

Day 196 - SATURDAY: July 1st

Deuteronomy 14

Deuteronomy 14:1-29 NKJV

"You are the children of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. "You shall not eat any detestable thing. These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, and that chews the cud, among the animals. Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, such as these: the camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they are unclean for you. Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses. "These you may eat of all that are in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales. And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you. "All clean birds you may eat. But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; every raven after its kind; the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after their kinds; the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl, the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl, the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat. "Also every creeping thing that flies is unclean for you; they shall not be eaten. "You may eat all clean birds. "You shall

not eat anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the alien who is within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you are a holy people to the LORD your God. "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. "You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you. "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll begin our last day of study for the week with the detailed UCG reading plan for this chapter: "In this chapter, Moses reminds the Israelites about proper and improper

mourning for the dead, about the consumption of clean versus unclean animals, and about tithing. *All* the laws discussed in this chapter are still valid for us today, with *two* exceptions.

When a close friend or relative dies, we are not to follow the ways of the heathen by "cutting" ourselves in mourning and despair, as ancient pagans and certain American Indian tribes did, nor by shaving the front of our head (verse 1).

The reason is given in verse 2: We are a holy people to God, and as such we are to abstain from all religious practices dedicated to pagan gods or the dead, who were believed to live on in another life.

Further, we are to abstain from eating any unclean animal (verses 3–21), which is a "detestable" or "abominable thing" when used as food. Though the only land animals specifically identified in this chapter as unclean for food are the camel, the rabbit, the rock hyrax and the pig, the general description of unclean land animals is given as all that fail to meet the criteria of both chewing the cud *and* having cloven hooves (verses 7–8). Thus, all reptiles and amphibians are unclean, as are worms, spiders and most insects. So too are most mammals, the only ones acceptable for food being most of the ruminants, such as

bovines, antelope, deer, sheep, goats and, though not always thought of, giraffe. In addition, only those water creatures "that have fins and scales" may be eaten (verses 9–10), thus ruling out things like eels, sharks, catfish, clams, squid, lobster, crab, shrimp and all other shellfish. Clean birds may be eaten (verses 11, 20)—but these are only indirectly defined by listing *unclean* birds that must *not* be eaten (verses 12–18). From this list, we can see which birds are clean by noticing the characteristics of the birds which are unclean: (1) a clean bird has a crop; (2) a clean bird has a gizzard with a double lining which can be easily separated; (3) a clean bird is not a bird of prey; (4) a clean bird does not devour food while flying; (5) a clean bird's hind toe and middle front toe are both elongated; (6) when a clean bird stands on a perch, it spreads its toes so that three front ones are on one side of the perch and the hind toe on the opposite side. All unclean birds lack at least one of these six characteristics. This means that the following birds are clean among others: chicken, turkey, duck, goose, swan, pheasant, quail, partridge, dove (pigeon), and all songbirds. While the King James Version says the "swan" is unclean in Deuteronomy 14:16 and Leviticus 11:18, the New King James and other modern

versions correctly translate the word here as referring to a kind of owl. Birds like owls, hawks and ostriches are *unclean*—and so are their eggs.

Verse 19 tells us that all creeping or swarming things are unclean. Yet Leviticus 11, the parallel passage to this one, clarifies that certain kinds of flying insects with jointed legs above the feet for leaping may be eaten, e.g., locusts, grasshoppers and crickets (verses 21–22). It is believed that in the ancient Middle East, these insects were ground into a fine meal and baked into cakes—perhaps explaining the later description of John the Baptist's eating locusts with honey (Matthew 3:4).

In verse 21 of Deuteronomy 14, the Israelites were permitted to give aliens the meat of animals that died of themselves. However, there is no indication that unclean animals were allowed to be eaten by *anyone*. Therefore, the prohibition for Israelites in verse 21 to eat meat of animals that died of themselves and the permission to give it to foreigners for consumption deals with only *clean* animals. This was, therefore, a *ritual* law—a point made even clearer by the fact that an Israelite who *did* inadvertently eat of an animal that had died of itself became *ritually clean* again in the evening after washing himself with water (Leviticus

17:15; compare 11:39–40). We do *not* read anywhere, however, that the eating of an *unclean* animal brought only ritual uncleanness that ended in the evening after washing. Also, this *ritual* law against eating animals that have died of themselves is not to be confused with another law that is still very much in effect—God's prohibition against eating the blood of any animal (Deuteronomy 12:16, 23–25), which outlaws "strangled" clean animals from being eaten (Acts 15:29; 21:25).

Another *ritual* law mentioned in Deuteronomy 14:8 prohibits the touching of a dead pig's carcass. Leviticus 11 explains that touching the carcass of any unclean animal made a person *ritually* unclean, but only "until evening" (verses 8, 11, 24, 26, 27, 31). Indeed, the same was true for touching a dead *clean* animal (verse 39). The fact that a person became *ritually* clean again by evening, after washing himself, shows the *ritualistic* character of this provision. (This is not to say, however, that there were not health benefits to following even these ritual laws. For instance, an animal that died of itself may have fallen victim to a disease, thus making it potentially harmful to eat. And it remains a good practice to wash our hands after we have touched a dead animal of any kind to prevent the possible

transmission of harmful pathogens. This is especially apparent when reading about how various pots and utensils were made unclean by the carcasses of dead animals in Leviticus 11.)

(To learn more about the dietary laws God gave, download or request our free booklet [*What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?*](#))

Finally, Deuteronomy 14:22–29 discusses some tithing principles that are still valid today. This passage does *not* address the *first* tithe, which was to be given to the Levites for their work (compare Numbers 18:21). Some have argued that the tithe mentioned in Deuteronomy 14:22 is the first tithe. Yet, if that were the case, it would be the only tithe mentioned here without an explanation for its use. It makes more sense that the use of the tithe mentioned in verse 22 is spelled out in the verses that follow (verses 23–26)—and these verses clearly refer to a *second* tithe, which is to be used by the tithe-payer for himself and his family in the observance of God's feasts. Then follows a brief mention of a *third* tithe, saved only every third year out of a seven-year sabbatical cycle (verses 28–29; compare 26:12; Leviticus 25:2–4) to be given to the poor—i.e., the Levite (who was not allowed to own any

land), the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. All three tithes are attested to by the well-known first-century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus (compare *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 4, chap. 4, secs. 3-4; chap. 8, secs. 8, 22).

(For more information on tithing and our responsibility in the matter, download or request our free booklet [*What Does the Bible Teach About Tithing?*](#)) [END]

Verse 1 – We saw similar commands in Leviticus 19:28.

Verse 3 – We reviewed similar instructions in Leviticus 11.

Verse 29 – If we are blessed to have abundance, God expects us to look out for those who have less.