

(Through the Bible) Leviticus 11-15

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith explores the significance of God's laws in Leviticus, emphasizing their relevance to health, spiritual well-being, and the nature of sin.

Duration: 41:20

Scripture: Deuteronomy 28:1-6, Deuteronomy 28:15, Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:1-3

Topics: "Following God", "Spiritual Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of meditating on and following God's law. He references Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1 to highlight the benefits of meditating on God's law day and night. The preacher also addresses the question of whether following the law is necessary in the age of grace, and asserts that God has laid down spiritual laws for believers. He concludes by stating that if believers meditate on and obey God's law, they will experience God's blessings and prosperity in their lives.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles to Leviticus chapter 11? Before we begin in the 11th chapter of Leviticus, let's take a look at the first few verses of chapter 28 of Deuteronomy. Because sometimes we're prone to get bogged down in the law, and we think, oh my, I wish we could just pass over this. Is this really necessary? Aren't we under the grace of God and living in the age of grace? But in reality, it is important that God is, that we realize that God is laying down for us certain spiritual laws.

And God has declared concerning His word, concerning His law here in chapter 28, And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe, to do all His commandments which I commanded thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, blessed shalt thou be in the field, blessed shalt be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, and the increase of your cows, and of your flocks, and of your sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store, blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise against thee to be smitten before thy face, they shall come out against thee one way, they shall flee before thee in seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessings upon thee in thy storehouses, and all that thou settest thine hand unto, and He shall bless thee in the land which the Lord giveth thee. And so, God has given to us certain spiritual laws.

If we obey them, then we are to be blessed. But if you go on and finish the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, you'll find the things that will transpire if you forsake the law of God, if you seek to ignore it. And of course, in verse 15, He begins, If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, then cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed shalt thou be in the field, cursed shall be thy basket and thy store, cursed shall be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land, and the increase of your cows and so forth, and all the curses that would come.

Now, in Joshua chapter 1, Moses gave sort of a final charge to Joshua. And in verse 8, he declared, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night. That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. So, if you'll keep it, if you'll follow it, if you'll meditate in it, God will make your way prosperous, then you will have good success. In Psalm 1, David declares, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in this law does he meditate day and night.

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Now, I know that you find it tedious sometimes going through these laws.

But know this, that if you will meditate in them, and then the emphasis is doing them, God's blessing is going to be upon your life. Now, the children of Israel made a great mistake in that they thought just because they had the law, they were justified by it. But Paul said it isn't just having the law, it's doing the law that brings the blessing.

So, as we go back now to Leviticus chapter 11, we find that in the 11th chapter, the Lord is dealing with the foods that they could eat and the foods that they should not eat. Now, to me, it shows that God is interested in your health. If the Lord should speak to us today, I'm sure that He would speak to us a lot about junk foods.

And He would be interested in your diet because you can't really be eating a lot of junk food and ask God to give you a strong body. Like I've shared with you when we used to go home from Bible school at night and buy ice cream and chocolate syrups and whipped cream and the whole thing, and then some guy would say, who's going to ask the blessing? I said, you can't ask God to bless this. It's no good for you.

You know it's not good for you. Eat it and take the consequences, but don't ask God to bless it. And so, God is interested in good nutrition.

And the foods that God allowed were foods that would be good, healthy, strengthening foods. Those foods that God disallowed for food, there was a health reason behind the disallowing of each food. Now, in the New Testament, we realize that the Bible says that, you know, all things are lawful for me.

But yet, Paul says, all things edify not. All things are not necessary. Peter saw a sheep let down from heaven with all kinds of clean and unclean things upon it.

And the Lord said, rise, Peter, kill and eat. He said, oh, not so, Lord. I've never eaten anything that was unclean.

And so many people take that as a green light from God to eat anything. I can eat the bacon and ham and pork chops and so forth, because God said, don't call that unclean, which I have cleansed. God wasn't really talking about people.

In that scripture, he was actually talking about the Gentiles. And he was dealing with Peter because God was going to call him to go to the Gentiles. And yet, I believe that Paul was a liberated enough Jew that I'm sure he probably ate pork chops and all whenever they were set before him.

Because he said, all things are to be received with thanksgiving and eat what is set before you, asking no questions. However, that wasn't in regards to pork. It was just, don't say, was this sacrifice to a pagan idol? If they say, yes, it was.

Then if you eat it, you're going to offend your conscience and theirs. So, yet Jesus said, it isn't what goes into a man's mouth that defiles the man, but that which comes out of his mouth. And so, I do believe that in the New Testament, the Lord did give us as Gentiles the privilege of eating meats that were forbidden to the Jews.

When they sought to deal with the issue of the relationship of the Gentile church to the law, Peter said, don't put on them a yoke of bondage that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. And so, they did mention just one thing. Don't eat things that are strangled, actually, or refrained from the blood.

And don't eat things that are sacrificed to idols. But they didn't go into the whole dietary list that God gave to them here in Leviticus. Now, as we look at the 11th chapter of Leviticus, we find the beast that God said that they could eat.

And so, he gave a basic rule. Whatsoever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed, and chews the cud among the beast, that shall ye eat. And then it gave examples of animals that could not be eaten because they didn't follow all three.

They needed to have all three of these things. They needed to have the parted hoof, the cloven foot, and they needed to chew the cud. Now, the camel chews the cud.

But divides not the hoof. And so, the camel was not to be eaten. The coney chews the cud, but divides not the hoof.

It's unclean. And the hare, because he chews the cud, but divides not the hoof, he's unclean unto you. Now, I had someone tell me at one time, they had a friend who didn't believe in God or the Bible anymore because of this particular scripture.

Where the Bible talks about the rabbit chewing the cud, and he said the rabbit doesn't chew the cud. And therefore, if the Bible was truly the word of God, it wouldn't say that a rabbit chews the cud when a rabbit doesn't chew the cud. Well, this animal in the Hebrew actually is the arnabeth.

And what kind of an animal that is, I don't know. But the King James translators thought that it was perhaps a rabbit. But just what kind of an animal it truly was, we don't know.

However, interestingly enough, they have found out just lately that a rabbit does chew a cud. And there is now articles and scientific evidence to prove that a rabbit actually does chew a cud. And so, this guy gave up his faith for nothing.

How tragic indeed. Now, the swine or the pig was forbidden. Now, we surely understand the health reasons for this.

With wild rabbit, of course, there's always the danger of yellow fever. They are carriers of this disease. And if you eat wild rabbit, you have to be careful because there is a prevalent danger from wild rabbit of yellow fever.

From the pig, we know that if we eat pork, it is important that we cook it well done. You never order your pork chops raw or rare because there is that danger of really getting trichinosis from rare pork. So, you've got to cook it so all of the worms are totally killed.

So that you're eating good dead worms instead of the possibility that some of them may not have been cooked until they were dead. And so, it's important that you really cook it well or else you're endangering your own health. Now, we know that now.

We know that it is important. And that a lot of people become extremely sick from not cooking the pork well enough. And so, we see that God was just protecting him rather than telling him how to cook it or make sure you cook it well.

He just put it on one of the forbidden list. And then God then spoke about those things that are in the water. And he gave certain basic overall rules and then gave some things that they should not do.

But the basically overall, verse 9, These shall ye eat of that which are in the waters. Whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters and in the seas and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. But if they have not fins or scales in the seas and in the rivers and all that move in the waters of any living thing, they will be an abomination to you.

And so, that would mean that there would be certain types of fish that should not be eaten. Of course, crab would be forbidden, clams would be forbidden. We do know that the shellfish during certain months of the year are deadly poisonous.

And so, God again is just protecting the people with these laws in regards to the things that are in the water. Now, as we learn more about these things, we can eat them. I mean, you can have clam chowder and you get your clams just so you know which months to gather them in and which months to not gather them.

So, whatsoever, verse 12, Hath no fins nor scales in the waters shall be an abomination to you. And then of the birds, certain ones were not to be eaten. You weren't to eat the eagle, the ossofridge, the vulture, the kite, the raven, the owl, the nighthawk or the hawks, various types, the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the swan, the pelican, the gear eagle, the stork, the heron, the lapwing, the bat.

I've never had any problem with any of these things. I've never been tempted to eat them. And so this part of the law doesn't really cause me any concern whatsoever.

But then verse 21, Yet these may ye eat of every flying or creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet to leap with all upon the earth. That means you can eat locusts. And John the Baptist was eating locusts and wild honey.

You can eat beetles if you are so inclined. And grasshoppers if that turns you on. But the flying, other flying, creeping things which have four feet shall be an abomination unto you.

And for these ye shall be unclean, whosoever touched the carcass of those and so forth. So God lays out and gives the rules then of the uncleanness, touching dead carcasses and unclean until evening and so forth. And the way you're to wash and so forth.

And really a lot of it is just the care in the washing and in the taking care of yourself after touching dead carcasses. And it's just good hygiene that God is teaching. Now this is the law of the beast and of the fowl and of every living creature that moves in the waters.

And it's interesting how that the end of each chapter sort of summarizes what the chapter was about. And so in the verse 46 you have sort of a summary of the things that God has dealt with. The law of the beast, the fowls and every living creature that moves in the waters and every creature that creeps upon the earth to make a difference between the unclean and the clean, between the beast that may be eaten and the beast which shall not be eaten.

I've noticed here that also mouse and lizards and snails and moles are on the forbidden list. So you gourmets who love your snails just know that you'd probably be healthier without them. In chapter 12 the Lord now deals with a woman who has born a child.

And if it's a male child she shall be unclean for seven days after the birth of the child. The separation from her infirmity and in the eighth day they shall circumcise the child and she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying for 33 days. And during that period of time is not to touch any hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary until the days of her purifying are fulfilled.

But if she bears a girl child then she shall be unclean for two weeks and be separated then in the days of her purifying for 66 days. And then when the days of her purifying are fulfilled for a son or for a daughter she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering which is the offering of consecration. And a young pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering onto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest.

So a offering of consecration and a sin offering. The priest shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her. She shall be cleansed from the issue of blood.

This is the law for her that is born a male child or a female. And if she be not able to bring a lamb then shall she bring two turtles that would be turtle doves or two young pigeons. And the one for a burnt offering the other for a sin offering and the priest shall make an atonement for her and she shall be clean.

Now it is interesting when Mary and Joseph after the birth of Jesus came for this purification right kind of a thing that Mary brought two turtle doves which would indicate that they were of poor circumstances. They weren't wealthy at all. They were poor people.

They could not afford to bring a sheep and the poor people could bring the two turtle doves and thus Mary indicating the poverty of Mary and Joseph brought two turtle doves for the sacrifice for her right of purification and all. As we get into chapter 13 God is dealing with the subject of leprosy and the priest were given instructions on how to diagnose leprosy. A breaking out on a person's body, the examination of it, the color of hairs that are in the blotch and so forth so that the priest can truly identify the leper.

Now it was twofold. Number one if it was indeed leprosy and many times they would set them apart for seven days re-examine them to see if there be any change of condition. But God wanted them to be very careful to number one if it was leprosy to isolate them from the people.

To keep this disease from spreading and so it was a quarantine kind of a thing. But secondly the careful examinations so that no one would be isolated who was not truly a leper. So God wanted them to be careful in both directions.

Make sure it's leprosy so that in case it is leprosy the person can be isolated from the community so that the disease would not spread. But secondly make sure if it isn't that the person then doesn't have this isolation from the community itself. And so the 13th chapter deals with leprosy the identifying of this loathsome disease by the priest and the separation of the person who is diagnosed actually as to having leprosy.

And the command that the person is to cry unclean unclean in verse 45 if it is discovered that he indeed has leprosy. And how that the garments and so forth are to be dealt with if there is a growth of some kind within the garment and how it's to be destroyed and burnt and all. This is the law of the plague of leprosy verse 59 in a garment of wool or linen either in the warp or wool for anything of skins to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean.

In chapter 14 it begins with very fascinating words. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying this shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Interesting indeed because leprosy is incurable.

So God in the law made provision for the operation of his grace apart from human instrument for in a technical sense leprosy was incurable it is still incurable to the present day. And yet God has made there within the law the provision giving him the leeway to work in a supernatural way to heal and thus the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. And it is interesting God declares the priest shall first go out of the camp and examine the person because any person with leprosy had to live outside the camp.

He was ostracized from the community. And so the priest had to go out from the camp and examine the man. And then if he beholds a plague of leprosy is healed in the leper then he shall command him to take the man that is cleansed to take two birds alive and clean and cedarwood and scarlet and hyssop and the priest shall command that one of the birds shall be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

As for the living bird he shall take it and the cedarwood and the scarlet and the hyssop and shall dip them in the and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water and he shall sprinkle upon him that is cleansed from the leprosy seven times and he shall pronounce him clean and he shall let the living bird loose into the open field. And then he that is cleansed shall wash his clothes shave all of his hair wash himself with water that he may be clean and after that he shall come into the camp and he shall tarry abroad out of his tent for seven days.

But it shall be on the seventh day he shall shave all his hair off of his head his beard his eyebrows even all the hair he shall shave off and shall wash his clothes and he shall wash his flesh with water and be clean the eighth day he is to take two lambs without blemish the one new lamb of the first year without blemish and three tenths of a deals of fine flour for the meal offering mingled with oil he's to offer a trespass offering sin offering and then a burnt offering or a offering of consecration and he shall take the blood of the trespass offering and put it upon the right ear and upon the thumb of the right hand and upon the great toe of the right foot of the leper who has been cleansed and he shall pour the priest shall pour some of the

oil into the palm of his own left hand and

he shall dip his right finger in the oil and then he shall sprinkle the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord the rest of the oil that priest is to put on the right ear and upon the right thumb and the big toe of the right foot and thus the process whereby the leper was brought back into the community and allowed to live once again among the people leprosy has often been used as typical of sin typical of sin because of the mystery of its origin and of its transmission we don't know how leprosy is transmitted from one person to another we don't know how a person gets leprosy even as we don't know how sin is actually transmitted from one to another and yet there seems to be death is passed unto all men for all sin and there is that transmission but we don't know how leprosy by all

human standards is incurable now through medicine they can arrest leprosy in its development but they can't cure it it can only be arrested it's incurable as far as human standards go so sin incurable as far as man is concerned leprosy is deadly so also is sin deadly in its results leprosy is insidious in its development within the body destroying first of all the nerves progressing until it hits a vital area even as sin seems to be progressive and insidious in that it destroys man's will to resist and so we see then in the cleansing of the leper the two birds the one that is killed the blood caught in this clay vessel the second bird dipped in that watery blood mixture i'm certain that if you sought to really look you would find great symbolisms and a reason for the cedar wood a reason

for the scarlet a reason for the hyssop and a reason for the bloody water for i am sure that in them there is something that does point to jesus christ and his sacrifice for us it is interesting that there is sort of a scarlet thread woven through the old testament pointing to jesus christ here the leper was to bring scarlet we remember that rahab the harlot was to allow a scarlet cord out the window so that all that would be in the house where the scarlet cord was hanging from the window would be saved when the children of israel captured jericho but the cedar wood could of course be looking forward to the cross and i'm sure that they all in some way look forward to the cross could it be that the cross was of cedar i don't know i wouldn't be surprised the bloodied water surely speaks to

us of when jesus had his side pierced by the roman soldier and there came forth blood and water and it speaks of our cleansing through the blood of jesus christ the hyssop we remember while he was there upon the cross they took the hyssop bush and they put vinegar upon it and put it to his lips when he cried i thirst so i'm certain that in all of this there is beautiful symbolism and as you read it and just open your heart to the spirit i'm sure that god can speak to you and give application to these things to your heart i am not much of one to get into spiritualizing of scriptures though i believe that there are spiritual analogies all the way through that is just not my method or type of teaching and thus i will leave that to others who seem to have greater insights into those types of

spiritual applications i find them very interesting and beautiful when they are pointed out and so then the dedication of the man having been cleansed the blood upon his ear upon his thumb and upon his foot is really that the symbol of the consecration of your life now to god this was the thing that was done for aaron when he was sanctified toward toward the priesthood the blood upon his ear thumb and right toe be speaking that your ear might be open to god that your hand might be busy doing the work of god and your feet walking in the path of god and so we having been cleansed from our sin that isn't the end of it we are now to live a life that is consecrated unto god a life of commitment unto him our ear open to his voice our hands doing his work our feet walking in his path and so

there is a whole analogy here of the leprous man in his cleansing with the sinful man and his cleansing and thus his consecration and commitment unto god and so he goes ahead and he details the uh the laws of of those that were plagued with leprosy verse 32 it sort of uh gives the capsulization this is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy whose hand is not able to get that which pertains to his cleansing the lord speak to mooses and aaron saying now when you come in the land there there was a there was a plague that would also get in the houses probably sort of a mildew and if this growth was in the houses they were to scrape the rocks they were to replaster them and if it broke out again they were just to tear down the house completely but if after the replastering it didn't

break out again then the house was considered clean and they could go ahead and live in it and so uh the um again the bringing of the birds and killing the one over the water and all much the same this is the law of leprosy chapter 14 now as we get into the 15th chapter god deals with uh sort of a a a boil kind of a thing or any breaking out on your body any kind of a running sore that a person might have that he is unclean and the whole thing has now to do with uh hygienic principles how that anything that he wears that touches it is unclean and and the various washing processes that they need to go through until this running sore sort of a staph infection is healed completely uh it is interesting that these laws of cleanliness these laws of washing and all were so important for good

hygiene up until just the last hundred years or so the hospitals did not always follow good practices of hygiene the doctors didn't really wash that much in fact there there used to be sort of a feeling that the bloodier that the the doctor's clothes were really it was sort of a symbol of of the efficiency and the effectiveness of the man and so they would go from one patient to another without washing from one childbirth delivery to another without washing and from one operation to another without washing coming in all bloodied and everything and just moving from one to another and not really following a a good routine of washing now one of the first doctors to recommend that they really start a thorough washing procedure was almost lost his license because he dared to suggest such a

thing and he was really a look down on in the medical field for quite some time until he was able to prove statistically that the death rate among his patients especially those mothers bearing children was much less than all of the rest by a dramatic amount because of the careful practices of washing so now this is up until just about a hundred years ago there wasn't nearly the care in washing and yet had they read the law that God gave they would have known the necessity and the value of the washing and of the cleaning now the bible doesn't say that cleanliness is next to godliness in those words those words are found in the quran but not in the bible but yet surely it is implied that cleanliness is important physical cleanliness is important that is certainly something that is taught in

the law though it is not necessarily related to godliness because they're whole different areas but yet just to your own physical well-being cleanliness is very important to stop the spread of disease and to for just good health cleanliness is important indeed and so as you get into the 15th chapter and you're dealing with these issues and so forth that are coming forth sort of a staff infection he goes through the various cleansing processes and the way that they are to be cleansed the number of days and so forth and then also just dealing basically with cleanliness and then coming to the woman and dealing with her in her menstrual period and the fact that during this period she was ceremonially unclean that anyone that touched the bed where she slept was also unclean would have to wash

and so forth and then after the menstrual period would have to wait for seven days in separation and then she would bring on the eighth day two young pigeons or turtle doves to the priest for sacrifices of a sin

offering and a burnt offering and then it was then she was then clean and could then resume physical relations with her husband once more it is interesting this no doubt is the reason why there was such great fertility among these people because that is they were able to or when they were able to come again with physical relationships was about the time of ovulation and so it made for a rapid increase in population and thus shall you separate the children of Israel from the uncleanness that they die not in their uncleanness when they defile my tabernacle it is among them

now the uncleanness it is important that we realize that this was a ceremonial uncleanness and during the period of this uncleanness they were not allowed to come to the tabernacle of God if you if you had this running sore you weren't allowed to come to the tabernacle of God until you'd gone through the seven days of washing washing your clothes washing your body and everything else and and after the the running sore had healed and scabbed over and healed and then you could come but it was it was ceremonially unclean you weren't allowed in the tabernacle of God during this period of uncleanness

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