

THROUGH THE BIBLE

LEVITICUS 8-15

Last Sunday 200,000 Catholics gathered in Rome at St. Peter's Square to welcome the first American pope, Leo XIV. It was Inauguration Day, the official start of his pontificate. Leo sported his papal vestments and the fisherman's ring. A massive crowd gathered in the square. Pope Leo even took a ride in the popemobile.

In today's chapters, Leviticus features a celebration on an even larger scale! Over a million Hebrews gathered at the Tabernacle door to witness the inauguration of Aaron, Judaism's first High Priest.

Remember, the "Tabernacle or tent of meeting" was the sacred space connecting heaven with earth - think of it as heaven's threshold. It's where God lived and fellowshiped with His people. It was the training ground where God would teach a people, fresh from slavery, how to order a new world. Israel needed to learn how to draw near to a holy God, and how to live in community with one another. God designed the Tabernacle to be the incubator for a new society.

And any *training ground* has to have *trainers*! So from the tribe of Levi, God appointed priests to lead in worship, and instruct Israel on the practices and rituals it required. You could say, the priests had Levi genes. And Leviticus was *their priestly tech manual*.

But Leviticus is more. According to the NT book of Hebrews the Tabernacle, its sacrifices and rituals, are a lens into the work of Jesus. Through Leviticus we see Jesus and His ways more clearly. Jesus is now our sacrifice, our priest, our cleansing, and our holy day!

Recall from last week, Leviticus 1-7 discussed the five sacrifices the nation could offer God - *the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering*. But someone had to offer these sacrifices, which leads us to Chapter 8 - the dedication of Aaron and sons - the first of the Levitical priests.

Verse 1, "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing oil, a bull as the sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting." So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. And the congregation was gathered together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting." A ceremony is being planned. Priests will be presented to the nation. But before a *presentation* there's always *preparation*...

And Chapter 8 describes seven steps in the dedication of the priests. *Remember, we too need similar preparation.* The NT says that now God wants all His people to be priests. Everyone in Christ should be a representative of God to a world lost without Him.

Well, **verse 6**, is **Preparation A, be washed**, *the new priests were washed with water.* And we too, need to be washed in the water of God's Word - our perspectives challenged and our minds renewed...

Verses 7-9, **Preparation B, be dressed**, *Aaron and sons are outfitted in the priestly uniforms.* We studied the priestly garments back in Exodus 28. And believers in Jesus should put on Christ, His identity and attitude.

Notice though in verse 8, Moses **"put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastplate."** These words literally mean **"lights and perfections."** What they were we're not sure, but by using them the priest could discern God's will. Some commentators think they were stones that acted as prisms - they shined light that literally guided the people, perhaps illuminating the lettering on the breastplate and communicating a written message.

Here's a thought for us. Today, God spells out what we need to know in the Bible! His Word and Spirit are sufficient. His Spirit guides us by His Word. Thus, God speaks to us by use'n and thumbing through our Bible.

Verse 10-12 is **Preparation C, be anointed**, *the Tabernacle and High Priest were anointed with oil.* And as God's representatives we need to be anointed and filled with the power and joy and love of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 13, **Preparation D, be a team**, *Aaron's sons are also dressed as priests.* Their help will be needed. And none of us can do it alone. We need the church!

Then **verses 14-28**, **Preparation E, be dedicated**, *Moses offers the sacrifices as the Lord prescribed in Chapters 1-7* - again, **"a sweet aroma to the LORD."**

But in verses 23-24 he does something wonderful in dedicating Aaron and his sons, **"Moses put some of the blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot..."**

Nine out of ten people are right handed, so Moses addresses our *"lead side"* and dedicates us to God. He puts blood on their ear, so they'll listen to only God's Word... their thumb, so they'll do only God's will... and their big toe, so they'll walk in only God's ways...

May we also dedicate **our ears to hear God, our hands to serve God, and our feet to follow God!**

Then **verses 29-32, Preparation F, be hungry.** *Moses serves the priests their portion of the sacrifices. Aaron and sons eat at the altar.* And likewise we should eat at God's altar. You can't feed others if you don't first feed yourself. Ministry begins by bringing our appetites to God, and letting Him satisfy our spiritual hunger.

Then **verses 33-36, Preparation G, be patient.** *They're to wait seven days at the Tabernacle door.* And we learn quickly in *serving God* that *waiting on God* is a prerequisite. Between the giving of a promise and the getting of that promise there is almost always a wait.

So, if you want to be effective for God take seriously the proper preparations: Preparation A - be washed, Preparation B - be dressed, C - be anointed, D - be a team, E - be dedicated, F - be hungry, G - be patient, and you won't need... **Preparation H.** Life becomes *a pain in the rear* when you don't make preparations.

In Chapter 9 the priests begin their ministry. Aaron, the high priest, is told to offer sacrifices on behalf of the nation. Verses 5-6 tell us, *"So they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of meeting. And all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. Then Moses said, 'This is the thing which the LORD commanded you to do, and the glory of the LORD will appear to you.'"* *Get ready, God is coming!*

But first, Aaron performs the sacrifices. Verse 9, *"And he dipped his finger in the blood, put it on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar."* A bull holds about three gallons of blood. Imagine the volume of blood from all five sacrifices combined. And not only that day, but every day for 1,500 years. The Tabernacle's bronze altar was definitely blood-stained.

Of course, this was the Tabernacle's Inauguration Day, **its Grand Opening!** It was fitting that all five sacrifices be offered. Finally, look at what happens in 9:23, *"And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces."* God comes to the barbecue! His glory appears and fire falls from heaven to consume the sacrifice. What a first day on the job for Aaron! Israel is astonished. The people fall on their faces before God.

It's interesting, three times in the Bible a new holy space - a house of worship - is dedicated, and each time the sacrifice is consumed by fire from heaven.

It happens here... Then again in 2 Chronicles 7 when Solomon dedicates the Temple in Jerusalem. The glory of the LORD fills the Temple, fire falls from heaven, and the people fall on their faces before God.

And it happens once more, when the NT temple is dedicated. In Acts 2, Peter preaches the Gospel, people get saved, the Church is birthed, and that's when tongues of fire appear over the heads of *living sacrifices*, or followers of Jesus. *A new temple opens!*

Now, I've got a question for you. **Have you ever been burned?** I've also got a list. The Top Ten ways to get burned: "**Ten**, invest your retirement fund in penny stocks... **Nine**, back talk your mother-in-law at your wedding rehearsal... **Eight**, bet the house on the Falcons winning the Super Bowl... **Seven**, ignore the expiration date on the milk in your refrigerator... **Six**, be truthful when your wife asks if she looks fat in her new dress..." Ok, those were the funny ones. The last five not so much... "**Five**, marry an unbeliever... **Four**, live a sexually promiscuous life... **Three**, give your kids everything, but your time... **Two**, ignore your Bible... And **One**, trust in people rather than trust in God..."

Well, in Leviticus 10:1-2, later on Inauguration Day. The Tabernacle hasn't even been broken in... two of the priests, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, get burned. "**Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.**"

Of course, their dad was upset and grieving over their deaths. Aaron is about to launch a complaint, when Moses says in verse 3, "**This is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.'**" In short, *God is just in His punishment*. At the end of verse 3 it reads, "**So Aaron held his peace.**"

Realize, this was the same fire that just a few verses earlier consumed the sacrifices and caused the people to worship. Now it consumes two of Aaron's sons.

In verses 4-7 Moses has to send two cousins into the Tabernacle to carry out the dead bodies. Moses warns the two remaining sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, to avoid grieving for their brothers publicly. They don't want to misrepresent God and die themselves. They need to affirm that God was right in His punishment.

Understand, God is like the sun. We couldn't survive without the sun. It's the author and source of life. But if we're nonchalant in the sun, and don't take the sun and its power seriously, it'll burn us. **We need the sun, but we also need to be protected**

from the sun. And the same is true with God. God is good. He's life, and light, and love - without Him there'd be nothing but death, and darkness, and despair. But to live in proximity to God, to fellowship with Him, "**atonement**" is required. A "**kaphar,**" or **covering**, a sacrifice is needed.

You and I need to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. *Jesus is the eternal Son tan lotion.* In Christ, we get tanned and transformed, not burned or consumed.

Nadab and Abihu disrespected God and became *crispy critters*. This is why priests are also called *friars!* (Ha!) Moses tells us the boys got burned because they offered "**profane**" or "**strange fire.**" Exactly what this was we're not sure. Some folks believe they entered the Holy of Holies - off limits to all but the High Priest...

Others believe they got the fire for their censers or torches from a source other than the bronze altar...

It could've been **a matter of timing** - the right act at the wrong time... Or **a matter of motive** - the right act done out of jealousy, or self-glory... Imagine, the sons thinking, *If we cause fire to fall from heaven nobody at school will pick on us again. Think of the chicks we'll get. We'll charge admission, folks pay to see fireworks.*

But there's another theory. Verse 9, "**Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.**" Notice, immediately following this incident we have an everlasting prohibition against priests drinking alcohol as they go into the Tabernacle to worship God.

That's why some people assume Nadab and Abihu were drunk when they entered God's presence - *that's why fire went out from the Lord and consumed them.*

Alcohol clouds your judgment. Thus, a pastor or elder has no business drinking while teaching, counseling, or guiding God's people. Imagine, calling a pastor for counsel, and he's slurring his words and confusing his thoughts, that'd be awful. That's why God made this prohibition "**a statute forever,**" and why we at CalvaryCSM have made it a policy for our leaders.

In fairness to Nadab and Abihu, they had just witnessed an awesome display of God's glory. Moses and Aaron go in to the Lord, and fire falls from heaven. Even if they weren't drinking they were still giddy. Talk about exhilaration! These guys are fired-up, literally, excited for God. They want in on the action, so they rush in before the Lord in an unsanctioned manner.

Be careful, we can get so caught up in the emotion of a moment we don't think - *God can be worshipped in ways that displease Him*. This happens in some Charismatic circles. Well-meaning people get whipped up into a frenzy; then approach God in self-serving ways. *It's once again, profane fire!* You can be fired-up for God in the wrong way, just ask Nadab and Abihu!

To enter God's presence is a privilege. Don't take it for granted. As Henrietta Mears use to encourage her students, "*Learn to walk softly in the Divine Presence.*"

Chapter 10 closes with a strange episode. Moses rebukes Aaron, because he and his two remaining sons don't eat their portion of the offering. In essence, Aaron replies, "*Give me a break. I lost two sons today. Don't expect me to have an appetite.*" Moses must've empathized with his brother, for in verse 20 we're told, "*So when Moses heard that, he was content.*"

But this issue of what the priests eat from the altar leads to Chapter 11, and the formation of God's dietary plan for the nation. Verse 1, "*Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These are the animals which you may eat among the animals that are on the earth.'*" Clean animals are permissible, *unclean* prohibited.

And how do you differentiate clean and unclean? The chapter explains. Animals with a split hoof and who chew their cud are clean or edible - such as cows, goats, sheep... Other animals unclean and off-limits.

Thus, camels are unclean because they have a singular hoof. A camel's feet are like pot-holder pads...

The same goes for rock badgers, the little furry chipmunk-like critters, you see all over Israel's Golan Heights. They're also called "*Coneys.*" They have spongy and padded feet, almost like suction cups, that let them attach themselves to steep cliffs...

Pigs have split-hoofs, but are unclean because they don't chew their cud. This is why I'm glad I wasn't born an orthodox Jew. I love bacon, sausage, and pork barbecue. I'm happy to be a pig-eating Gentile saved by grace... And note, 11:6, "*the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves is unclean to you...*" so find a *hair in your food* and its unclean!

Of course, aquatic animals have a different criteria. Clean animals are those with fins and scales - which eliminates shellfish - shrimp, or crab, or lobster. This would mean no "*Shrimp Lovers Feast*" at Red Lobster.

Verses 13-19 list unclean birds. If you had a taste for *bat*, or *stork*, or *owl*, sorry they'd be off-limits. Notice, verse 14, "*falcons*" are unclean birds. Even God calls the

Falcons “dirty birds.” Verse 16, the “hawk” is also unclean. Thus, the Falcons and Hawks are hopeless. They are called “an abomination among the birds.”

As are the flying insects that creep on all fours legs. They’re also unclean. Verse 41, “And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth shall be an abomination.” Insects are a huge source of communicable disease.

But if the insect has jointed legs that allowed it to leap, you can eat it - *locust, crickets, grasshoppers, yum, yum!* You can eat *hoppers*, not *creepers*. John the Baptist ate locust and honey. Locust were kosher.

But why all this differentiation between clean and unclean animals? Remember, God’s promise to Israel back in Exodus 15:26, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.” God’s dietary laws were His fulfillment of this promise. God eliminated from the Hebrew diet meat that was prone to carry parasites and disease.

This was before the days of refrigeration and processing - so this eliminated meats that today would be healthy, but in ancient times would’ve spoiled easily.

Thus, keeping *kosher* - a Hebrew term which means “fit” or “proper” - in essence, “clean meats” - protected God’s people from the types of diseases that plagued the Gentiles. In the Middle Ages when the bubonic plague swept Europe Jews were the only people group unaffected. This is why they were accused of poisoning the water supply. Their diet and hygiene made them immune. Today, Israel has one of the longest average life-spans of any nation, largely due to its kosher laws.

Yet I think God also instituted this notion of *clean and unclean*, not just for health, but spiritual reasons. Man is by nature a consumer, physically and spiritually. We feed our body and soul. And just as food was deemed clean and unclean; likewise, the movies, music, books, video games, etc. that feed our soul are either clean or unclean. The ole computer adage is true, *garbage in garbage out*. Take in trash, and you’ll end up trash.

This is why the health food advocates say, “You are what you eat!” That concept applies not only physically, but spiritually. Moses taught if you ate or touched anything unclean it made you unclean; and thus unfit for the worship or service of God. Consume unclean ideas and influences and you’ll be unfit for God’s use.

God wants His people to view all of life through the grid of clean and unclean - holy and unholy - *some things are good for us, others things are bad for us*.

Notice verse 29, among the unclean things is “**the mouse.**” And I’d add, not just the animal, but the gadget that scurries across your computer screen. It’s also called a mouse. And like the unclean animal it too carries disease. Pornography is a modern day plague. It kills minds, and souls, and marriages. I’m just saying recognize what’s unclean and stay away.

Don’t be like the guy who complained there was too much sex and violence on his DVR. **You can take control over what you take in!** To be useful and effective for God reserve your mind and soul for His input and influence. The key verse here is 11:44, “**For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourself with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**” Stay away from the creeps!

Again, Leviticus is the reordering of a new society for the slaves who’d exited Egypt. God aligns His people’s perspective with His. They need to live discriminately. Things are clean or unclean, holy or unholy... **And life is not as God intended.** As pilgrims in a fallen world we see the consequences of sin in dietary choices, in childbirth, skin disease, fungus, and bodily emissions. These conditions and what they say to us about our current environment are the focus of chapters 11-15.

Chapter 12 establishes rituals for a woman after she gives birth. Verse 1, “**The LORD spoke to Moses... ‘If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean.’**” A woman’s “*customary impurity*” was her time of the month, or menstrual flow, during which she was considered not *morally unclean*, or sinful, but *ceremonially unclean*.

And it’s important we understand the difference... Moral verdicts of clean or unclean were based on the good or evil intrinsic to the act. But ceremonial verdicts were based on symbolism and typology. For example, nothing is immoral or sinful about a woman’s menstrual flow, but when the Hebrews thought of human reproduction, God wanted them to recall that sin has poisoned the fountain of life. We’re all born into sin. David said in Psalm 51:5, “**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.**”

Sin tainted the very springs of life. And *to remind us - to condition us to that reality* - God attached a ceremonial uncleanness to reproductive acts and fluids. Thus following the birth of a son a woman was unclean seven days. She’d brought a little sinner into the world and as a result she was considered unclean.

Verse 3, “**On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.**” *Why did God wait until the eighth day to have male babies circumcised?* Scientists now know

the blood of a newborn doesn't coagulate until the eighth day of life. A baby boy could possibly bleed to death if he was circumcised on the fifth or sixth day. God knew this long before science.

Of course, circumcision was also symbolic. God's covenant passed down from son to son. Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant. And it was to be carried out on the eighth day. Jesus also rose from the dead on the first day of the week, or the eighth day.

After the circumcision the woman remained impure for 33 days. All in all, she was ceremonially unclean for 40 days, the biblical number for judgment. Again, this is not an individual judgment, but childbirth is a reminder that all of us are born in sin and under God's judgment.

And if the woman gave birth to a girl, her period of uncleanness was twice as long, 66 days. This could be a warning to parents that a daughter will cost twice as much money to raise as a son. *(Ha!) I paid far more for my daughter's fifty cheerleading outfits than I did my son's one baseball jersey...* Seriously, double time for the daughter may be in anticipation of her own childbearing later in life. When the daughter becomes a mom she'll also birth a sinner. It'll be double trouble.

The rest of Chapter 12 says when her purification is over she's to go to the priest and offer a sacrifice. If she can't afford a lamb, turtledoves or pigeons will do.

Everyone could afford two doves, even Joseph and Mary. This was the purification sacrifice they brought to the Temple in Luke 2 when Jesus was circumcised.

Chapters 13-14 deal with the dreaded, flesh-eating disease called [leprosy](#). Middle East missionary, William Thompson once reported an encounter he had with a few lepers, "[As I approached Jerusalem, I was startled by the sudden sight of beggars, without eyes, without nose, without hair, without everything... They held out their handless arms, unearthly sounds gurgled through throats without palates. In a word, I was horrified.](#)"

There were two types of leprosy. *Tuberculoid leprosy* was benign. It lasted a few years, then disappeared. But *lepromatous* was malignant, and highly contagious. Apart from an act of God there was no known cure.

Both diseases began with a white or red patch on the skin. The sore became ulcerated and spread. Soft tissues deteriorated. Appendages were eaten away.

Leprosy numbs nerve endings, so that lepers can accidentally stick a hand in the fire and not realize their hand has been burned. Today, when a leper begins treatment he's given a cat to take home. The cat shoos away the mice that will nibble on the leper's flesh while they sleep. Lepers were called "[the walking dead.](#)"

Today, leprosy is called “[Hanson’s Disease](#),” named after a Norwegian doctor who discovered the bacteria that causes it. Doctors can now treat it medicinally. But in ancient times it was highly contagious. This meant lepers were required to isolate themselves from the camp. They lost family, businesses, and friends.

Look at 13:45-46, “**Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.**”

Imagine the psychological effect of swapping the word “[hello](#)” for “[unclean](#)” in your vocabulary. Rather than extend a greeting you shouted “[unclean](#)” so the person could flee to the other side of the street.

This is why the diagnosis of leprosy was so strategic. He or she came to the priest and Chapter 13 lays out the diagnostic procedures for the various appearances of this horrific disease. According to verse 4 sometimes the priest gave it seven days to see if a sore worsened.

Another aspect of leprosy that should be mentioned is its similarities to sin. Leprosy is to the outer man, what sin is to the inner man. *It’s loathsome and ugly. It begins imperceptibly. It’s progressive. It creates a callousness and insensitivity. It stifles fellowship. It spreads to others. It’s curable only by a miracle from God. And its healing is pronounced by the high priest, and in sin’s case, our High Priest is Jesus Christ.*

While Jesus was on earth He often healed lepers. It demonstrated His power over both the disease, and the sin that’s brought all diseases into the world.

Interestingly, whenever Jesus healed a leper he touched him. He could’ve just spoken a word, but Jesus always touched the people that nobody else wanted to touch. Matthew 8:3 tells us, “[Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.](#)”

Before Jesus healed the leper physically, He healed him emotionally. Our Lord Jesus still touches the untouchable, but today you and I are His hands.

Verses 47-59 tell us what to do if leprosy gets into a garment. In ancient Israel there was an active fungus that bred in cloth. When the fungus was found in a garment, either the contaminated portion was torn out of the garment - or washed out - or the clothes were taken out and burned. But the fungus was not allowed to linger in the garment. It could produce leprosy.

And let me say a word to fathers. Dad, you are the priest in your family, and it’s your job to examine your kids’ clothes for spiritual fungus. Lewd shirts and tight skirts - low-

cut pants and obscene T-shirts - need to be purged from your kid's wardrobe. Beware! Immodest clothes are a sign of a spiritual fungus. Unless you *address* their *dress* the fungus might lead to leprosy.

Which all reminds me... *"What did one amoeba say to the other amoeba?" "Wow, you're a fun guy!"*

Leviticus 14 is a fascinating chapter. It lays out the purification ritual performed when a leper was healed. First, he was inspected by the priest, and if truly healed he was pronounced "**clean**" and readmitted to society.

Then a sacrifice was offered involving five ingredients... *two birds, a few pieces of cedar, a strand of scarlet thread, and a branch from a hyssop plant.* One bird was killed over running water and its blood sprinkled on the living bird. The running water spoke of the Holy Spirit, flowing and spreading the merits of the sacrifice of Christ to a lost world. The living bird was let loose in an open field, speaking of Jesus' resurrection.

This is why in Luke 17 Jesus told the man he healed of leprosy to go to the priest and be pronounced clean. Jesus wanted the man to see the imagery of this ritual.

Then in Leviticus 14:33, *"And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: "When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession..."* At the time the Israelites were living in tents. But when they enter Canaan they'll build houses, and all homeowners know there'll be issues. *Mold, mildew, fungus, wood rot, carpet stains, etc...*

Some translations render the phrase "**leprous plague**" in verse 33 as "**spreading mildew.**" What exactly Moses had in view we're not sure, but he was concerned that an active fungus would spread to the house's occupants. The rest of the chapter describe the procedures to follow to rid the house of the fungus.

Leviticus 15 deals with bodily discharges - *boils, scabs, saliva, infected ears, runny noses, irritated eyes, oozing sores, puss-secreting wounds, diarrhea.* Realize, diarrhea is hereditary, **it runs in your genes!** Verse 16 even mentions *"an emission of semen."*

In verse 11, precautions against infected discharges are to rinse hands, and wash clothes, and quarantine until evening. **Sounds like the most recent covid precautions.** When a man was declared "**clean**" a sacrifice was offered to readmit him to the camp. Similar to the negative test you needed to go back to work. These measures still guard against a pandemic.

The existence of germs and bacteria were unknown prior to the 1800s. Doctors had no idea how diseases were transmitted. It was not uncommon for a doctor to go from patient to patient never washing his hands. Surgeons thought the bloodier the better. They would walk into rooms wearing blood-splattered gowns to impress their customers. The hospital's own practices posed the greatest threat to a patient's health.

Today though we understand how disease spreads and emphasize sanitation and sterilization, yet it's still amazing how dumb we can be. Before the epidemic the American Society for Microbiology did a study on the handwashing habits of Americans. They observed 6,333 people in restrooms in five US cities. They even attended a Braves game, and found only 64% of the restroom patrons washed their hands after going to the toilet. Be careful who you *high five* after a homer!

Covid *and* Leviticus teach us that simple hand washing is the best way to stop the spread of infection.

One other point. Notice 15:18, “When a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.” Here is a normal, healthy - even sacred - sexual encounter between a husband and wife, yet the couple is considered “*unclean*” until evening. *What's with that?*

Again, don't confuse *ceremonial uncleanness* with *moral uncleanness*. There's nothing *morally* wrong with a husband and wife enjoying sex (*Hebrews 13:4 tells us the marriage bed is undefiled.*), but *ceremonially or symbolically* the act caused a temporary uncleanness.

Ceremonial verdicts were based on symbolism. Nothing is immoral about marital sex, but when the Hebrews thought of human reproduction God wanted them to remember that sin poisoned the fountain of life. People are born in sin. An original sin was passed down to all men. Ceremonially, the couple was considered “*unclean,*” at least for the rest of the day.

One more thought, since sex made a person unclean and unfit for worship this separated sex and worship in the minds of Hebrews. We don't read much into that, but in the pagan worship of the ancient fertility gods sex with temple prostitutes was a religious rite. God wanted none of that thinking in His people's worship.

Let me close with Leviticus 15:25, “If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean.” Remember the woman in Capernaum who for twelve years suffered from chronic bleeding. The Law considered her, “*unclean.*” She'd been abandoned by friends and family. Even worship had been off-limits.

Leviticus 15:31 says she would've defiled the Tabernacle had she entered.

But in Matthew 9:20 we're told, "Suddenly, a woman... came from behind and touched the hem of (Jesus') garment. For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour." Jesus healed who the Law rejected. But this woman had *faith in the power and virtue of Jesus, enough faith to reach out and touch Him... may we have that same faith.*