

What's for Dinner?

Leviticus 11:1-43, Deuteronomy 14:1-20
Case Study: [Bubonic Plague](#) (Rats Anyone?)

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

God did not comprise the particulars of Leviticus in the Bible as "filler"! All the details of Leviticus are significant and, as part of the Holy Scriptures:

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The overall enterprise is easier to see how each little imprint adds to the "big picture." The big picture (or overall design) of Leviticus could be entitled: "God's Holy Personality and Plea."

Leviticus 11:45-47 "For I am the Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; thus you shall be holy for I am holy. ⁴⁶This is the law regarding the animal, and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters, and everything that swarms on the earth, ⁴⁷to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.

Hebrews 9:11 ¹¹ But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹² Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Another reason for the clean and unclean laws was **physical hygiene** and **sanitation**. Without stringent parameters, disease and outbreaks of plague would have been mutual throughout Israel. Our current familiarity of "germs" is data the Israelites did not have. Today if a dead mouse were found in our bathroom or food supplies we would raise no questions about systematic washing or destruction of the soiled dishes.

Leviticus 11:29 - These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth; the weasel, and the **mouse (no cats)**, and the tortoise after his kind...

The principle of separation is vital to a holy life. In fact, the word "holy" means "separated for God's use." Do not become close friends with people who are "unclean" in their "diet" and "walk."
2nd Corinthians 6:14-18 ¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?... ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you...

Ephesians 5:26 ²⁶ That he (Jesus) might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

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Dietary Laws and Uncleanness Quiz

In this study, we will examine what the Bible says about being "clean" and "unclean," but we must explain that these terms are not talking about sanitation or the kind of dirt that can be washed away by soap and water. Rather, it was a matter of being religiously acceptable. Unclean people, for example, were not allowed to eat animals that had been sacrificed in the temple (Lev. 7:19-21). High priests had to take special precautions to remain "clean" and able to perform their duties (Lev. 21:10-12).

1. What was a common source of uncleanness? Lev. 15:2-3, 16-24. Did the uncleanness spread to everything and everyone it touched? Verses 4-12. How long were women considered unclean after giving birth? Lev. 12:1-8. Did Jesus' parents keep this law? Luke 2:22-24.

2. How long would a person be unclean after touching a corpse? Num. 19:11-13. Was it permissible to be near a corpse but not touch it? Verses 14-15. Could such an unclean person participate in the Passover? Num. 9:6.

3. How was a person to be cleansed or become acceptable again? Num. 19:12, 17-19. What was the penalty for failing to do this? Verses 13, 20. How was the special water made? Verses 2-9, 17-18. Did this sprinkling cleanse the people on the outside, or the inside? Heb. 9:13.

4. Was Jesus careful to avoid ritual uncleanness? Matt. 8:2-3; 9:20; Luke 7:12-14. Did he encourage others to observe purification rules? Matt. 8:4. What did he say about the importance of uncleanness? Matt. 15:11. What did the religious leaders think of Jesus' attitude? Verse 12. Comment: The Pharisees were very careful about maintaining religious purity, but Jesus did not seem particularly concerned about it. He felt free to touch people and things that were unclean. According to the rules of the old covenant, this would have made Jesus unclean, too. But instead of becoming contaminated by the uncleanness, Jesus cleansed the person of the problem.

5. What rules did God give regarding clean and unclean animals? Lev. 11:1-43; Deut. 14:1-20. Why did God give the Israelites these rules? Lev. 11:44-45; 20:24-25; Deut. 14:2, 21. Did these laws apply to gentiles? Verse 21. Comment: God is holy (separate), and he set his people apart from other nations. He told them to make a distinction between animals, and by this to be distinct from other nations. In this way, the nation of Israel symbolized holiness. Just as they were set apart from other nations, God was set apart from humanity. The Israelites' holiness rules pictured God's holiness.

6. Was the distinction between clean and unclean animals known long before Abraham? Gen. 7:1-9. Was Noah allowed to eat clean animals, or was he permitted to eat any kind of animal? Gen. 9:2-4. Comment: The concept of clean and unclean was a religious distinction, with no claims about health. God permitted people to eat animals that were not permissible for sacrifice. Noah was allowed to eat any kind of animal, any kind of bird and any kind of fish. This is the way Jews have traditionally understood this instruction to Noah.

Jewish rabbis said that gentiles were righteous if they observed laws that went back to their ancestor Noah -- and avoiding unclean meat was not part of the requirements. The rabbis listed seven rules that go back to the time of Noah:

1. not to worship idols,
2. not to blaspheme God's name,
3. to establish courts of justice,
4. not to kill,
5. not to commit adultery,
6. not to steal and

7. not to eat meat that had been cut from a living animal (Talmud, Sanhedrin 56; see the article "Laws, Noachian," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* or the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*).