

God's Handbook on Holiness - Part 1

by Roy Hession

Roy Hession's sermon explores the significance of the Book of Leviticus in understanding God's holiness and the foreshadowings of Christ within its laws.

Duration: 48:35

Scripture: Leviticus 15:31, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Holiness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the writing and purpose of the book of Leviticus in the Bible. He emphasizes that the book was inspired by God and written by Moses. The speaker acknowledges that some people may find the book difficult to understand, especially new Christians, but he sees it as a valuable opportunity to introduce them to the treasures of the Bible and the revelation of Jesus. The main theme of the book, according to the speaker, is the holiness demanded by the presence of the tabernacle among the Israelites, which sets them apart from other nations. The speaker highlights the importance of holiness and the various laws and regulations outlined in Leviticus that reveal a foreshadowing of Jesus.

Transcript

Some time ago, as you will remember, we were all reading in the Scripture Union from the book of Leviticus. And the message and charm of what is a rather unfamiliar scripture gripped my heart afresh. And I found myself living a good deal in this book of Leviticus.

And in these days, I feel the Lord wants us to have some studies in the third book of Moses called Leviticus. And that is going to be our study for these mornings. That's how it reads in our authorised version, the third book of Moses called Leviticus.

When you're on the continent and you're speaking by interpretation, if you say to the interpreter, to interpreter of the people, let's turn to the book of Leviticus, he won't know what you mean. Because they don't call it Leviticus there, they call it the third book of Moses. There are five books of Moses and Leviticus is the third book.

And I want us to look at this book in these days. It's rather unfamiliar, it isn't always the easiest of reading, certainly not always in public. At first, it might even seem to be tedious.

And you know, I've often feared a little for a young Christian who says, now I've found the Lord, I'm going to begin reading the Bible from the beginning right through to the end. And he gets on fine with Genesis and he gets on fine with Exodus. But so often the young Christian gets a bit stuck when he finds himself in the middle of Leviticus.

But I want to tell you, the child of God can ignore no part of the Holy Scripture without great loss to himself. I myself, when I'm going through a book, I plough through everything, even the genealogies. And I for one have found precious gems in what look like to be the most unlikely parts of the Holy Scripture.

And this is certainly true of this book of Leviticus. It's full of precious and wonderful gems. It's full of the most searching and practical truth.

Above all, it's full of blessed foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus Christ and of that precious gospel of which he is the center. Furthermore, I don't think you will understand many other parts of the Old Testament fully if you haven't some understanding at least of the book of Leviticus. All the time in the historical portions there are burnt offerings and sin offerings and peace offerings being offered.

And you won't know what it all means unless you have got some knowledge at least of this book where all these ceremonial laws and much else is laid down. Now, in these mornings together, I'm not going to assume any familiarity on your part with this book. Of course, many of us who have lived in our Bibles are deeply familiar with this precious portion of God's Word.

But some of us aren't. Some of us, like the young Christian, have got stuck in Leviticus and have skipped on to something further. So I'm going to really be quite elementary.

And those of us who have lived in our Bibles for years, you may find me saying things that you already know. But one is very much aware of the fact that God brings to our conference many new Christians. And it's a wonderful joy to introduce new Christians to the wonderful treasures of their Bible and to show how they all reveal a wonderful vision of the Lord Jesus whom they have so recently come to know.

Now, my difficulty, of course, my tendency is always to pack too much in. And I'm going to try not to do that each morning. And for that reason, this morning, what we have to think about will be largely introductory.

And it won't be, perhaps, till tomorrow morning that we should get into the heart of the message of this book. But we can't just go assuming you understand how the book was written, what it's really intended to emphasize, and get right into its spiritual message. We can't assume that.

We must get our framework right, and I'm sure I'll have your patience in that matter. Now, first of all, what was the occasion of the writing of this book? Well, it is the third book of Moses, written under the inspiration of God by that great man of God. All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

Peter says, holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. And I believe that this book is inspired of the Lord. It was given to Moses by the Holy Spirit.

And the occasion of it was this. Israel had been brought out of their slavery in Egypt in that marvelous way, through the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb upon the doorpost, in their being spared that terrible hour of judgment. They saw that miracle by which the Red Sea was parted for them, and how it came upon their enemies and drowned them.

And they went that journey into the wilderness until they came to Mount Sinai. God did not lead them directly into the Promised Land. He led them for no less than one year.

He kept them waiting for one year at the foot of this great mountain. He had much to teach them. He had to make them a nation.

He had to give them laws. He wanted to reveal the ceremonial of their religion to them, all of which was going to be of great importance. And so they spent that full year at Mount Sinai.

And it was during that time that Moses received from God the words of this book and wrote them down. It was at Mount Sinai. You will remember that God came down upon that mountain, and it was altogether on a smoke.

They heard the voice of the trumpet, and they literally heard the voice of the living God speaking those ten great words, the ten commandments. You remember that Moses went up for forty days, six weeks, into that mountain where he received all the detailed instructions concerning the building of the tabernacle of witness, their place of worship in the wilderness. And during that six weeks, he not only received the details of the tabernacle, but he received these laws.

He came down, you remember, to find that the people had turned away from God and resorted to idolatry. He broke the stones and he went back for a further six weeks. I don't think it was then that he received any further communications of this order.

For six weeks he spent interceding with God on behalf of that sinning people. And for six weeks he looked deep into the nature of the heart of God and saw that in the heart of God there was a Lamb, that the central characteristic of the God that they were serving, that he was a God of grace and mercy. Well, those are wonderful days they spent at Mount Sinai.

And so it was then that this was given. The tabernacle, by this time, had been set up and these were the laws regarding its worship and much else. Well now, to whom was this book addressed originally? Well, it was addressed to the Levites.

That's why it's called the Leviticus. It's to do with the Levites. They in turn were, of course, to administer the laws of this book to the people.

But in the first case it was addressed to the Levites. Now, we all think that there were twelve tribes of Israel. In actual fact there were thirteen.

The sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh were divided to form two tribes, you remember. And so there were thirteen. The thirteenth was Levi.

And Levi was taken out from the nation. He was not accounted one of the twelve tribes. And when they came to divide the land of Canaan between the twelve tribes, Levi was given no inheritance.

The Lord was his inheritance. He was to be a special nation, separated from the others, to represent the nation to God and to represent God to the nation. I suppose we can regard the Christian as being a Levite, separated out from the world.

And what is written here to the Levites we can regard as being written to us. And so here were these Levites. Their business from the Levites came the priestly family, the sons of Aaron.

They were Levites, of course. And whereas the priests, that particular branch of the Levites, had special privileges and duties that none else had, not even the Levites, the Levites in turn had many other duties that the Israelites hadn't. They were the ones who took care of the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, that served it and all that needed to be done.

And they were the ones who transmitted these various laws to the people. So there was the occasion when this book was given at Sinai, and it was given to the Levites, especially to instruct them in their duties and so that they can transmit God's law to the people. And now the contents of this book.

As I suggested, it is largely made up of laws. First of all, there is a section, if you go through it, you'll find a section dealing with civil laws. You see, here's a rabble.

They're to be made a nation. They're to have laws. And this nation is to be different from any other nation in that its laws are going to be given by the God of heaven.

And you know to this day, many of the laws given at Sinai are enshrined in the statute books of nations that have been affected by Christianity. Certainly, many of the laws on the English statute books are connected, draw their inspiration from Sinai. And would that more of them did.

Ours would be a safer and a purer country if it was. So many of the more recent laws are deviations from what we had in scripture. But of course, we wouldn't want all the Sinai laws to be on our statute book because quite obviously there were those that had local application only and we shall see also laws that related to the peculiar Jewish ceremonial.

So there's the first part of the contents, civil laws. And let me say one thing about these civil laws. They're all the kindly laws of a kindly God.

I can see the love of God in the very laws he laid down. You'll see, we may touch upon them later, those laws that related to property. The land was divided amongst the tribes and a family had certain ancestral property.

And the kindly laws of God so arranged things that that family need not finally lose that ancestral property. Even if because of poverty they had to sell it. On the year of jubilee it went back every 50 years to the original owner.

And there are other things, many other things. The kindly laws of God concern for the weak, concern for the widow, concern for those that might be oppressed. Yes, we see the very moral character of this gracious God in the very laws he instituted.

So then there are civil laws. And then there are in many parts quite obviously moral laws. Straightforward moral laws that come home to everybody's heart and conscience as right.

And these too are revelations of God. Perhaps the chapter which enshrines the most wonderful set of moral laws is Leviticus 19. Indeed you can look upon Leviticus 19 as the sermon of the mount of the Old Testament.

I don't think the sermon of the mount goes very much further than Leviticus 19. Away with this notion that the God of the Old Testament is one God and the God of the new. Nothing.

From the very dawn of creation our God was a God of mercy and pity and compassion and grace. And after every one of these various moral laws given in this chapter 19 you have the formula I am the Lord. You can see verse 10 Thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard.

Thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger. This is a law, a moral law. Why? For I am the Lord, I'm like that.

I'm concerned about the poor man. I'm concerned about the stranger. And don't you be too particular in getting every grape off the vineyard.

Leave it for them, for I am the Lord. What sort of a God is this? A God of tender compassion. A God who is the same God that the Lord Jesus revealed.

You can go right the way through. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before thee blind. Thou shalt fear thy God, for I am the Lord.

You're not to take advantage of another's infirmity. The blind can't see what you're putting in front of him. The deaf can't hear what he's saying.

You shan't do it. Why, Lord? Because I am the Lord. I'm concerned about the other man.

And so we see the character of God shining out not only in the civil laws that he instituted, but in the moral laws. And did you know it's in the book of Leviticus that you have the famous word that Jesus reiterated for us about loving thy neighbor as thyself? Verse 17, Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor.

If you love him, you won't want to see him going on in the wrong course. Lovingly rebuke him. You shall not suffer sin upon him.

Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people. But thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And why? Because I'm like that.

I love this world, rebel world, as I love myself and I gave my son for it. And so here and in many other places you have the moral laws laid down. Of course, there are more in Exodus as well.

But certainly here in this book of Leviticus. But when you've said all that, the greater portion of the book is not taken up with civil laws, nor is it taken up with moral laws, but if you please, with ceremonial laws. The laws relating to their worship and to their fellowship with God and to the ceremonial and such like that was associated with it.

That is what the book seems to be occupied with more than any of the other two. Does that mean that God is more interested in ceremonial and services and the minutiae of sacrifices than in moral issues? It doesn't mean that at all. And here we come to perhaps the greatest importance of this book.

In these ceremonial laws, in these various ceremonies associated with their worship, God was teaching them things which perhaps they could only barely describe, but which are plain and clear to us who live in the dispensation now that Jesus Christ has come. Here in these ceremonies of sacrifice and worship, we have wonderful types, foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this may be chicken feed to those who've lived in their Bible for years.

We've been in the habit of happily and restfully and joyfully seeing pictures of the one we've come to know and love, even in the Old Testament. But this may be something new for some of the new Christians. It seems to me that the Holy Spirit knew him who was to come.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost were all occupied in this great redemption that God was going to accomplish for a sinning world. And the Holy Spirit was the author of the book. And he was so excited about this wonderful revelation that was to come that he couldn't help slipping intimations of it in all over the place before he ever came.

And so it is, the Holy Spirit who dictated this book gives us wonderful glimpses and foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus. Now very often when the substance comes, the shadow loses significance. For instance, I've often thought of it this way.

Here's a play. And at a particular point in the play, the main character is about to step onto the screen. And everybody knows this is the moment.

There's a pause, we'll suggest, in the dialogue. And the chief character waits for a moment in the wings. And maybe there's a bright light behind him.

And the audience see his shadow cast right across the stage. And they look at that shadow with great interest. They see his cloak, maybe his dagger or something.

It's a tense moment. And they get quite an impression of the one who is to come. And then he steps onto the stage.

Well now that's how it is. The Lord Jesus stood in the wings of history. But he cast his shadow before him before he ever came.

And our Old Testaments are full of that wonderful shadow. And how much of him can we learn as we patiently let the Spirit teach us the meaning of these foreshadowings of him who was to come. Now in the play, once the substance has come, you're not very interested in the shadow.

But that's not so here. The foreshadowing reveals the Lord Jesus. But the Lord Jesus in our Bibles casts new light back onto those foreshadowings.

And all I know, I've learnt things about my Lord Jesus from the Spirit, from my Old Testament, which aren't all that clearly revealed in the New. They don't need to be. They're in there.

In fact, you come to the place where Old and New don't seem to have a great deal of distinction. It's all the same, blessed Lord. After all, the New Testament is only words.

What are words? And the Old Testament is only words. The real thing is the reality. And it matters not where you're reading if the Spirit reveals you the reality.

It may be from Leviticus or it may be from John's Gospel. It's the same Lord Jesus that the Holy Spirit's revealing. And so this does make our whole Bibles thrilling.

Granted, granted, some of it will seem a little difficult at first. Be patient, be patient. You're going to live your life with this book.

Don't expect to get the hang of the whole thing straight away. You're going to spend a lifetime. You're going to go on with this book right to your dying day.

And as you get older, you'll read it even more because you'll have more time. You won't be able to go off to holiday conferences. You'll be stuck on that bed just enjoying this wonderful book that God's given you.

Now, let me give you the foundation for what I've said about our Old Testament being foreshadowings of Christ. Once again, I'm assuming that we're beginning and we don't want any people to leap over points in the logic. Let's take it bit by bit.

Now, is this true? Did Jesus treat his Old Testament this way? Indeed, he did. Will you turn to Luke 24, verse 27? Now, this is the famous story of the walk to Emmaus. And although that couple hadn't yet had their eyes opened, the stranger by their side began to show them that the death of their beloved master was no accident, that it was all prophesied in the Scripture.

Verse 26, he said, Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? Was it not necessary? Necessary, they said. I don't see that. Terrible calamity.

Oh, wait a minute. And this stranger, verse 27, And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. There was no New Testament then.

The only Scriptures were the Old Testament. And he took them back to their Jewish Scriptures and he pointed out all the foreshadowings and prophecies concerning the Messiah. Of course, the Jews knew there were these prophecies concerning the Messiah, but the only ones they noted was the Messiah coming in his glory.

They just somehow missed the other ones that talked about him as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They never did understand Psalm 22, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And so the Lord Jesus took them back and showed himself in these Old Testament Scriptures. Now, we're not stretching it.

We're not making it up. Here it is. This is the manner in which the Lord Jesus himself acted.

And then in the same chapter, verse 44, when he appears to them in the upper room, he said unto them, These are the words which I speak unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, listen, which were written in the law of Moses, that's your first five books, Leviticus included, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Who thought the Psalms were prophetic of Christ? Well, there are some Psalms certainly are. They're known as Messianic Psalms.

David was speaking of himself and his troubles in the first case, but it's quite evident as you read them. He's going on to speak of someone who also was a man of sorrows, even the Lord Jesus. And so, we are not stretching it when we seek to find the Lord Jesus and the gospel of which he is a center in our Old Testament.

Well, that's then a word about the contents, civil laws, moral laws, and ceremonial laws, which last, as I say, seem to be the most important, at least they occupy the greater portion of the book, because they make such a wonderful revelation of the Son of God who was to come. Now, the theme of the book. As I see it, the theme of the book is simply a treatise on the holiness demanded by the presence of the

tabernacle in their midst.

That is the thing around which everything revolves. That which makes Israel different from any other nation is that the Lord, their God, dwelt among them in a tabernacle. And the presence of the Lord, their God, dwelling in that tabernacle imposed certain demands upon the people.

And the demand was holiness. Will you turn to chapter 15, verse 31? At the end of a chapter talking about various uncleannesses which they could contract, from which they needed to be cleansed, verse 31 says, Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they die not in their uncleanness when they defile my tabernacle that is among them. Here was a people among whom God had his dwelling place.

And the presence of the tabernacle of the Lord among them made certain demands upon them with regard to holiness that wouldn't otherwise have been made. Certain things, because of the presence of that tabernacle, were to be regarded as unclean and defiling, which were not so regarded by any other nation, no matter how moral or intellectual like the Athenians. No, no, they didn't see anything defiling in this and that.

They had no rules as to what they should eat and what they shouldn't eat, what they should touch and what they shouldn't touch. But here was a people among whom God deigned to dwell. And the holiness ensuing from that fact is the theme of this book.

Turn back for a moment to Exodus chapter 25, where the instructions for the building of the tabernacle was given. Verse 2. Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring me an offering of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering, verse 8, and let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. That was the purpose of that tabernacle, that portable place of worship.

It was that I may dwell among them. I know not perhaps literally so, it was pictorial, and yet there were real evidences of God's presence there. The base of that pillar of fire and cloud rested above the holy place of the tabernacle.

And the high priest, when he went in once a year into the Holy of Holies, he found it lit with a supernatural light from that pillar of light within. There were evidences that God was in some local special way that they could understand dwelling among them. What sort of people must a people be who have the Lord of heaven and earth dwelling in their midst? And they found that things became defiling to them that might not be defiling to others.

They found a need of washing and being unclean until the evening over things that occasioned no bother at all to other nations. Well, the application of that to us is very, very important. Because we are a people among whom the Lord dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast wind it in either direction. Because we are a people among whom the Lord dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you turn to 2 Corinthians 6.16 Verse 16, 2 Corinthians 6.16 What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And that very fact makes demands upon us with respect to holiness.

There must be moral correspondence between him who dwells and them among whom he dwells. Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. You've got the same thought, of course, in 1 Corinthians 3.16 1 Corinthians 3.16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? He dwells among us as a fellowship but in us as individuals.

My life, my body, my mind are part of his temple. He is dwelling in me. Therefore, listen to what happens, if any man defile the temple of God him shall God destroy.

A man of the world may do something without any compunction of conscience. But not so the Christian. He's defiled the very temple of God and uncleanness in Israel is said to defile the tabernacle in their midst.

And, says Moses, that might bring death upon you. Therefore, you've got to be scrupulous with regard to the cleansing of any new defilement that is contracted. And then, of course, you've got the same thought in 1 Corinthians 6 verse 19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you and which ye have of God and ye are not your own.

That, then, I suggest, is the theme of the book. It's a treatise on the holiness demanded by the presence of the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God amongst us. And, of course, its application is tremendous for us.

Because it is, rightly understood, a handbook on holiness. Once you begin to see, get the clue. And its key word, well, its key word is found at least five times.

1144 Here is the key word of this book, this third book of Moses. 1144 I am the Lord your God ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves and ye shall be holy for I am holy because I who dwell among you am holy. There must be moral correspondence between me and you.

Not the same degree of perfect holiness, of course not. But I must be willing to call that sin which God calls sin, that defiling which He says is defiling and I must avail myself of His appointed cleansing for those things which He says need it. Again and again you get this great word in the next verse.

Therefore, last half, ye shall be holy for I am holy. 19 verse 2 Ye shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy. 20 verse 7 Sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy for I the Lord your God am holy.

And verse 26 of that chapter 20 Ye shall be holy unto me for I the Lord thy God am holy. Shall we settle it in our hearts? Maybe this word holiness sounds a funny word, but it's got to be absolutely basic for us as believers. It's so easy to slip away from God's standards of holiness.

And as we shall see, it isn't merely we're called upon to make frantic efforts. We are simply called upon to agree with God about holiness. And to say on every and any issue Oh God, you're right, I'm wrong there.

And you're encouraged to do that because as portrayed in this book, there's wonderful abundant provision for our cleansing and restoration on every point where we've been defiled. None of the key words of this book is clean and unclean uncleanness, defiled, cleansing. It goes all the way through the book.

It's a real handbook on gospel holiness. Gospel holiness is different from legal holiness. Legal holiness is turning over a new leaf and it never gets you anywhere.

Gospel holiness is that which turns back the old leaf and agrees with God. The basic element of gospel holiness is honesty about our unholiness. You know a man who says, you know, I'm frankly terribly selfish.

You know he's on the way out of his selfishness, don't you? You know the man who says, I'll tell you frankly, I get so jealous, especially of so-and-so. Why, you know that's the first step out of it. You know grace is going to reach that man and do something for him.

That's gospel holiness. It isn't frantic attempts. It's all under grace.

But it is that which faces the challenge of the presence of the Lord God among us and is willing to say yes. Well, I need this challenge. I slip from that so easily.

I guess we all do. And this is the way of revival. The Christian life is a way of holiness because the one who saved us is holy.

Shall we get reconciled to that? You shall be holy. For I the Lord thy God am holy. People of the world won't have a conscience about many things which the child of God will because of the presence of a holy God in his heart.

And it's every provision made for the weakest and most failing of us as we shall see to walk this pathway of holiness. This is the Christian life and none other. It's so easy to beg moral issues.

I believe there are some Christians, they get saved, they start reading their Bibles and getting their minds full of doctrine and busy in God's work. But very, very seldom do they face a moral issue in their lives. But I believe the only way of growth, even of growth in the Word of God, is facing moral issues.

Who was the wisest man in the Old Testament? Well, you might have various opinions. I suggest one, Daniel. He had understanding in the visions of God into the future.

But was there ever a man who knew what holiness was as Daniel? Who refused to defile himself with the things that went on in Babylon? And the way of holiness for him was the way of deep spiritual understanding. This is the gateway. And I need to have this said to me as much as I guess you do too.

So this is the great theme. And so, as I've indicated, there are many things indicated in this book which defile. Quite obviously, transgressions of the moral law revealed in this book defile.

And we need cleansing. But the interesting thing is that the things in this book which are said to defile aren't moral things at all. They're along the line of the ceremonial.

That's where they contracted most of their defilement, along the ceremonial line. And the explanation is this, that God deliberately created any number of artificial uncleannesses on purpose. The things that defile, make us unclean, are artificial.

It's an artificial uncleanness which Israel were constantly contracting. I mean to say, a woman having a child. She had to be cleansed afterwards.

There was defilement in it. A leper. He was considered defiled.

We don't regard leprosy any more defiling than measles. They're both contagious. There's nothing dirty in themselves.

Eating certain foods. I mean to say, if a Jew ate pork, he was defiled. Well, we don't think it's any defiling.

It's very nice. It was artificial and deliberately so. And the poor Jews had to conform to this rather onerous law.

But this artificial uncleanness was created in order to give God his picture book in which to speak to later generations of the great redemption of the Lord Jesus and of a far greater uncleanness. The artificial uncleannesses of Leviticus are picturing for us the moral defilement that comes to us by sin. And we won't have time to go into it all, but I believe there's a deep, deep picture that even the very best and highest in human life, even motherhood, is tainted by the fall.

There's nothing in us that doesn't need the cleansing of the blood of the Lord Jesus. Everything, whole of life, is affected with a fallen world. And if we're going to stand before God at all, we can never stand on the ground of innocence or what is merely natural.

We must be only on the ground of that precious blood, that redemption that's been created, that's been accomplished for us by the Lord Jesus. And so that is the uncleanness you find, artificial uncleanness. Now for the time that remains this morning, just let me turn you to two forms of artificial uncleanness.

The first is in Leviticus chapter 11. Now here is a chapter on the dark sheet permissible to the Israelites, what they were to eat and what they were not to eat. And if they ate certain foods, certain animals, they were unclean.

And they had to wash their clothes and be unclean until the evening. You've got the animals first of all, and only that was to be eaten, which parted the hoof and chewed the cud, which of course excluded a whole lot of animals, which personally I'm not particularly keen about. The camel wasn't to be eaten, well you can keep the camel.

The coney, I'm not sure what the coney was, but maybe he wasn't very palatable either. Hare, well it's a long time since I had jugged hare, but the Jews weren't to have him because he didn't part the hoof and chew the cud. Some of these animals parted the hoof but didn't chew the cud, they got to do both to be safe.

And then you've got the fish, only those that had fins and scales, wasn't enough to have fins, had to have fins and scales to be on their diet sheet. And it's strange to see, it's very strange that the sort of foods that do conform are the foods that well I feel quite safe with, I'm not sure I like eels. Maybe you do, but you say they've got fins but haven't got scales.

But I don't know, some of them do give me the creeps a little bit. And such fish were to be an abomination to them. Then among the fowls of the air, well you weren't to eat the eagle or the vulture.

Well I'm quite clear and you weren't to touch an owl. Would you like to have roast owl? Or the night hawk and so on. The cormorant, birds of prey and so on.

And then creeping things, verse 29, the weasel and the mouse. How would you like to have roast mouse or fried mouse? Snails! Well on the continent you can get snails, frogs even. I think frogs are refused here.

I remember when I was in Brazil with William Nagenda and we were taken to a Chinese restaurant and they brought a dish on, a whole succession of dishes. And William offered me, he said, have one of these, they're chicken's legs you see. But I'd been told.

And he got one almost to his mouth and I said they're not, they're frog's legs. And as far as an African can go pale under his colour he went pale and he put it back quick. And you can look through this chapter even to touch the carcass of one of these animals when it was dead made the man unclean.

He wasn't fit for worship. He had to wash his clothes and his flesh in water and be unclean until the evening. Now I don't believe it was because there was something basically unhygienic in certain animals.

It does so happen that these rules do in many cases conform to our modern ideas of hygiene but not altogether. That wasn't the point, it was an artificial uncleanness in order that they might discern what was clean and what was unclean. Verse 47, to make a difference between the unclean and the clean.

And the message of this is what do I feed on? What do I feed on? Because sometimes what I feed on renders me unclean. The people of the world they can feed on certain things. They can go to certain movies.

They can read certain magazines. They can pore over certain columns in the newspaper and they don't see anything wrong and they don't see any of the worst but not so the one who is the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost. And you're rendered unclean by what you feed on.

I know we could, and I've read interesting expositions how parted hoof and the chewing of the cud and the fins and the scales have meaning. And I don't deny those expositions but we won't go into details now and none of us could be altogether dogmatic on all the details, though some of them are instructive indeed. But this is the thing, what do I feed on? It renders me unclean.

And I know I have been unclean. I find myself with unhealthy interest in certain columns. Speaking of impurity it's a funny thing I don't get tempted by hearing of the glorious happy married life of a couple.

But when I hear of something salacious of people transgressing those moral laws and finding sexual satisfaction outside what is right and proper, I find that response. There's something in me. You see, the fall seems to affect the sexual side of us perhaps more than any other side.

The right use of sex, no temptation, but the wrong use. And you know you can feed on it. You can like to read it.

And it defiles us. And I must confess sometimes I'm not sharp enough on this. I'm not acknowledging it.

I'm not repenting of it as I should. And I little wonder why Jesus isn't near me. It's what goes in.

What we feed on, that can defile us. And also there are expositors who suggest it's not only those sort of things that defile but the very teaching we feed on. Someone has suggested he's got to part the hoof and chew the cud.

That message, that Christian life is only right, which has the two things. Parting the hoof, it's suggested, might picture separation from the world. And chewing the cud, meditation on the Bible and the true message of the grace of God.

It's possible to have one without the other but to be very punctilious. But to be absolutely astray on the truth of the Gospel. On the other hand we can be very strong on the Gospel but careless as to our walk with God and we're playing with sin.

Well, we won't be pragmatic about that. It's what goes in that defiles. And so I'm just giving you a little touch along this line.

And there's another chapter where it's not what goes in that defiles, it's what comes out. And in chapter 15. In chapter 15 here's a chapter and the heading in my authorized version says the uncleanness of men and women in their issues.

Speak unto the children of Israel when any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, this shall be his uncleanness. Whether his flesh run with his issue or his flesh be stopped from his issue, it is his uncleanness. And everything he touches, the bed is unclean and the clothes are unclean, everything's got to be washed.

A man or a woman with a running sore of one sort or another was unclean. And Jesus said it isn't what goes into a man that makes us unclean, well it does but what is far more important is what comes out. Because you know you can be so careful, you don't read anything you don't go to a thing that might defile you but the truth is the defilement's inside already and it comes out all too often in the words we speak in perhaps a carelessness about the jokes we make and fornication, let it not be so much named among you as become his saints.

I've known Christians and they've been guilty of passing around jokes which have got a little taint about them laughing at what ought not to be laughed at is what comes out and it renders me unclean I've defiled the temple of the Lord and I'm out of touch with that God but not only such things that complaining spirit, that running that festering sore, always complaining. My friend it's a wonderful thing when we see that's defiling the temple of the Lord that's among me. Maybe self-pity.

We can almost enjoy it, it's a running sore. When people come to us we give them a dish of self-pity, that's all we can talk about and it defiles the presence of the Lord.

Jealousy, what a running sore that is it doesn't always come out in big bits of pus, it's always slightly oozing just a little bit of oozing, oozing, oozing I've had problems with jealousy and I know this terrible festering sore, it hides itself, you can't always see it but oh there's nothing that puts me out of fellowship with God like this running sore of jealousy or a resentful spirit hard and unforgiving toward that man that's wronged you whenever you see that person or hear his name mentioned you think of that thing that sort of thing's going on in the world all the time and nobody thinks anything of it but not know so the child of God you shall be holy for I the Lord thy God am holy and the very presence of the Lord Jesus in us and with us makes things sin for us which were never

sinned before but the presence of the tabernacle not only rendered things unclean that otherwise might not have been unclean but the central thing as we shall see tomorrow in that tabernacle in their worship was the offering of the sin offering, the burnt offering of others and although God was a holy God there was instituted a ritual which portrayed the way in which people like ourselves who do get so easily unclean may nonetheless come and be washed and cleansed from our uncleanness and walk in fellowship with that holy God and that perhaps is the biggest note that this book has to tell us not only about our uncleanness not only about the necessity of holiness but of this simple wonderful way of grace the Lamb of God that bareth away the sin of the world that's what Paul meant in

Hebrews 9 when he said if the ashes of an heifer if the blood of bulls and goats spoken of here and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean spoken of in Numbers 19 sanctified to the purifying of the flesh

how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God and my friends don't let me leave the impression this is a frightening book it's a most encouraging book for sinners who are prepared to agree with God they are sinners here you have the gospel as we shall see, good news for bad people who are prepared to acknowledge the full extent of their badness on any given issue and then they have these wonderful visions of Jesus that we shall see and we come right into the holiest by that blood that he poured out for us let us pray Lord

Jesus, we are learners, we want to be together at thy feet Lord, when it comes to the real things, none of us knows more than another we're all learners and Lord we don't want to learn things merely with our heads we don't want to get an academic knowledge merely of thy word we don't want to get a wonderful outline of this book even we want to penetrate to the reality of which it speaks to the one who is foreshadowed in its pages we confess Lord that we've all too readily contracted uncleanness and Lord forgive us for getting used to our uncleanness forgive us Lord for being willing to live with it and come to terms with it when you want us to judge it as sin in thy presence so Lord teach us all that you want us to learn from this precious part of thy holy word in these days together Amen

and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore Amen

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