

**Message #19****Leviticus 11:1-23**

When we come to the eleventh chapter of Leviticus, we come to a major change in the book. So far Leviticus has been dealing with the sacrifices required to have fellowship with God. Now the book moves to the holiness required to have fellowship with God. There is an old saying: “cleanliness is next to godliness.” We can legitimately say from this section that cleanliness is part of holiness. In the mind of God, cleanness is always related to holiness but they are not the same. As one writer observed—“The clean is not necessarily holy, but the holy is always clean.” In other words, one could ritualistically obey the cleanliness laws, but not necessarily have real heart holiness. However, one could not have real heart holiness without obeying the cleanliness laws.

When we come to Leviticus 11, we come to a section that deals with purity. So this section gives a series of purity laws designed to govern everyday life. Chapter 11 deals with dietary laws. Chapter 12 deals with childbirth laws. Chapter’s 13-14 deals with leprosy laws pertaining to one’s body and home. Chapter 15 deals with male and female discharges from genital areas. When one steps back and looks at the entire picture, what one realizes is that God is interested in purity in every phase of life—from what we eat to where we live to what we do.

**IN ORDER TO HAVE CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, WE MUST DESIRE AND PURSUE PURITY AND HOLINESS NOT ONLY IN OUR WORSHIP, BUT IN OUR DAILY, PRACTICAL LIVES BY MAKING CLEAN VERSUS UNCLEAR CHOICES .**

- (Observation #1)** - These dietary instructions were given directly from God to Moses and the priests. **11:1**
- (Observation #2)** - These dietary instructions were given to Israel, not the Church . **11:2**
- (Observation #3)** - These dietary instructions are no longer operative as we have further revelation from God which says we may eat all things and these laws were nailed to the cross of Christ (Mark 7:1, 19\*; Acts 10:9-16/11:4-11; Rom. 14:2-3; I Cor. 8:8; Col. 2:14, 16; I Tim. 4:1-6).
- (Observation #4)** - If one’s heart were interested in being right with God, he could be pardoned even if he had violated these purification laws (II Chron. 30:14-20)
- (Observation #5)** - The idea of being clean or unclean does not have to do with the quality of creature. All creation reflects God’s glory.
- (Observation #6)** - God does not inform us as to how He classified an animal as clean or unclean.

**DIETARY INSTRUCTION #1** – Instruction concerning the eating of land animal life.  
**11:2-8**

Actually, there are six main sections in Leviticus 11 and each section begins with the pronoun “these” (**11:2, 9, 13, 24, 29, 46**). An abridgement to these dietary restrictions is found in Deuteronomy 14.

Now according to **verse 3**, the land animals that could be eaten were limited to those that had a divided or split hoof and those that chewed the cud. Animals that chew the cud are herbivorous, not carnivorous. It is possible that one reason would be that the Israelite would not indirectly even eat an animal who ate the blood of another animal.

1. The camel (**11:4**) was off limits because even though it chewed the cud, it did not have a divided hoof.
2. The rock badger (**11:5**)—some type of high mountain rodent who lived in rocks—chewed cud but did not have a divided hoof (mentioned here and Deut. 14:7; Ps. 104:18; Prov. 30:26).
3. The rabbit (**11:6**) chewed cud but did not have a divided hoof (mentioned here and Deut. 14:7).
4. The pig (**11:7**) has a divided hoof but does not chew the cud. This is the only animal that has a divided hoof but does not chew the cud.

Now **verse 8** adds one more important fact; not only were the Israelites not to eat these animals, they were not to even touch them. God viewed these as unclean and God does not want His people even touching that which is unclean, much less taking it in.

#### **DIETARY INSTRUCTION #2** –Instruction concerning the eating of water life. **11:9-12**

From the aquatic world the breakdown is that one may eat any water life that has fins and scales (**11:9**). Anything without fins and scales were not to be eaten (**11:10**). In fact, God wanted His people to view eating such life as detestable and abhorrent (**11:11-12**).

#### **DIETARY INSTRUCTION #3** – Instruction concerning the eating of bird life. **11:13-19**

There does not appear here to be any physical trait that would distinguish one bird from another. Many believe all of these birds drink the blood of their victims and therefore God deems them unclean to eat. The precise identification of these birds is difficult; however, when compared to all of the birds which are apparently clean, the clean birds far outnumber the “dirty birds.” There are twenty birds on the list:

- 1) Eagle; 2) vulture; 3) buzzard; 4) kite; 5) falcon; 6) raven; 7) ostrich; 8) owl; 9) seagull;
- 10) hawk; 11) little owl; 12) cormorant; 13) great owl; 14) white owl; 15) pelican; 16) carrion vulture; 17) stork; 18) heron; 19) hoopoe; 20) bat.

#### **DIETARY INSTRUCTION #4** – Instruction concerning the eating of flying insects. **11:20-23**

The only insects permitted to eat were those with jointed hind legs used for jumping. Such insects included the locust, the cricket and the grasshopper. We know that John the Baptizer lived on a diet of locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4). Such delectables as cockroaches, flies and mosquitoes were avoided.

Now in regard to dietary restrictions—Col. 2:16-17 indicates that we are no longer under the restrictions and that they were a shadow of the substance which belongs to Christ.

In other words, these restrictions had something to do with Jesus Christ. It is very possible that the restriction does have to do with the blood. Christ's blood is so sacred in the mind of God that He would not permit His people to even eat anything blood related. But the point we most definitely see is this—**holiness and cleanness are produced by our relationship to and with Jesus Christ**. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is, in part, determined by clean versus unclean choices. The closer we are with Christ, the more we will love things good and hate things evil.