

Leviticus Chapter 11 Continued

Leviticus 11:21

"Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon [all] four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth;"

(This has been purposely repeated).

Leviticus 11:22 "[Even] these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind."

The four following ones, which seem to be no other than four sorts of locusts.

"The locust after his kind":

This is the common locust, called by the name of Arbeh, from the great multiplication and vast multitudes of them.

The phrase, "after his kind", and which also is used in all the following instances, signifies the whole entire species of them, which might be eaten.

"And the bald locust after his kind":

Which in the Hebrew text is Soleam, and has its name, as Aben Ezra suggests, from its ascending rocks.

But since locusts do not climb rocks, or have any peculiar regard for them, rather this kind of locust may be so called, from their devouring and consuming all that come in their way.

From the Chaldee word which signifies to swallow, devour, and consume.

But why we should call it the bald locust is not so clear, though it seems there were such, since the Jews describe some that have no baldness, which the gloss explains, whose head is not bald.

"And the beetle after his kind":

Which is another sort of locust called Chargol, and should not be rendered a beetle, for no sort of beetles are eatable.

Nor have legs to leap withal, and so come not under the general description given of such flying, creeping things, fit to eat.

"And the grasshopper after his kind":

This is another, and the fourth kind of the locust that might be eaten":

Its name is Chagab, from the Arabic word Chaguba, "to veil", locusts veiling the light of the sun.

The difference between these several sorts is with them this: The Chagab has a tail, but no bunch; Arbeh neither bunch nor tail; and Soleam has a bunch, but not a tail; and Chargol has both bunch and tail.

Maimonides reckons up eight sorts of them fit to eat; and these creatures were not only eaten by the Jews, but by several other nations.

I repeated verse 21 from the last lesson, to make a complete statement here.

In the part of the world, where the Israelites lived, beetle, locust, and grasshopper were eaten regularly.

These were not only eaten when they were in desperate situations, but were actually thought of as a delicacy.

Personally, I have never eaten anything like this, but in many parts of the world today these are still served as a delicacy.

Leviticus 11:23 "But all [other] flying creeping things, which have four feet, [shall be] an abomination unto you."

Excepting the four sorts before mentioned, wherefore we rightly supply the word "other".

"Which have four feet; or more; the Vulgate Latin version adds, "only", but wrongly; for those that have more are unclean, and forbidden to be eaten, excepting those in the preceding verse.

And most creeping things that fly have six feet, as the locusts themselves, reckoning their leaping legs into the number.

Though it may be observed, that those creatures that have six feet have but four equal ones, on which they walk or creep.

And the two foremost, which are longer, are as hands to them to wipe their eyes with, and protect them from anything that may fall into them and hurt them.

They not being able to see clearly because of the hardness of their eyes, as Aristotle observes, and particularly it may be remarked of the fly, as it is by Lucian, that though it has six feet it only goes on four, using the other two foremost as hands.

And therefore, you may see it walking on four feet, with something eatable in its hands.

Now all such creatures that have four feet or more, excepting the above, shall be an abomination unto you; abhorred as food, and abstained from.

Verses 24-43

A person could also become “unclean” by touching a “carcase”, or reptiles, or anything on which a reptile might fall.

Cleansing was accomplished by washing in water, although some unclean items had to be broken.

To be only “unclean until the even” (as against a week, as with Miriam (in Num. chapter 12), suggests a lighter offense.

This section deals with separation from other defiling things.

Leviticus 11:24 "And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever toucheth the carcase of them shall be unclean until the even."

That is, for eating them; or should they eat them they would be unclean.

"Whosoever toucheth the carcass of them shall be unclean until the even":

Not only he was unclean that ate them, but he that even touched their dead bodies was reckoned unclean.

They might not go into the tabernacle, nor have conversation with men, nor eat of the holy things, which were forbidden men in any uncleanness.

And though there is no mention of his washing himself, it may be understood, this being a short or concise way of speaking, as Aben Ezra observes.

Who adds, that it was necessary that he should wash himself in water.

Which was typical of washing and cleansing by the grace and blood of Christ, without which a man cannot be cleansed from the least sin, and pollution by it.

And may signify that during the legal dispensation there was no proper cleansing from sin, until the evening of the world, when Christ came and shed his blood for the cleansing of it.

It seems that out of all the insects that fly and walk, just the ones of the locust family were permitted to be eaten.

Come to think of it, who would want to eat a fly, or mosquito, or any of the other flying pests we spray to get rid of?

There is nothing dirtier, in my opinion, than a roach.

We could understand with no problem God restricting them in use for the table.

Leviticus 11:25 "And whosoever beareth [ought] of the carcase of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even."

That carries them from one place to another, out of the camp, city, village, or house or field where they may lie.

And though this is done with a good design, as being offensive or infectious, yet such a one;

"Shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even":

From whence both Jarchi and Aben Ezra infer, that the pollution by hearing or carrying is greater than that by touching.

Since such a man, so defiled, was obliged to wash his clothes as well as his body.

So saints, that have contracted pollution by any manner of sin, are to wash their garments and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

Mosquitoes carry malaria, among other things, and you can see it would not be good to touch them.

These ordinances are just good common sense rules that God has made to help man.

We watch out for our children and try to keep them safe.

God cares more for us than we do for our children.

Why would He not give these ordinances to protect us from destroying ourselves?

Verses 26-27

These prohibited animals would include horses and donkeys, which have a single hoof, and lion and tigers, which have paws.

Leviticus 11:26 "[The carcasses] of every beast which divideth the hoof, and [is] not clovenfooted, nor cheweth the cud, [are] unclean unto you: every one that toucheth them shall be unclean."

As the camel.

"Nor cheweth the cud":

Though it may divide the hoof, as the swine.

And on the other hand, such as may chew the cud, and yet not dividing the hoof, as the coney and hare.

For the Scripture here, as Aben Ezra observes again, uses a short and concise way of speaking.

These; "Are unclean unto you":

To be reckoned by them such, and neither to be eaten nor touched.

"Everyone that toucheth them shall be unclean":

Until the evening; and obliged to washing, though not expressed.

This is not to be understood of touching them while alive, as some Sadducees or Karaites' understand it, according to Aben Ezra.

For camels, horses, mules, etc. might be, and were rode upon, and so touched.

But this is speaking of them when dead, or their carcasses, as is rightly supplied in the beginning of the verse.

And the Jewish writers understand this of the flesh of the carcass only, not of the bones, horns, and hoofs, which, they say, do not defile, only the flesh.

This is repeated from (Lev. 11:8).

Leviticus 11:27 " And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on [all] four, those [are] unclean unto you: whoso toucheth their carcass shall be unclean until the even."

Or "the palms" of his hands; meaning such creatures, whose feet are not divided into two parts.

But into many, like the fingers of a hand, as apes, lions, bears, wolves, foxes, dogs, cats, etc.

"Among all manner of beasts that go on all four":

This is added, to distinguish them from fowl, such as are clean.

Who walk but on two feet, though their feet are divided into fingers or talons, and may be called hands on which they walk.

"Those are unclean unto you":

And as they might not be eaten, so neither touched, as follows:

"Whoso toucheth their carcass shall be unclean until the even":

See notes on Lev. 11:24.

Those animals that have paws, would be all animals from the cat family.

This also includes dogs and wild animals like bear.

These warnings just go into greater detail than those mentioned earlier.

Some animals eat things like grass and do not eat flesh.

Other animals do not eat anything but flesh.

God made each animal for its specific use on this earth.

We need to learn what God's purpose was for each animal and use them for that purpose only.

Leviticus 11:28 "And he that beareth the carcase of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: they [are] unclean unto you."

Carries it upon any account, from place to place.

"Shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even":

As he that bore the carcasses of any of the flying creeping things (Lev. 11:25).

"They are unclean unto you":

Even the carcasses of the one and of the other; and to all the Israelites, men, women, and children, as Aben Ezra observes.

As we said before, a carcase is the body of a dead animal.

It died for some reason.

You can catch a disease from an animal the same as from another human.

This washing of the clothes is another common sense precaution.

Any germs in the clothes probably would be lost after washing.

In our day when so many dreaded diseases are around, we should be very careful to always wash our hands after coming in contact with animals, or even after we have shaken hands with a stranger.

In the hospitals, nurses wear gloves when they are caring for patients to keep from catching the AIDS virus and other dreaded diseases.

Leviticus 11:29 "These also [shall be] unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth; the weasel, and the mouse, and the tortoise after his kind,"

These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth.

As distinguished from those creeping things that fly, these having no wings.

And which were equally unclean, neither to be eaten nor touched.

Neither their blood, their skin, nor their flesh, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it.

And the Misnic doctors say that the blood of a creeping thing and its flesh are joined together.

And Maimonides observes, that this is a fundamental thing with them, that the blood of a creeping thing is like its flesh.

Which in Siphre (an ancient book of theirs), is gathered from what is said in (Lev. 11:29).

"These also shall be unclean":

Hence the wise men say, the blood of a creeping thing pollutes as its flesh.

The creeping things intended are as follows:

The weasel: however, all agree is rightly interpreted "the mouse"; which has its name in Hebrew from its being a waster and destroyer of fields.

An instance of which we have in (1 Sam. 6:5; see notes).

So that this sort may be chiefly intended, though it includes all others, who are distinguished by their colors, the black, the red, and the white.

As a learned physician expresses it, eats almost everything, gnaws whatever it meets with, and, among other things, is a great lover of swine's flesh, which was an abomination to the Jews.

Nor does it abstain from dung, and therefore it is no wonder it should be reckoned among impure creatures.

And yet we find they were eaten by some people (see Isa. 66:17).

Especially the dormouse; for which the old Romans made conveniences to keep them in, and feed them, and breed them for the table.

The last in this text, "the tortoise", means the land tortoise; it has its name from the shell with which it is covered, this word being sometimes used for a covered wagon (Num. 7:3).

There are various kinds of them, as Pliny and other writers observe.

A tortoise of the land kind is esteemed a very delicate dish.

The Septuagint version renders it, the "land crocodile", which, is approved of by Bochart: and Leo Africanus says that many in Egypt eat the flesh of the crocodile, and affirm it to be of good savor.

Its flesh is white and tender, and tastes like veal.

Leviticus 11:30 "And the ferret, and the chameleon, and the lizard, and the snail, and the mole."

And the ferret.

Whatever creature is here meant; it has its name in Hebrew from the cry it makes.

And so the ferret has but one note in its voice, which is a shrill, but small, whining cry.

It is used to drive rabbits out of their holes.

The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render the word by "mygale", the weasel mouse, or "mus areneus" of the Latins, the shrew or shrew mouse.

It has something of the mouse and weasel, from whence it has its name in Greek, being of the size of the one, and the color of the other.

"And the chameleon":

This is a little creature like a lizard, but with a larger and longer head.

It has four feet, and on each foot three claws.

Its tail is long; with this, as well as with its feet, it fastens itself to the branches of trees.

Its tail is flat, its nose long, and made in an obtuse point.

Its back is sharp, its skin plaited and jagged like a saw, from the neck to the last joint of the tail, and upon its head it hath something like a comb.

In other respects, it is made like a fish; that is to say, it has no neck.

What is said of its living on air, and changing color according to what it is applied, are now reckoned vulgar mistakes.

But whatever creature is here meant, it seems to have its name in Hebrew from its strength, wherefore Bochart takes the "guaril" or "alwarlo" of the Arabs to be meant.

Which is the stoutest and strongest sort of lizard, and is superior in strength to serpents, and the land tortoise, with which it often contends.

"And the lizard":

So Jarchi interprets the word by a "lizard".

It has a larger letter than usual in it, that this creature might be taken notice of, and guarded against as very pernicious, and yet with some people it is eaten.

Calmet says, there are several sorts of lizards, which are well known.

There are some in Arabia of a cubit long, but in the Indies there are some, they say, of twenty-four feet in length.

Dr. Shaw says, that he was informed that more than 40,000 persons in Cairo, and in the neighborhood, live upon no other food than lizards and serpents.

Though he thinks, because the chameleon is called by the Arabs "taitah", which differs little in name from "letaah", here; that therefore that, which is indeed a species of the lizard, might, with more propriety, be substituted for it.

"And the snail":

So the word is rendered by Jarchi, on the place, and by Kimchi, and Philip Aquinas, and David de Pomis, in their lexicons.

And these creatures, though forbidden to the Jews, yet are not only used for medicine, but also for food by many.

Snails of several kinds, we are told, are eaten with much satisfaction in Italy and France.

In Silesia they make places for the breeding of them at this day, where they are fed with turnip tops, etc.

And carefully preserved for the market.

And the Romans took care of them in the same manner.

Bochart thinks a kind of lizard is meant, which lies in sand, called by the Arabs "chulaca", or "luchaca", because the word here used signifies, in the Talmudic language, sandy ground.

"And the mole":

And so it is interpreted by Onkelos and Jarchi here, and by David de Pomis, and Philip Aquinas, in their lexicons.

The same word is used for a certain sort of fowl, which we translate the "swan" (Lev. 11:18), but here of a creeping thing.

Whatever is intended by it, it seems to have its name from its breath.

Either in a contrary signification, if understood of the mole, which either holds its breath, or breathes not while underground.

Or from its breathing more freely, wherefore Bochart takes it to be the "chameleon".

Which, as Pliny says, is always gaping with its mouth for air.

And it has been a vulgar notion, though a wrong one, that it lives upon it.

The Targum of Jonathan interprets it by the "salamander"; now whoever ate any of the above eight creeping things, according to the Jewish canons, was to be beaten.

The only visible difference in these and the unclean we read about in the previous verses, is that these go on their belly, they do not fly.

Many of the things in this category, such as snail are eaten today.

These are not forbidden to those who speak the Word and pray over everything they eat.

Food is cleansed by the Word and prayer.

Leviticus 11:31 "These [are] unclean to you among all that creep: whosoever doth touch them, when they be dead, shall be unclean until the even."

Unfit for food, and not to be touched, at least when dead, as in the next clause.

That is, these eight sorts of creeping things before mentioned, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, and these only, as Maimonides says.

"whosoever doth touch them, when they be dead, shall be unclean until the even":

For touching them while alive did not defile, only when dead.

And this the Jews interpret, while they are in the case in which they died, that is, while they are moist.

For, as Ben Gersom says, if they are so dry, as that they cannot return to their moisture, they do not defile.

For which reason, neither the bones, nor nails, nor nerves, nor skin of these creeping things, defile.

But, they say, while the back bone is whole, and the bones cleave to it, then a creeping thing is reckoned moist, and while it is so it defiles.

Leviticus 11:32 "And upon whatsoever [any] of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether [it be] any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel [it be], wherein [any] work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the even; so it shall be cleansed."

Any of the above eight creeping things, that is, of their flesh.

For as for their bones, nails, nerves, and skin, as before observed, being separated from them and dry, they do not defile.

"Whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack":

Every wooden vessel, as the Targum of Jonathan; and all sorts of clothes, of woolen, linen, or silk, and all sorts of skins, excepting skins of sea beasts.

For these, according to the Jews, received no pollution.

And also sacks or sackcloth, made of goats' hair, and the like.

"Whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done":

Any tool or instrument made use of by any artificer in his trade, or any vessel wrought by him.

"It must be put into water":

Dipped into it, even into forty seahs of water, according to the Targum of Jonathan.

And which is to be understood, not of any working tool, or finished vessel only, but of any vessel of wood, raiment, skin, or sack, before mentioned.

"It shall be unclean until the even":

Even though put into water and washed.

"So it shall be cleansed":

In the above manner, by being put or dipped into water; or "afterwards", as the Septuagint, when it has been dipped and the even is come, and not before.

As we have mentioned throughout these lessons, these instructions were given for the benefit of man.

These things mentioned here, are just very good health practices.

The Israelites were not as well learned on germs and how they are passed on, as our society today.

I believe these laws were like (rules for living a healthy life).

Leviticus 11:33 "And every earthen vessel, whereinto [any] of them falleth, whatsoever [is] in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it."

Any of the above eight reptiles, should they by chance fall into the midst an earthen vessel.

"Whatsoever is in it shall be unclean":

If it only by falling touched the outside of it, it was not unclean; but if it fell into it, then whatever was contained in it was unclean.

For, as Jarchi says, an earthen vessel does not pollute or receive pollution, but from the air of it, from its inside.

"And ye shall break it":

Other vessels might be put into water and rinsed, and so be cleansed, but earthen vessels, being of no great value, were to be broken in pieces.

An emblem this, as Ainsworth suggests, of the dissolution of our bodies, which are as earthen vessels, and of the destruction of sin thereby, and of the entire removal of it by death.

An earthen vessel could not be properly washed and freed from germs.

The only thing to do to get rid of the germs then, would be to break it.

Leviticus 11:34 "Of all meat which may be eaten, [that] on which [such] water cometh shall be unclean: and all drink that may be drunk in every [such] vessel shall be unclean."

Which otherwise is lawful to eat and fit for food, whether herbs, or whether the flesh of clean creatures.

"That on which such water cometh shall be unclean":

That is, such water as is put into an unclean vessel, become so by the fall of any unclean reptile into it.

Wherefore such water poured out upon any sort of food, clean and fit to eat, or that is put into such water, to be dressed, it becomes unclean and unfit to eat.

For the vessel, being unclean, defiles the water, and the water defiles the food.

Jarchi interprets this of water in general, which coming upon anything eatable, prepares it for uncleanness.

"We learn (says he) that no food is fit and prepared to receive defilement until water comes upon it once; and after it is come upon it once, it receives defilement for ever, even though it becomes dry."

But the former seems to be the true sense.

"And all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel shall be unclean":

Whatever otherwise might be lawfully drank, yet being put into such a vessel, into which any unclean reptile was fallen, or being in it when it fell into it, became unclean and not fit to be drank.

And those liquors which receive uncleanness, and make meats unclean by coming on them, according to the Misnic doctors, are these seven: dew, water, wine, oil, blood, milk, and honey.

This is speaking of the earthen vessel above.

It is easy to see that anything in the earthen vessel that had been contaminated would also be contaminated, since you could not wash the earthen vessel and remove the germs.

Leviticus 11:35 "And every [thing] whereupon [any part] of their carcase falleth shall be unclean; [whether it be] oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down: [for] they [are] unclean, and shall be unclean unto you."

Before the Scripture seems to speak of anyone of the reptiles perfect, that falling upon anything should pollute it.

But here of any part of them, though ever so small, which should, through any accident, fall and light upon anything, even that would render it unclean and unfit for use.

Whether it be oven, or ranges for pots":

The one to bake bread in, and the other to boil flesh in, as Aben Ezra observes.

"They shall be broken down":

And no more made use of for baking and boiling.

"For they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you":

Were made hereby unfit for use, and should not be used.

The Jewish writers explain the phrase, "to you", meaning to your necessity.

That which they had need of, but now should not use nor receive advantage from.

Even "to you"; all men, women, and children, as Hiskuni interprets it.

All this was ordered to create in them an abhorrence of these creatures, and to make them cautious of eating and touching them.

And careful that they come not nigh, or touched, or fell upon anything, since it would give them so much trouble, as well as occasion loss.

This just shows how the germs can be carried from the carcase, and anything it touches would be contaminated.

This is just stating again, that anything the dead body falls on, that cannot be washed up, has to be done away with.

I remember when I was a child, if you went to see someone with a disease like typhoid, you had to go to a place away from everyone, take a bath and burn your old clothes you wore in the room where the patient was.

There would be fresh clothes that had not been in contact with the disease to put on.

I really believe this is what God is saying here.

It has just been in the last few years, that Doctors and nurses wore masks in the operating room.

Until modern cleanliness standards were incorporated into hospital regulations, many people died from infections, rather than the illness they were being doctored for.

Leviticus 11:36 "Nevertheless a fountain or pit, [wherein there is] plenty of water, shall be clean: but that which toucheth their carcase shall be unclean."

"A fountain or pit":

The movement and quantity of water determined the probability of actual contamination.

Water was scarce also, and it would have been a threat to the water supply if all water touched by these prohibited carcasses were forbidden for drinking.

You can easily see why running water would wash the contamination away.

Just to sum up this lesson, I would say a loving God cared so much for His children that He not only gave them laws to preserve their soul, but gave them laws of cleanliness to help them live healthy lives here on earth.

Leviticus Chapter 11 Continued Questions

1. What 3 insects from the locust family were permitted to be eaten?
2. What were they thought to be?
3. If you touched the carcass of an unclean thing, you were unclean until when?
4. What instructions were given about clothing when you touched the unclean thing?
5. What insect is well-known for carrying malaria?
6. What are these ordinances of cleanliness really?
7. Not only were they not to eat unclean animals, but were not to _____ them as well.
8. Name some of the animals that go upon their paws.
9. How do the eating habits of animals vary?
10. What should we learn about animals and their purpose?
11. What is a carcass?
12. What advantage is it to wash your clothes after you have touched a dead animal?
13. Why are so many nurses in hospitals wearing gloves today when they care for their patients?
14. Name the things in the mouse family forbidden to eat.
15. Why would an earthen vessel, that had been in contact something unclean, have to be broken?
16. Many years ago, when people visited those with very contagious diseases, they did what, with their clothing they had worn in the presence of the sick person?

17. Until modern cleanliness standards were installed in hospital rooms, what unexpected thing did many patients die of?
18. Why would a fountain or pit not be contaminated?
19. God loved His people so much that He not only gave them laws to preserve their soul, but laws of cleanliness, why?