

Be Holy

Leviticus 11.1-47

March 17th, 2019

Introduction

- “What does God have Against Lobsters?”
- Dietary Laws are something we still have in culture today: Kosher / Halal
- 3 different words
 - *tahor* -- **pure**
 - *tames* -- **impure**
 - *seqes* - **detestable / abomination**
- 3 different ways to be made unclean / contaminated
 - By eating
 - By touching
 - By being touched
- What made foods clean or unclean?
 - 4 theories (maybe 6)
 - **Arbitrary** - this is a test of obedience
 - **Cultic** - associated with Pagan rituals OR these were the animal to be used in the Hebrew religion
 - **Hygienic** - keep the people from disease / parasites
 - **Symbolic** - the animals represented contemplation or the Serpent
 - Mary Douglas
 - **Creation** and order - land, sea, air, and swarmed
 - Locomotion and digestion
 - There was no crossover / nothing in common with other creatures
 - These animals behaved **properly** for their environment

- Clean and unclean animals **predate** Leviticus
 - Noah's ark
 - God's covenant with Abraham
- What is the deeper issue? WHY were they supposed to avoid and/or abstain from eating or touching these animals?
- Leviticus 11.43-47

Main Points: God gave them these rules so that ...

1. they don't become **detestable** to God - vs 43-44
 - the issue was purity
 - so that God could **dwell** with them
 - James 4.4-5
 - The New Testament does employ the language of clean and unclean to refer to moral behavior; thus the principle of separation from what is unclean still stands. For example, immorality practiced by Gentiles is called uncleanness (Rom 6:19; 2 Cor 12:21; Eph 4:19; 5:3, 5; 1 Thess 4:7). This is particularly seen in 2 Cor 6:17, where Paul, alluding to Leviticus 11, reminds the readers not to touch unclean things in admonishing his readers to separate from sinfulness. This application is in harmony with the meaning and purpose of the dietary laws in Leviticus 11. Like Israel, the church must be holy, or distinct from the world. The church does the most for the world when the church is least like the world.¹
 - What did Jesus say? - **Matthew 15.10-20**
2. they become **imitators** of God - v 45
 - the issue was distinction
 - so that God would be **honored**
 - Ephesians 5.1

- This call to “be holy, for I am holy” is one of the slogans of Leviticus. It is repeated twice here (vv. 44, 45) and comes again another three times (19:2; 20:7, 26). Man's highest duty is to imitate his creator.²
- What did Jesus say about this?- **Matthew 5.48**

3. they intentionally discern what **honors** God - 46-47
 - the issue was discernment
 - so that God should be **glorified**
 - 1Peter 2.12
 - In short, the Lord is saying to the Israelites, ‘As an act of reverential worship to the holy one who has redeemed you and set you apart to be my holy ones, set yourselves apart to me by obedience to my holy commands, in this way acknowledging and reflecting my own holiness to the watching world³
 - What did Jesus say about this?- **Matt. 23-23-26**

Conclusion

The dietary laws weren't about the animals, they were about being **different**

The temptation is to compromise, to assimilate, to be relevant

We are called to live according to His precepts, to imitate Him, and to discern between good and evil, between right and wrong according to what **He** has said

Be Holy, for God is Holy.

Amen.

¹ Rooker, M. F. (2000). *Leviticus* (Vol. 3A, p. 181). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers. -- A similar statement is attributed to G. C. Morgan (Wiersbe, *Be Holy*, 50¹

² Wenham, G. J. (1979). *The Book of Leviticus* (pp. 180-181). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

³ Sklar, J. (2013). *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary*. (D. G. Firth, Ed.) (Vol. 3, p. 172). Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press.