

The Bible From 20,000 Feet Part 14: Leviticus ch. 11 - 22

Tuesday Night Bible Study, October 28, 2008

--OUTLINE

- STATE OF BEING CLEAN AND UNCLEAN UNDER THE CEREMONIAL LAW
- SELECT EXAMPLES OF MISCELLANEOUS LAWS
- DAY OF ATONEMENT

--STATE OF BEING CLEAN AND UNCLEAN UNDER THE CEREMONIAL LAW

--laws regarding the state of being ceremonially clean and unclean served both a physical purpose and a spiritual purpose.

--first we'll look at the physical purpose... a person or object became ceremonially unclean when they posed a threat to the health of others in Israel's camp.

--in order to promote a healthy environment unclean people or objects had to go through certain steps before they could become ceremonially "clean" again and function normally in society.

--example of steps taken when a person or object became ceremonially unclean:

--Leviticus 13:45-58: "The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 46 As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp. 47 "If any clothing is contaminated with mildew — any woolen or linen clothing, 48 any woven or knitted material of linen or wool, any leather or anything made of leather — 49 and if the contamination in the clothing, or leather, or woven or knitted material, or any leather article, is greenish or reddish, it is a spreading mildew and must be shown to the priest. 50 The priest is to examine the mildew and isolate the affected article for seven days. 51 On the seventh day he is to examine it, and if the mildew has spread in the clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or the leather, whatever its use, it is a destructive mildew; the article is unclean. 52 He must burn up the clothing, or the woven or knitted material of wool or linen, or any leather article that has the contamination in it, because the mildew is destructive; the article must be burned up. 53 "But if, when the priest examines it, the mildew has not spread in the clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or the leather article, 54 he shall order that the contaminated article be washed. Then he is to isolate it for another seven days. 55 After the affected article has been washed, the priest is to examine it, and if the mildew has not changed its appearance, even though it has not spread, it is unclean. Burn it with fire, whether the mildew has affected one side or the other. 56 If, when the priest examines it, the mildew has faded after the article has been washed, he is to tear the contaminated part out of the clothing, or the leather, or the woven or knitted material. 57 But if it reappears in the clothing, or in the woven or knitted material, or in the leather article, it is spreading, and whatever has the mildew must be burned with fire. 58 The clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or any leather article that has been washed and is rid of the mildew, must be washed again, a it will be clean."

--the precautions taken when a person or object became unclean not only helped prevent the spread of disease and promote a healthy environment in Israel's camp but also served the spiritual purpose of constantly reminding Israel about their natural spiritual state...

--because we are sinners we sin every day, and that sin makes us spiritually unclean.

--because God is holy, in order for Israel to live in His presence they had to be cleansed from their sin every day through the atoning sacrifices.

--Leviticus 15:31: "**You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean [things that make them physically unclean and sin that makes them spiritually unclean], so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling My dwelling place, which is among them.**"

--Numbers 19:20: "But if a person who is unclean does not purify himself, he must be cut off from the community."

--speaking of the spiritual cleansing that occurred on the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16:30 states "on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, **you will be clean from all your sins.**"

**flash-forward to future day when Israel turns their back on God and pays the consequence for persisting in spiritual uncleanness: Isaiah ch. 64

**just like Israel lived in God's presence so we too live in God's presence through His Spirit that dwells in us...

--in a very real sense we are the temple of God, and yet we are still sinners... the only way that we are able to continually live in God's presence is through the atoning sacrifice of Christ... we are cleansed of all of our sins through the shed blood of Christ!

--1 Corinthians 3:16: "**Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?**"

--1 John 1:7: "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

--1 Cor 6:9-11: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

--Hebrews 9:13-14: "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

--cleansed through the atoning sacrifices... as we saw in the last study, "atonement" means "to cancel" or "exchange"... the life of the animal sacrifice was given in "exchange" for the life of the person; the sentence of death for the person's sin was "cancelled" and the animal died in their place.

**if a way wasn't provided for us to become spiritually clean, then our eternal fate would be the same as the unclean clothing in Leviticus 13:52 – just as unclean clothing was thrown into the fire so we would end up in the eternal lake of fire!

--SELECT EXAMPLES OF MISCELLANEOUS LAWS

--"mediums and spirits..."

--Leviticus 19:31: "Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God."

--Leviticus 20:6-7: "And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. 7 Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.

--people may have impressive supernatural "spiritual" experiences through the power of "mediums and spirits" but their experience isn't from God!

--the key point in this command is that God wants His people to depend on Him ("for I am the LORD your God" v.7) rather than any other source.

--a person may seem very "spiritual" and talk about the importance of love and the importance of prayer...they may seem more "spiritual" than most Christians and may tempt one to think that

they have found another way to God...but the ultimate litmus test is whether or not the Lord is their God - "for I am the LORD your God."

**the most "spiritual" thing is to simply trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior!!

--many of the commands are moral guidelines that we will naturally follow if we are led by the Spirit... reviewing the moral commands is a good way to see if there are areas in our life where we are not being led by the Spirit... a couple examples:

--honor elderly people: "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man." (Leviticus 19:32:)

--honesty: "You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 36 You shall have honest scales, honest weights..." (Leviticus 19:35-36:)

--laws regarding sexual immorality (Leviticus 18)

--the role of shed blood in atonement...

--it was the blood of the sacrifices that made atonement...pointing to the shed blood of Christ... His body wasn't burned, like the animal sacrifices, but His blood was shed...

--Leviticus 17:11-12: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'"

--every animal slain for food had to be slain at the tabernacle and its blood offered as a sacrifice. If the blood of the slain animal wasn't offered as a sacrifice then the person who killed the animal was guilty of murder! (Leviticus 17:1-7)

--once Israel was established in Canaan spread out over all the land it wasn't possible to bring every slain animal to the Tabernacle so alternate provisions were given (Deuteronomy 12:15-16).

--God called Israel to an extremely high standard because He was leading them in a radical new direction from the pagan ways of Egypt for the monumental purpose of laying the foundation for the Messiah to bring salvation to the whole world!

--one commentator wrote, "The Israelite could not spend a day, prepare a meal, enjoy a social time with family or friend, go on a hunting trip, or attend to his daily business without being reminded he was in covenant relation to a holy God."

--the seemingly excessive regulations of the ceremonial law also speak of how exceedingly sinful and thick-headed we are by nature!

--DAY OF ATONEMENT

--countless sacrifices for sins were offered throughout the year but once a year on the Day of Atonement a special sacrifice was offered which symbolically covered all of Israel's sins...

--Leviticus 16:21-22: "Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat [*the "scapegoat" sacrifice*], confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22 The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land..."

--this special sacrifice on the Day of Atonement and how it symbolically covered "all" of Israel's sin highlighted the limited role of the daily sacrifices and pointed to the day when Christ would offer one sacrifice for all the sins of the world.

--the limited role of the daily sacrifices was further highlighted by the fact that only on the Day of Atonement did the high priest enter the Holy of Holies (the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle which was symbolic of God's presence)

--before the scapegoat sacrifice another goat was sacrificed as a sin offering and its blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat in Holy of Holies (Leviticus 16:15)

--only on the day when a sacrifice symbolically covered "all" of Israel's sins did the high priest enter the Holy of Holies..Christ entered the place in heaven of which the Holy of Holies was symbolic only once when He offered one sacrifice for all the sins of the whole world.

--special garments worn by the high priest on the Day of Atonement...

--normally priests wore ornate clothing with a breastplate of twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel (Exodus 28).

--on the Day of Atonement the high priest wore a plain white, linen tunic (Leviticus 16:4) that was symbolic of Christ...

--the holiness of Christ

--the humility of Christ stepping down from His glorified state in heaven.

--when Christ died on the cross he was wearing a tunic

--profound difference between Christ's ministry as High Priest and the Levitical high priests on the Day of Atonement...

--before offering sacrifices for the people of Israel, the high priest first had to offer sacrifices for his own sin; this stood in stark contrast to Christ who never offered any sacrifice for Himself because He was sinless.

--at the end of Leviticus ch. 16 the Lord sums up the Day of Atonement: "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work — whether native-born or an alien living among you — 30 because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. 31 It is a sabbath of rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. 32 The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments 33 and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the people of the community. 34 "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites." (Leviticus 16:29-34)

--Hebrews speaks of how Christ fulfilled the Day of Atonement... Heb 9:24-27: "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another — 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

--before the sacrifice of Christ the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies only once a year...but now, through Christ, we can essentially enter the Holy of Holies in heaven in our spirit anytime!

--Hebrews 10:19-22: "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..."