

C. The Expression of Holiness in the Laws of Purity. Leviticus 11-15, et al

The laws of cleanliness or purity are seen in the light of our relationship with one another, God, and the world around us. The fact is that God has standards of cleanliness (morality) that apply in all areas of life and this is really the thrust of this segment of our book. The book notes many particular areas and the principles given for these spill over into unnamed areas. What it means is that there is no area of life in which God's testimony is unimportant or is to be overlooked by us.

In evangelical circles one must remember that the concepts of "clean" and "unclean" are much older than the Mosaic code, having roots that are pre-Noahic in form. What is new is the institutionalization of them and the more formal outworking of the various parts. In more liberal circles this is not recognized and it is thought the ante-diluvian references are "written backwards" so to speak. As this is not a critical course we will not take this up in length but it is worth noting the many things generally revealed and then progressively given elaboration as God's program unfolded.

It is my impression that great amounts of the law were given to impress on the nation the reality of God's control in every life-setting. At times a particular regulation may not seem practical or well-placed. But behind these are two considerations. 1) there may have been circumstances not known to us but perfectly rational at the time and 2) the awareness of God in this particular life setting may have been especially needed. We tend to forget God very easily...so what reminds us of Him and His will for us is never out of order.

These laws of purity are not much studied today and I suppose the extensions given them in orthodox Jewry may have helped that. But they have a practical cast with which we should make ourselves familiar. My treatment of them is not so detailed as the sacrificial portion although we do want to examine them in some degree.

1. The Laws of Practical Cleanliness...

a. The Dietary Code Leviticus 11 (also see Deuteronomy 14:3-20)

Determining "clean" and "unclean" eating practices was very very important. All the restrictions were on "meat" types of dishes although in the health sense, vegetable substances are often far more harmful. Meat, however, is one of the "desired" things and the test of what honors God is made in the area of these substances.

(1) The tests:

--animals 11:2-8 (largely domesticated types)

The animal must part the hoof, be cloven footed and chew the cud.

see also vs 26-28

animals (largely non-domesticated) 27, 29-31

The whole class is unclean and the particular critters are specified with the generalization of vs. 27