

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Laws concerning clean and unclean animals, Leviticus 11:1, Leviticus 11:2. Of Quadrupeds, those are clean which divide the hoof and chew the cud, Leviticus 11:3. Those to be reputed unclean which do not divide the hoof, though they chew the cud, Leviticus 11:4-6. Those to be reputed unclean also which, though they divide the hoof, do not chew the cud, Leviticus 11:7. Whosoever eats their flesh, or touches their carcasses, shall be reputed unclean, Leviticus 11:8. Of Fish, those are clean, and may be eaten which have fins and scales, Leviticus 11:9. Those which have not fins and scales to be reputed unclean, Leviticus 11:10-12. Of Fowls, those which are unclean, Leviticus 11:13-21. Of Insects, the following may be eaten: the bald locust, beetle, and grasshopper, Leviticus 11:22. All others are unclean and abominable, their flesh not to be eaten, nor their bodies touched, Leviticus 11:23-25. Farther directions relative to unclean beasts, Leviticus 11:26-28. Of Reptiles, and some small quadrupeds, those which are unclean, Leviticus 11:29, Leviticus 11:39. All that touch them shall be unclean, Leviticus 11:31; and the things touched by their dead carcasses are unclean also, Leviticus 11:32-35. Large fountains, or pits of water, are not defiled by their carcasses, provided a part of the water be drawn out, Leviticus 11:36. Nor do they defile seed by accidentally touching it, provided the water which has touched their flesh do not touch or moisten the seed, Leviticus 11:37, Leviticus 11:38. A beast that dieth of itself is unclean, and may not be touched or eaten, Leviticus 11:39, Leviticus 11:40. All creeping things are abominable, Leviticus 11:41-44. The reason given for these laws, Leviticus 11:45-47.

Verse 1

And the Lord spake unto Moses - In the preceding chapter the priests are expressly forbidden to drink wine; and the reason for this law is given also, that they might be able at all times to distinguish between clean and unclean, and be qualified to teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord had spoken, Leviticus 10:10, Leviticus 10:11; for as inebriation unfits a person for the regular performance of every function of life, it must be especially sinful in those who minister in holy things, and to whom the teaching of the ignorant, and the cure of souls in general, are entrusted. Scheuchzer has remarked that no Christian state has made any civil law against drunkenness, (he must only mean the German states, for we have several acts of parliament against it in England), and that it is only punished by contempt. "Custom," says he, "that tyrant of the human race, not only permits it, but in some sort authorizes the practice, inasmuch that we see priests and ministers of the Church ascend the pulpit in a state of intoxication, judges seat themselves upon the benches, physicians attend their patients, and others attempt to perform the different avocations of life, in the same disgraceful state." - Physic. Sacr., vol. iii., p. 64. This is a horrible picture of German manners; and while we deplore the extensive ravages made by this vice, and the disgrace with which its votaries are overwhelmed, we have reason to thank God that it very rarely has ever appeared in the pulpit, and perhaps was never once seen upon the bench, in our own country. Having delivered the law against drinking wine, Moses proceeds to deliver a series of ordinances, all well calculated to prevent the Israelites from mixing with the surrounding nations, and consequently from being contaminated by their idolatry. In Leviticus 11 he treats of unclean Meats. In Leviticus 12:1-8, 13, 14, and 15, he treats of unclean Persons, Garments, and Dwellings. In Leviticus 16 he treats of the uncleanness of the Priests and the People, and prescribes the proper expiations and sacrifices for both. In Leviticus 17 he continues the subject, and gives particular directions concerning the mode of offering, etc. In Leviticus 18 he treats of unclean matrimonial connections. In Leviticus 19 he repeats sundry laws relative to these subjects, and introduces some new ones. In Leviticus 20 he mentions certain uncleannesses practiced among the idolatrous nations, and prohibits them on pain of death. In Leviticus 21 he treats of the mourning, marriages, and personal defects of the priests, which rendered them unclean. And in Leviticus 22 he speaks of unclean sacrifices, or such as should not be offered to the Lord. After this, to the close of the book, many important and excellent political and domestic regulations are enjoined, the whole forming an ecclesastico-political system superior to any thing the world ever saw. Bishop Wilson very properly observes that, "by these laws of clean and unclean animals, etc., God did keep this people separated from the idolatrous world: and this is a standing proof, even to the present day, of the Divine authority of these Scriptures; for no power or art of man could have obliged so great and turbulent a nation to submit to such troublesome precepts as the Jews always have submitted to, had they not been fully convinced, from the very first, that the command was from God, and that it was to be obeyed at the peril of their souls."

Verse 3

Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed - These two words mean the same thing - a divided hoof, such as that of the ox, where the hoof is divided into two toes, and each toe is cased with horn.

Cheweth the cud - Ruminates; casts up the grass, etc., which had been taken into the stomach for the purpose of mastication. Animals which chew the cud, or ruminates, are provided with two, three or four stomachs. The ox

has four: in the first or largest, called the ventriculus or paunch, the food is collected without being masticated, the grass, etc., being received into it as the beast crops it from the earth. The food, by the force of the muscular coats of this stomach, and the liquors poured in, is sufficiently macerated; after which, formed into small balls, it is thrown up by the esophagus into the mouth, where it is made very small by mastication or chewing, and then sent down into the second stomach, into which the esophagus or gullet opens, as well as into the first, ending exactly where the two stomachs meet. This is what is termed chewing the cud. The second stomach, which is called the reticulum, honeycomb, bonnet, or king's hood, has a great number of small shallow cells on its inward surface, of a pentagonal or five-sided form, exactly like the cells in a honey-comb; in this the food is farther macerated, and then pushed onward into the third stomach, called the omasum or many-plies, because its inward surface is covered with a great number of thin membranous partitions. From this the food passes into the fourth stomach, called the abomasum, or rede. In this stomach it is digested, and from the digested mass the chyle is formed, which, being absorbed by the lacteal vessels, is afterwards thrown into the mass of blood, and becomes the principle of nutrition to all the solids and fluids of the body. The intention of rumination, or chewing the cud, seems to be, that the food may be sufficiently comminuted, that, being more fully acted on by the stomachs, it may afford the greatest possible portion of nutritive juices. The word cud is probably not originally Saxon, though found in that language in the same signification in which it is still used. Junius, with great show of probability, derives it from the Cambro-British *chwyd*, a vomit, as it is the ball of food vomited, or thrown up, from the first stomach or paunch through the esophagus into the mouth, which is called by this name. Those who prefer a Saxon derivation may have it in the verb whence our word *chew*; and so *cud* might be considered a contraction of *chewed*, but this is not so likely as the preceding.

Verse 5

The coney - שָׁפָן (shaphan), not the rabbit, but rather a creature nearly resembling it, which abounds in Judea, Palestine, and Arabia, and is called by Dr. Shaw *daman* Israel, and by Mr. Bruce *ashkoko*. As this creature nearly resembles the rabbit, with which Spain anciently abounded, Bochart supposes that the Phoenicians might have given it the name of שָׁפָן (spaniah), from the multitude of שָׁפָן (shephanim) (or (spanim), as others pronounce it) which were found there. Hence the emblem of Spain is a woman sitting with a rabbit at her feet. See a coin of Hadrian in Scheuchzer.

Verse 6

The hare - אַרְנֵבֶת (arnebeth), as Bochart and others suppose, from אָרַח (arah), to crop, and נִיב (nib), the produce of the ground, these animals being remarkable for destroying the fruits of the earth. That they are notorious for destroying the tender blade of the young corn, is well known. It is very likely that different species of these animals are included under the general terms שָׁפָן (shaphan), and אַרְנֵבֶת (arnebeth), for some travelers have observed that there are four or five sorts of these animals, which are used for food in the present day in those countries. See Harmer, vol. iii., p. 331, edit. 1808. Some think the mountain rat, marmot, squirrel, and hedgehog, may be intended under the word (shaphan).

Verse 7

And the swine - חָזִיר (chazir), one of the most gluttonous, libidinous, and filthy quadrupeds in the universe; and, because of these qualities, sacred to the Venus of the Greeks and Romans, and the Friga of our Saxon ancestors; and perhaps on these accounts forbidden, as well as on account of its flesh being strong and difficult to digest, affording a very gross kind of aliment, apt to produce cutaneous, scorbutic, and scrofulous disorders, especially in hot climates.

Verse 9

Whatsoever hath fins and scales - Because these, of all the fish tribe, are the most nourishing; the others which are without scales, or whose bodies are covered with a thick glutinous matter, being in general very difficult of digestion.

Verse 13

And these - among the fowls - the eagle - נֶשֶׁר (nesher), from נָשַׁר (nashar), to lacerate, cut, or tear to pieces; hence the eagle, a most rapacious bird of prey, from its tearing the flesh of the animals it feeds on; and for this purpose birds of prey have, in general, strong, crooked talons and a hooked beak. The eagle is a cruel bird, exceedingly ravenous, and almost insatiable.

The ossifrage - Or bone-breaker, from *os*, a bone, and *frango*, I break, because it not only strips off the flesh, but breaks the bone in order to extract the marrow. In Hebrew it is called פֶּרֶס (peres), from פָּרַס (paras), to break or divide in two, and probably signifies that species of the eagle anciently known by the name of *ossifraga*, and which we render *ossifrage*.

the fish which it had discovered while even flying, or rather soaring, at a very great height.

The great owl - yanshuph , according to the Septuagint and the Vulgate, signifies the ibis, a bird well known and held sacred in Egypt. Some critics, with our translation, think it means a species of owl or night bird, because the word may be derived from nesheph , which signifies the twilight, the time in which owls chiefly fly about. See Bochart, vol. iii., Colossians 281.

Verse 18

The swan - tinshemeth . The Septuagint translate the word by the porphyryon , purple or scarlet bird. Could we depend on this translation, we might suppose the flamingo or some such bird to be intended. Some suppose the goose to be meant, but this is by no means likely, as it cannot be classed either among ravenous or unclean fowls. Bochart thinks the owl is meant.

The pelican - kaath . As kaah signifies to vomit up, the name is supposed to be descriptive of the pelican, who receives its food into the pouch under its lower jaw, and, by pressing it on its breast with its bill, throws it up for the nourishment of its young. Hence the fable which represents the pelican wounding her breast with her bill, that she might feed her young with her own blood; a fiction which has no foundation but in the above circumstance. Bochart thinks the bittern is meant, vol. iii., Colossians 292.

The gier eagle - racham . As the root of this word signifies tenderness and affection, it is supposed to refer to some bird remarkable for its attachment to its young; hence some have thought that the pelican is to be understood. Bochart endeavors to prove that it means the vulture, probably that species called the golden vulture - Bochart, vol. iii., Colossians 303.

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Verse 19

The stork - chasidah , from chasad , which signifies to be abundant in kindness, or exuberant in acts of beneficence; hence applied to the stork, because of its affection to its young, and its kindness in tending and feeding its parents when old; facts attested by the best informed and most judicious of the Greek and Latin natural historians. See Bochart, Scheuchzer, and Parkhurst, under the word chasad . It is remarkable for destroying and eating serpents, and on this account might be reckoned by Moses among unclean birds.

The heron - anaphah . This word has been variously understood: some have rendered it the kite, others the woodcock, others the curlew, some the peacock, others the parrot, and others the crane. The root anaph , signifies to breathe short through the nostrils, to snuff, as in anger; hence to be angry: and it is supposed that the word is sufficiently descriptive of the heron, from its very irritable disposition. It will attack even a man in defense of its nest; and I have known a case where a man was in danger of losing his life by the stroke of a heron's bill, near the eye, who had climbed up into a high tree to take its nest. Bochart supposes a species of the eagle to be meant, vol. iii., Colossians 335.

The lapwing - duchiphath , the upupa, hoopoe, or hoop, a crested bird, with beautiful plumage, but very unclean. See Bochart, and Scheuchzer. Concerning the genuine meaning of the original, there is little agreement among interpreters.

The bat - atalleph , so called, according to Parkhurst, from at , to fly, and alaph , darkness or obscurity, because it flies about in the dusk of the evening, and in the night: so the Septuagint vespertilio , from vesper, the evening. This being a sort of monster partaking of the nature of both a bird and beast, it might well be classed among unclean animals, or animals the use of which in food should be avoided.

Verse 20

All fowls that creep - Such as the bat, already mentioned, which has claws attached to its leathern wings, and which serve in place of feet to crawl by, the feet and legs not being distinct; but this may also include all the different kinds of insects, with the exceptions in the following verse.

Going upon all four - May signify no more than walking regularly or progressively, foot after foot as quadrupeds do; for it cannot be applied to insects literally, as they have in general six feet, many of them more, some reputed to have a hundred, hence called centipedes; and some a thousand, hence called millipedes; words which often signify no more than that such insects have a great number of feet.

Verse 21

Which have legs above their feet - This appears to refer to the different kinds of locusts and grasshoppers, which have very remarkable hind legs, long, and with high joints, projecting above their backs, by which they are enabled to spring up from the ground, and leap high and far.

Verse 22

The locust - אֲרֵב (arbeh), either from אָרַב (arab), to lie in wait or in ambush, because often immense flights of them suddenly alight upon the fields, vineyards, etc., and destroy all the produce of the earth; or from רָבַח (rabah), he multiplied, because of their prodigious swarms. See a particular account of these insects in the notes on Exodus 10:4 (note).

The bald locust - סֹלָמ (solam), compounded, says Mr. Parkhurst, from סָלַח (sala), to cut, break, and אָמַם (am), contiguity; a kind of locust, probably so called from its rugged, craggy form. See the first of Scheuchzer's plates, vol. iii., p. 100.

The beetle - צָרְגוֹל (chargol). The Hebrew name seems a derivative from צָרַח (charag), to shake, and רֶגֶל (regel), the foot; and so to denote the nimbleness of its motions. Thus in English we call an animal of the locust kind a grasshopper; the French name of which is sauterelle, from the verb sauter, to leap - Parkhurst. This word occurs only in this place. The beetle never can be intended here, as that insect never was eaten by man, perhaps, in any country of the universe.

The grasshopper - צָבָב (chagab). Bochart supposes that this species of locust has its name from the Arabic verb (hajaba) to veil; because when they fly, as they often do, in great swarms, they eclipse even the light of the sun. See the notes on Exodus 10:4, and the description of ten kinds of locusts in Bochart, vol. iii., col. 441. And see the figures in Scheuchzer, in whose plates 20 different species are represented, vol. iii., p. 100. And see Dr. Shaw on the animals mentioned in this chapter. Travels, p. 419, etc., 4th. edition; and when all these are consulted, the reader will see how little dependence can be placed on the most learned conjectures relative to these and the other animals mentioned in Scripture. One thing however is fully evident, viz., that the locust was eaten, not only in those ancient times, in the time of John Baptist, Matthew 3:4, but also in the present day. Dr. Shaw ate of them in Barbary - fried and salted, and tells us that they tasted very like crayfish. They have been eaten in Africa, Greece, Syria, Persia, and throughout Asia; and whole tribes seem to have lived on them, and were hence called acridophagoi, or locust-eaters by the Greeks. See Strabo lib. xvi., and Pliny, Hist. Nat., lib. xvii., c. 30.

Verse 27

Whatsoever goeth upon his paws - צַפְצַפִּים (cappaiv), his palms or hands, probably referring to those animals whose feet resemble the hands and feet of the human being, such as apes, monkeys, and all creatures of that genus; together with bears, frogs, etc.

Verse 29

The weasel - חֹלֵד (choled), from חָלַד (chalad), Syr., to creep in. Bochart conjectures, with great propriety, that the mole, not the weasel, is intended by the Hebrew word: its property of digging into the earth, and creeping or burrowing under the surface, is well known.

The mouse - אַחְבָּר (achbar). Probably the large field rat, or what is called by the Germans the hamster, though every species of the mus genus may be here prohibited.

The tortoise - טְסַב (tsab). Most critics allow that the tortoise is not intended here, but rather the crocodile, the frog, or the toad. The frog is most probably the animal meant, and all other creatures of its kind.

Verse 30

The ferret - אֲנָכָה (anakah), from אָנַח (anak), to groan, to cry out: a species of lizard, which derives its name from its piercing, doleful cry. See Bochart, vol. ii., col. 1066.

The chameleon - צָבָח (coach). Bochart contends that this is the (waril) or (guaril), another species of lizard, which derives its name from its remarkable strength and vigor in destroying serpents, the Hebrew צָבָח (cach) signifying to be strong, firm, vigorous: it is probably the same with the mongoose, a creature still well known in India, where it is often domesticated in order to keep the houses free from snakes, rats, mice, etc.

The lizard - לֵטָאָה (letaah). Bochart contends that this also is a species of lizard, called by the Arabs

(wahara), which creeps close to the ground, and is poisonous.

The snail - $\text{ח}^{\text{א}}\text{ח}^{\text{ב}}\text{ח}^{\text{ג}}$ (chomet), another species of lizard, according to Bochart, called (huluka) by the Arabians, which lives chiefly in the sand - Vol. ii., col. 1075.

The mole - $\text{ח}^{\text{א}}\text{ח}^{\text{ב}}\text{ח}^{\text{ג}}$ (tinshameth), from $\text{ח}^{\text{א}}\text{ח}^{\text{ב}}$ (nasham), to breathe. Bochart seems to have proved that this is the chameleon, which has its Hebrew name from its wide gaping mouth, very large lungs, and its deriving its nourishment from small animals which float in the air, so that it has been conjectured by some to feed on the air itself - Vol. iii., col. 1073. A bird of the same name is mentioned Leviticus 11:18, which Bochart supposes to be the night-owl - Vol. iii., col. 286.

Verse 32

Any vessel of wood - Such as the wooden bowls still in use among the Arabs. Or raiment, or skin - any trunks or baskets covered with skins, another part of the furniture of an Arab tent; the goat-skins, in which they churn their milk, may be also intended. Or sack - any hair-cloth used for the purpose of transporting goods from place to place.

Verse 33

And every earthen vessel - Such pitchers as are commonly used for drinking out of, and for holding liquids. M. De la Roque observes that hair-sacks, trunks, and baskets, covered with skin, are used among the travelling Arabs to carry their household utensils in, which are kettles or pots, great wooden bowls, hand-mills, and pitchers. It is very likely that these are nearly the same with those used by the Israelites in their journeyings in the wilderness, for the customs of these people do not change.

Verse 35

Ranges for pots - To understand this, we must observe that the Arabs dig a hole in their tent, about a foot and a half deep; three-fourths of this, says Rauwolff, they lay about with stones, and the fourth part is left open for the purpose of throwing in their fuel. This little temporary building is probably what is here designed by ranges for pots; and this was to be broken down when any unclean thing had fallen upon it. See Harmer, vol. 1., p. 464.

Verse 36

A fountain or pit, etc. - This must either refer to running water, the stream of which soon carries off all impurities, or to large reservoirs where the water soon purifies itself; the water in either which touched the unclean thing, being considered as impure, the rest of the water being clean.

Verse 37

Any sowing seed - If any part of an impure carcass fall accidentally on seed about to be sown, it shall not on that account be deemed unclean; but if the water put to the seed to prepare it for being sown, shall be touched by such impure carcass, the seed shall be considered as unclean, Leviticus 11:38. Probably this may be the meaning of these passages.

Verse 42

Whatsoever goeth upon the belly - In the word $\text{ח}^{\text{א}}\text{ח}^{\text{ב}}\text{ח}^{\text{ג}}$ (gahon), the vau holem, in most Hebrew Bibles, is much larger than the other letters; and a Masoretic note is added in the margin, which states that this is the middle letter of the law; and consequently this verse is the middle verse of the Pentateuch.

Whatsoever hath more feet - Than four; that is, all many-footed reptiles, as well as those which go upon the belly having no feet, such as serpents; besides the four-footed smaller animals mentioned above.

Verse 44

Ye shall - sanctify yourselves - Ye shall keep yourselves separate from all the people of the earth, that ye may be holy; for I am holy. And this was the grand design of God in all these prohibitions and commands; for these external sanctifications were only the emblems of the internal purity which the holiness of God requires here, and without which none can dwell with him in glory hereafter. See at the conclusion of this chapter. The contents of this chapter must furnish many profitable reflections to a pious mind.

1. From the great difficulty of ascertaining what animals are meant in this part of the law, we may at once see that the law itself must be considered as abrogated; for there is not a Jew in the universe who knows what the animals are, a very few excepted, which are intended by these Hebrew words; and therefore he may be repeatedly breaking this law by touching and being touched either by the animals themselves or their produce, such as hair, wool, fur, skin, intestines, differently manufactured, etc., etc. It therefore appears that this people

have as little law as they have gospel.

2. While God keeps the eternal interests of man steadily in view, he does not forget his earthly comfort; he is at once solicitous both for the health of his body and his soul. He has not forbidden certain aliments because he is a Sovereign, but because he knew they would be injurious to the health and morals of his people. The close connection that subsists between the body and the soul we cannot fully comprehend; and as little can we comprehend the influence they have on each other. Many moral alterations take place in the mind in consequence of the influence of the bodily organs; and these latter are greatly influenced by the kind of ailment which the body receives. God knows what is in man, and he knows what is in all creatures; he has therefore graciously forbidden what would injure both body and mind, and commanded what is best calculated to be useful to both. Solid-footed animals, such as the horse, and many-toed animals, such as the cat, etc., are here prohibited. Beasts which have bifid or cloven hoofs, such as the ox and sheep, are considered as proper for food, and therefore commanded. The former are unclean, i. e., unwholesome, affording a gross nutriment, often the parent of scorbutic and scrofulous disorders; the latter clean, i. e., affording a copious and wholesome nutriment, and not laying the foundation of any disease. Ruminating animals, i. e., those which chew the cud, concoct their food better than the others which swallow it with little mastication, and therefore their flesh contains more of the nutritious juices, and is more easy of digestion, and consequently of assimilation to the solids and fluids of the human body; on this account they are termed clean, i. e., peculiarly wholesome, and fit for food. The animals which do not ruminate do not concoct their food so well, and hence they abound with gross animal juices, which yield a comparatively unwholesome nutriment to the human system. Even the animals which have bifid hoofs but do not chew the cud, such as the swine, and those which chew the cud but are not bifid, such as the hare and rabbit, are by Him who knows all things forbidden, because he knew them to be comparatively innutritive. In all this God shows himself as the tender Father of a numerous family, pointing out to his inexperienced, froward, and ignorant children, those kinds of aliments which he knows will be injurious to their health and domestic happiness, and prohibiting them on pain of his highest displeasure. On the same ground he forbade all fish that have not both fins and scales, such as the conger, eel, etc., which abound in gross juices and fat which very few stomachs are able to digest. Who, for instance, that lives solely on swine's flesh, has pure blood and healthy juices? And is it not evident, in many cases, that the man partakes considerably of the nature of the brute on which he exclusively feeds? I could pursue this inquiry much farther, and bring many proofs founded on indisputable facts, but I forbear; for he who might stand most in need of caution, would be the first to take offense.

3. As the body exists only for the sake of the soul, and God feeds and nourishes it through the day of probation, that the soul may here be prepared for the kingdom of heaven; therefore he shows in the conclusion of these ordinances, that the grand scope and design of all was that they might be a holy people, and that they might resemble him who is a holy God - God Is Holy; and this is the eternal reason why all his people should be holy - should be purified from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. No faith in any particular creed, no religious observance, no acts of benevolence and charity, no mortification, attrition, or contrition, can be a substitute for this. We must be made partakers of the Divine nature. We must be saved from our sins - from the corruption that is in the world, and be made holy within and righteous without, or never see God. For this very purpose Jesus Christ lived, died, and revived, that he might purify us unto himself; that through faith in his blood our sins might be blotted out, and our souls restored to the image of God - Reader, art thou hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Then blessed art thou, for thou shalt be filled.