case of skin disease, clothing and home infestation

Separation from camp, isolation up to 2 weeks with a visit after a week; washing of body or clothing/tearing out/burning of the diseased item

Priest does not promote a cure, his rituals were performed only after the disease had passed.

- ▶ Takeaway:
- ▶ Pastoral care is modeled in this chapter
  - ▶ Multiple visits in/out of camp
  - ▶ Inspection, conversation?
  - ▶ Bringing of food?
  - ▶ End goal is restoration to regular fellowship
- ▶ Lots of people are 'outside' or 'cut off' in society
  - ▶ Duty of Christians to tend to them

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## Chapter 14: Laws for Cleansing Lepers

Rites of restoration the priests were to carry out for a person who was healed of a skin infirmity

- ▶ Inspection; offering of 2 birds
  - ▶ One sacrificed;
  - ▶ One sprinkled with blood and set free, (similarities to the scapegoat ritual of ch.16) symbolizing departure of affliction and restored access to God
- ▶ Washing, shaving, live outside his own tent (inside camp)
- ▶ 8<sup>th</sup> day – grain, guilt, wave, burnt and sin offerings, anointing oil from head to toe
- ▶ Celebration of being restored from death to life

- ▶ Cleansing of house:
  - ▶ Inspection, removal of afflicted parts [or removal of house altogether outside the city]
  - ▶ Offering of the birds for cleansing the house
  - ▶ Points to the holiness of God who owns everything, that believers can sanctify possessions and be free from worldly contamination

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## Ch15: The PG-13 chapter we won't read out loud

- A. Abnormal discharges - of a man
  - B. Normal discharges – of a man
    - C. Normal discharge in sexual intercourse between a man and a woman
  - B. Normal discharges – of a woman
- A. Abnormal discharges - of a woman

Sex, or anything to do with intercourse, human sexuality or sex-related disease are to be kept away from God's presence, this is all unclean.

1. Death and decay were never a part of God's original creation. These are a result of the curse. Anything symbolic of death and decay or mortality are 'unclean.'
2. Blood is a big deal. The only blood allowed in the tabernacle is blood of sacrifice.
3. Blood and body fluids outside the body are a symbol of death.

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## Why?

**To set the Israelites apart from surrounding nations who used sex as part of fertility rituals and worship of pagan gods: to appeal to, imitate or please those gods.**

God ordained marriage and invented procreation, and provides the boundaries of proper behavior.

His concern for holiness extends to diet, personal hygiene and the things that touch His people, and all areas of human sexuality.

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## Key concepts as you read ch. 15:

- ▶ Things associated with life (reproduction, childbirth) and death (corpses) brought about ritual impurity, requiring a temporary distance from God's pure presence.
- ▶ Semen contains the potential for new life; its discharge, though natural, is seen as a loss of that potential.
- ▶ Menstrual blood: when expelled also represents a life not created.
- ▶ Ritual, Not Moral: Being "unclean" from married sex doesn't mean being sinful, but rather being ritually ineligible to approach the sanctuary until cleansed (e.g., by bathing).

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## Ch. 15 summary

Individuals were required to make the necessary determinations for themselves if they had become unclean through any emissions (or by contact with that person or their stuff), and then follow through with the prescribed ceremonial remedies of washing, and separation from the worship site.

Cleansing required the burnt and sin offerings identical to the postpartum offering.

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## What did Jesus do?

The gospels record some very intentionally-placed characters in the accounts– all who would have been ritually unclean and would have made Jesus unclean.

- ▶ He touched dead bodies (Jairus' daughter)
  - ▶ He touched a leper ('I am willing; be cleansed')
  - ▶ He healed the woman with the issue of blood when she touched his clothing
  - ▶ He ate with sinners and tax collectors
- ▶ He defied norms and showed that compassion transcends ritual purity laws
  - ▶ Engaged with marginalized people, with compassion and healing
  - ▶ Demonstrated his power to forgive sins
  - ▶ Revealed his ID as Messiah

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## Wrap-up and Take home notes

- ▶ We are to worship God on HIS terms. In a society that makes up whatever it wants to believe about 'higher powers' we should be careful to take God at HIS WORD for who he is and what he tells us about truth.
  - ▶ We must make proper distinctions about our lives, beliefs and doctrine
  - ▶ God wanted his people set apart. That has not changed. Do not be conformed to the image of the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Rom 12:2
- ▶ All life is sacred
  - ▶ Like leprosy, sin is more than 'skin deep.' It separates us from God and isolates us from others, it spreads and worsens, and it defiles us. It must be 'cut out.'
  - ▶ Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and is not repulsed by our physical, emotional, relational, behavioral impurity. Healing and salvation are possible through Him alone.

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## Definitions

- ▶ Consecration: take what is common and make it holy or sacred
- ▶ Profane: take what is holy and defile it; profane is also another word for 'common'
- ▶ Anoint: To set someone or something apart for a specific holy purpose, often with oil
- ▶ Sanctification: set apart by God for His exclusive use
- ▶ Atonement: God's provision for forgiveness: a 'covering' of sin by the blood of an innocent substitute.

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