

Leviticus 11-12

Bible Study

Review

Chapter 8—consecration of Aaron and his sons

- Washing, clothing and anointing
- Three sacrifices and sacrificial meal
- Seven days of consecration while not leaving the tabernacle

Chapter 9—“Eighth day”—priesthood service begins

- Newly ordained priests offer up the first public sacrifices
 - Aaron pronounces a blessing upon Israel
- The glory of the Lord appeared and consumed the burnt offering and fat upon the altar

Chapter 10—Nadab and Abihu disobey and offer profane fire (8th day)

- A warning to Aaron and his sons about the incorrect use of alcohol in priestly duties

Leviticus 10:9

⁹“Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations,

Review Continued

Leviticus 10: 10 [key verse]

“that you may **distinguish** between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean

11 “and that you may **teach** the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses”

These verses set up the instructions in chapters 11-15
[3rd part of the book]



Chapters 11-15—Laws of Cleanness/uncleanness

(Expositors) “the Levitical laws of **cleanness** have no known extensive parallel in the surrounding cultures.

The laws were symbolic of **spiritual cleansing** and served to set Israel apart from the surrounding nations.”

(Tyndale) “**Uncleanness** is a most important concept in the Old Testament. Leviticus 11-15 are devoted to expounding its meaning, but it is difficult for secularized Western man to grasp.

Indeed, to approach God in such a condition was positively dangerous and could lead to death of the individual concerned.

But more important still, uncleanness could defile the tabernacle, which would make it impossible for God to dwell there. [Lev. 15:31]”

Leviticus 15:31

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.

Arrangement of Leviticus 11-15—appears to be according to the duration of uncleanness

[Chap.11]—Clean and unclean meats
(Gordon Wenham, New Int. Com. OT) “The uncleanness laws start with uncleanness that is **permanent**: that associated with various animals and food [chap. 11]”

[Chap.12]—uncleanness of childbirth
Isolation from a total of forty to eighty days to be ceremonially clean

[Chapters 13 and 14]—Infectious skin disease
Isolation from seven to fourteen days or more depending upon the severity

[Chapter 15]—Uncleanness from secretions
Washing and waiting, usually a week

“unclean”
(Theological Wordbook OT) “Animals and foods were considered clean or unclean by their nature.

Persons and objects could become ritually unclean.
Personal uncleanness could be incurred through birth, menstruation, bodily emissions, ‘leprosy’, sexual relations and misdeeds, and contact with death”

Introduction Chapter 11

Two subjects addressed in chapter 11

First Section:

Verses 2-23, 41-45—clean and unclean animals for food

Second section:

Verses 24-40—uncleanness by contact with a dead animal [carcass]

(Word) “That a shift in subject has taken place at v. 24 is also evidenced by the change in style.

Instead of direct address in the second person, the typical sentence has an imperfect verb with a participial clause as its subject. The style throughout this section then is more impersonal than that of the first section.”

First section Ch. 11: Clean and unclean meats

Clean and unclean meats are based upon a holiness principle:
Holiness: as a word in OT has the meaning of being sacred or dedicated...set apart...also being connected with God

The quality of holiness belongs to God...he is the source of it....and God is the originator of all righteous principles and laws

Leviticus 11: 44-45

⁴⁴For I *am* the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

⁴⁵For I *am* the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

Leviticus 11

v.2-23—1st section Clean/unclean meats
[Parallel account: Deut. 14: 3-20]

¹Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them,
²“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘These *are* the animals which you may eat among all the animals that *are* on the earth:

v.1 1st time God spoke to Moses **and** Aaron—priests responsible to distinguish between the clean and unclean and teach [10: 10- 11]

“animals’ [OKJ] “beasts”= animals (Heb.) *behemah*
(Companion) “The Hebrew division of the animal kingdom was: 1) Land animals 2) water animals 3) birds of the air 4) swarming animals

Genesis 7:1-2

¹Then the Lord said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen *that you are* righteous before Me in this generation.

²You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that *are* unclean, a male and his female;

The first biblical account noting the distinction between clean and unclean...more than 1,000 years before the covenant with Israel

³Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves *and* chewing the cud—that you may eat.

A basic simple principle—whatever animal that is cloven-footed and chews the cud can be eaten by humans

Cattle, sheep, goat, deer and gazelle families; antelope, bison, caribou, elk, giraffe, hart, ibex, moose, ox, reindeer

⁴Nevertheless these **you shall not eat** among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;

“you shall not eat”

(Companion) “These laws are not arbitrary. Food plays a chief part in health and sickness. It is our wisdom to obey these laws now, as far as possible....some for sanitary reasons. Some from peculiarities of climate. Some for separating from other peoples”

⁵the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you;

⁶the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you;

⁷and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you.

⁸Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They *are* unclean to you

“rock hyrax” [OKJ] “coney”= “the old English name for rabbit” (Companion)

Animals that are scavengers—such as pigs, bears, etc can eat and thrive on decaying flesh

Predatory animals such as wolves, lions, leopards most often prey on the weakest (sometimes diseased) animals in herds

(UCG Booklet) "**A common denominator of many of the animals God designates as unclean is that they routinely eat flesh that would sicken human beings**"

v. 7 “swine”

(Tyndale) “The domestic pig appears to have been first reared in ancient Egypt in the Old Kingdom period

⁹These you may eat of all that *are* in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat.

¹⁰But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which *is* in the water, they *are* an **abomination** to you.

¹¹They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination.

¹²Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that *shall be* an abomination to you.

v. 9 “fins and scales” —define what fish may be eaten... “that you may eat”

v. 10 “an abomination”

(NSB) “is a stronger word than unclean. It implies not just avoidance, but active, fierce repulsion”

(Tyndale, Harrison) “The clean varieties mentioned usually swim at various depths in the water, whereas the unclean species tend to have their habitat in shallow water.”

‘shall be an abomination to you’

(Tyndale) “However careful one might be in the preparation and serving of the “edible crustacea”, there can be no guarantee that the food will not produce such adverse effects as allergic reactions of varying severity, or even more serious complications involving food poisoning or parasitic infestation.”

¹³And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they
are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard,
¹⁴the kite, and the falcon after its kind;
¹⁵every raven after its kind,
¹⁶the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind;
¹⁷the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl;

¹⁸the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture;
¹⁹the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

(Tyndale) “Many of those mentioned were birds of prey, or birds which fed on carrion.”

v. 18 ‘white owl’

[OKJ] “Swan”—NKJ has the correct translation: a kind of owl

v. 18 ‘jackdaw’—a kind of crow

v. 19 ‘hoopoe’—a colorful bird found across Afro-Eurasia notable for its crown of feathers

²⁰All flying insects that creep on *all* fours *shall be* an abomination to you.

²¹Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on *all* fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth.

“insects”

(New Int. Com. OT) “The Hebrew *sherets* is a broader term than the English translation insects suggests; ‘swarming things’ or ‘swarmers’ expresses it meaning more aptly. They are small creatures that often occur in swarms and move to and fro in haphazard fashion.”

v.20, 21 “creep on all fours”

(Tyndale) “This phrase can hardly describe insects as having four legs, since the *Insectae* as a class normally have six legs. The reference is evidently to their movements, which resemble the creeping or running of the four-footed animals.”

“All insects that did not jump about because they did not possess the elongated hind legs of the locust family were to be regarded as detestable. This unclean group would include all those insects that fed upon filth, rubbish or carrion, and were therefore potential transmitters of disease.”

²²These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind.

²³But all *other* flying insects which have four feet *shall be* an abomination to you.

v. 22

(Tyndale) “The clean insects are members of the group *Orthoptera*, and could be indentified from the jointed hind legs, which are longer than the others and enable the insect to leap about”

(New Int. Com. OT) “Four kinds of locusts or grasshoppers are pronounced clean. They are characterized by having jumping legs to hop with. These enable them to have a distinctive hopping motion as opposed to swarming.

Second section: v. 24-40—Defilement by contact with **dead animals**

(New Bible Com) “Guidelines are here given as to the kinds of contact that made a person ritually unclean”

²⁴By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening;

²⁵whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening:

²⁶*The carcass* of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean.

v. 24 “carcass” (Heb. *Nebela*) “This noun refers to a human or animal body devoid of life” (Theological Wordbook OT)

(NSB) “Merely to touch an unclean carcass caused a person to be **unclean until evening**, when the new day began for the Israelites.

v. 25 “whoever carries part of the carcass...”

(NSB) “If a person carried or picked up a carcass, or part of a carcass, that persons uncleanness was greater.”

v. 26 (NSB) “The word *carcass* is not in the Hebrew text, but clearly that is what is meant here. A live unclean animal, such as a donkey or camel, could not make a person unclean simply by touching it. Otherwise, many people would have been unclean all the time.”

²⁷And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on *all* fours, those *are* unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening.

²⁸Whoever carries *any such* carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It *is* unclean to you.

(NSB) “Whatever goes on its paws is unclean because it does not have a cloven hoof. As with the previous group, to touch a carcass was to be unclean and to carry a carcass was to be even more unclean, requiring a more thorough cleansing.” [v.28]

(Tyndale) “Any person who became defiled through touching the bodies of unclean [dead] animals had to wash his clothes and remain defiled until evening, when a new day commenced.

At that time he would wash his body also, and until this had been done he **could not participate in tabernacle worship or in any personal sacrificial rites.**”

²⁹These also *shall be* unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind;

³⁰the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.

³¹These *are* unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening.

(NIV Application Commentary) “All land swarmers—with locomotion close to the ground: mainly reptiles, but also some rodents and low slung mammals (weasel)—are prohibited for eating, and carcasses of some of them not only affect human beings directly but also defile a variety of objects, including vessels and their contents [v.29-38].”

(Tyndale) “These animals when dead defile anything they touch, and such articles or objects have to be soaked in water to remove any impurities, and be regarded as unclean until evening, by which time any infectious organisms should have dissipated with the drying process and exposure to sunlight.”

³²Anything on which *any* of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether *it is* any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item *it is*, in which *any* work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean.

³³Any earthen vessel into which *any* of them falls you shall break; and whatever *is* in it shall be unclean:

³⁴in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean.

³⁵And everything on which *a part of any such* carcass falls shall be unclean; *whether it is* an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; *for they are* unclean, and shall be unclean to you.

(Tyndale) “Even cooking equipment such as ovens or stoves [v.35] was defiled by the carcasses of unclean species.

The only exception to the rules about contamination consisted of the spring or cistern [v.36], the latter being an artificially constructed container for domestic water supplies.”

³⁶Nevertheless a spring or a cistern, *in which there is* plenty of water, shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean.

³⁷And if a part of *any such* carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it *remains* clean.

³⁸But if water is put on the seed, and if *a part of any such* carcass falls on it, it *becomes* unclean to you.

v. 36 A spring or cistern, a source of water cannot be contaminated
v. 37 Dry seed for sewing is clean
v.38 Wet seed in contact with a creeper is contaminated

³⁹‘And if any animal which you may eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening.

⁴⁰He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

(Tyndale) “Contact with carcasses of clean animals that had died from natural causes was also forbidden, otherwise temporary defilement would result.

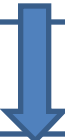
⁴¹‘And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth *shall be* an abomination. It shall not be eaten.

⁴²Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on *all* fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth—these you shall not eat, for they *are* an abomination.

⁴³You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them.

(NIV Application Commentary) “Apparently because all land swarmers are prohibited without exception, this class in general is reserved for the end of Leviticus 11 as a potent contrast to holiness [v.44-45]”

The most important point of the entire chapter: observing God’s food laws has the purpose of emulating the Lord’s holiness



⁴⁴For I *am* the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

⁴⁵For I *am* the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

⁴⁶'This *is* the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth,

⁴⁷to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.'"

(Word) "This instruction concludes with a summary statement giving the purpose of this instruction. It is designed to make a clear distinction between the clean and unclean among animals and between those that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten"

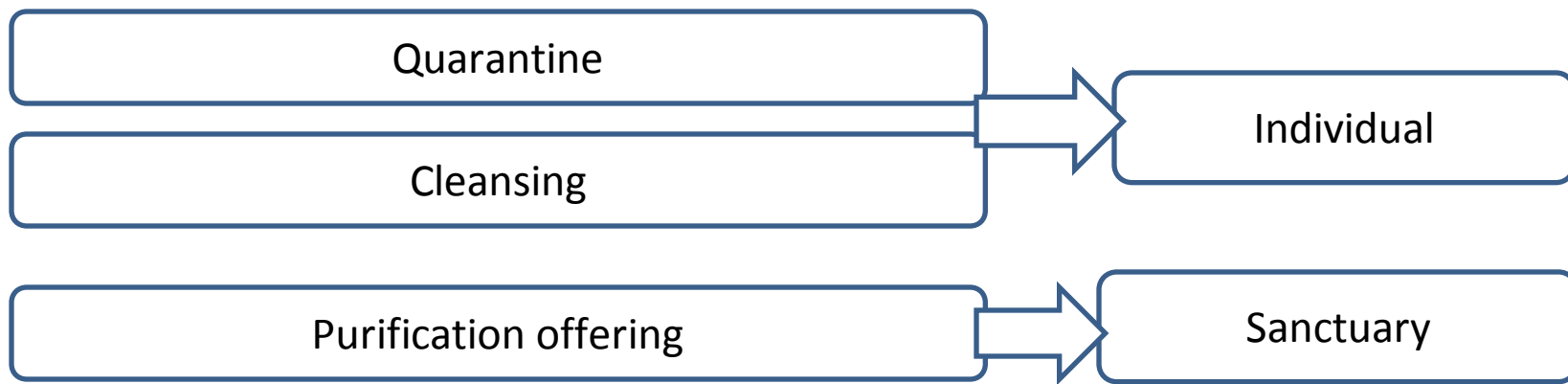
Introduction:
Chapters 12-15--Disposal of impurity

(JSB, Tanakh) “The next four chapters prescribe how to dispose of the types of impurity identified by the priestly tradition.

Impurity (Heb. *Tum’ah*) is often translated as contamination, defilement , pollution, or uncleanness.”

(JSB, Tanakh) “Three elements effect the disposal of impurity: the passage of time, cleansing (usually in water), and the purification offering.

The first two purify the individual, the third the sanctuary.”



Uncleanness—Spiritual principles and physical /health principles

(Expositors) “The best way to think of the notion of ‘uncleanness’ is as a teaching device to remind the people of Israel of the holiness of God”

(A Guide to the Pentateuch, Wenham)

“ Something or someone unclean may not enter God’s presence in worship: only the clean may do so.

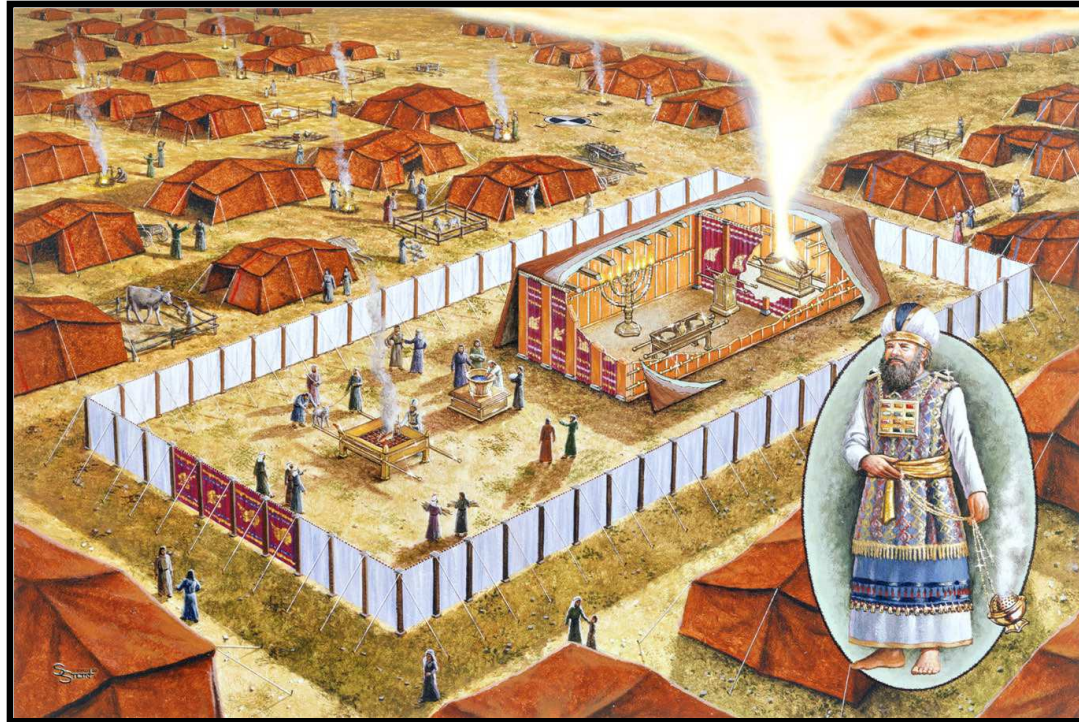
God is super-holy and should anyone unclean come near God, he is liable to be destroyed. Clean could be paraphrased as ‘fit for worship’

Hygienic principles:

One of the ways that communicable illness is dealt with as taught by God is—
Quarantine...isolate the person from the rest of the community

- Illustrating the need for removing spiritual uncleanness by the lesson of physical separation
 - And the importance of washing with water

Only the ceremonially clean could worship at the tabernacle



(Word) “A primary purpose of the laws of ritual purity then is for each person to prepare himself, making himself clean, before he goes to the sanctuary to worship.

The laws of ritual purity keep people mindful of the wide gulf that separates sinful people from the holy God, and yet they speak of God’s grace in providing a way for sinful, frail humans to prepare themselves to bridge that gulf and enter into his presence.”

Chapter 12

Uncleanness after childbirth

¹Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
²“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean.’”

(Expositors) “Childbirth, like menstruation, rendered the mother unclean. The period was seven days for a boy, twice that for a girl [v.2,5]. There may be more reasons than one for such a law. First it would put the mother in sufficient isolation to assist in bringing her back to normal health.

Also, it is possible that such a provision would help prevent the spread of childbed fever, which in former days took so many lives.”

(Und. Bible Com.) “Childbirth was a time fraught with danger and fear. Death was often imminent.

The loss of blood could be extensive, and blood was significant in the priestly scheme of things. Dealing with such a dangerous loss of blood would keep one from worship.”

³And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

God directed Abraham that a male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day as a sign of the covenant

Genesis 17:10-12

¹⁰This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;
¹¹and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

¹²He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised...

v. 3 (Tyndale, Harrison) "Circumcision on the eighth day is ideal medically, since after that period the nervous and vascular development of the child makes resection a painful affair.

Furthermore, newborn children are susceptible to hemorrhage up to the fifth day of life, due to inadequate levels of vitamin K and prothrombin, both of which are important elements in the clotting process. By the eighth day the prothrombin level has stabilized at 100%, making it a suitable time for circumcision."

⁴She shall then continue in the blood of *her* purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, **nor come into the sanctuary** until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

v. 4 'the blood of her purification'

(BKC) "It was not the birth itself (the baby was not considered unclean) but the post natal discharge of blood [v.5,7] that made the mother ceremonially unclean.

(Und. Bible Com.) "to be purified from her bleeding shows the connections between the loss of blood and uncleanness in this case"

(Tyndale) "The purification that the mother underwent was strictly the result of the secretions which accompanied the birth. The discharges involve tissue debris, mucus and blood, and are known as the lochia."

⁵But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purification sixty-six days.

(NIV Application Commentary) “During the following period of thirty-three [v.4] or sixty-six days [v.5] of postnatal blood purification, the mother’s impurity is not communicable by touch, and she is only **restricted from contacting anything sacred or entering the sanctuary compound [v.4].**

She is free to contact anything in the common sphere, including her husband by resuming sexual relations”

(New Int. Com. OT) “No convincing explanation has been offered why the birth of a girl makes the mother unclean for twice as long as the birth of a boy. There does seem to have been a belief in antiquity that the postnatal discharge lasted longer in the case of a girl.

⁶When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

(NIV Application Commentary) “When the period of impurity is over, the mother must bring a pair of sacrifices to the sanctuary: a young sheep for a burnt offering and a dove or pigeon for a purification offering....we know that such a pair of sacrifices carries the function of a purification offering...”

⁷Then he shall offer it before the Lord, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This *is* the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

v. 7 “for the flow of her blood”

(New Int. Com. OT) “For Douglass, a bleeding or discharging body lacks wholeness and is therefore unclean. Loss of blood can lead to death, the antithesis of normal healthy life.”

⁸‘And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.’”

Luke 2:22-24

²²Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord

²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “*Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord*”),[£]

²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “*A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*”[£]

“sin offering”

(NIV Application Commentary) “She has not sinned...The goal/meaning of the ritual procedure is to remove physical ritual impurity from the woman so that she is ritually pure, not to remove moral fault from her in preparation for divine forgiveness. So her hatta’t is a *purification offering.*”

Lessons

The laws of clean and unclean meats are given and specifically connected to holiness

Leviticus 11:44-45

⁴⁴For I *am* the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

⁴⁵For I *am* the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

The new Jerusalem with God dwelling on Earth will not allow any uncleanness or anything that defiles to enter into it

Revelation 21:27

²⁷But there shall by no means enter it anything [£]that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.