

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 11: 20-28

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Leviticus chapter 11, and today we'll read from verse 20 to verse 28.

Leviticus chapter 11 discusses the dietary laws. While the Israelites were required to follow these dietary laws, New Testament believers are not required to adhere to them. However, we must understand the spiritual meaning behind these regulations and apply them to our daily lives. This chapter divides living creatures into five categories: land animals, aquatic creatures, birds, insects, and creeping things. The first four categories include both clean and unclean animals, but the fifth category, creeping things, is entirely unclean.

Regarding the dietary laws revealed by God, the order starts with land animals, then moves to aquatic creatures, birds, and finally insects. God first revealed that these four categories include both clean and unclean creatures. We have already studied the first three categories, and today we will study the fourth: insects, found in verses 20-28.

Before moving on to the fifth category, creeping things, God provides a summary regarding the first four types of creatures, particularly in dealing with the issue of death. If someone accidentally comes into contact with the carcass of one of these four types of creatures, how should they handle it, and how can they become clean again? As for creeping things, since they are all unclean and cannot represent saints, Scripture sets them apart and deals with them separately in Leviticus 11:29-38. Especially in cases of unintentional contact with the carcass of a creeping thing, the passage explains how to be cleansed.

Today, we will focus on the section about insects, as well as the summary concerning the first four types of creatures—what should be done when someone comes into contact with their carcasses to become clean again. Since dietary laws

no longer apply to New Testament believers, we focus on the spiritual application. The first four categories of creatures—land animals, aquatic creatures, birds, and insects—are symbolic of Gentile Christians. This is what Peter saw in the large sheet containing various creatures in Acts 10:11-15.

When the gospel was about to be preached to the Gentiles, Peter struggled to keep up. God specifically allowed Peter to see a vision while he was in a trance, where he saw a large sheet containing various creatures, including the four types of animals. Some were clean, and some were unclean, and God told Peter to "Rise, kill and eat." Being a devout Jew, Peter responded, saying, "I have never eaten anything common or unclean." However, God specifically told Peter, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." After this, God sent Peter to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, to preach the gospel and bring them to salvation.

So, from a spiritual application perspective, these four types of creatures symbolize Christians. If we reflect on our experiences as Christians, we will see that throughout our spiritual growth, God has prepared various environments to help us mature. Sometimes, we are like land animals, walking freely on God's created earth. At such times, we need to learn to "chew the cud" of God's Word—not only storing it in our hearts but also meditating on it continually. We also need to have divided hooves, choosing to walk on the path God has prepared for us.

At other times, we are like aquatic creatures, living in a world filled with death and corruption, with waves of culture, politics, economy, and fashion crashing over us. In these moments, we must be like fish with fins and scales, able to resist Satan's attacks and the temptations of the world, swimming upstream to seek God's higher will.

Sometimes, God brings us to spiritual heights, like birds soaring in the sky, filled with spiritual freedom, transcending earthly attractions and temptations. During these times, we must distance ourselves from death and darkness, set aside personal interests and self-adornment, and focus on receiving the life-giving nourishment from God.

Sometimes, in God's wisdom, He allows you to be placed in difficult circumstances where you feel powerless to rise above your situation. In such moments, your condition may feel like that of an insect—small, vulnerable, and limited. So, what should you do?

Verse 20: “All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you.”

Many insects have both wings and legs, but those without wings are categorized as the fifth type, the creeping creatures, and all creeping creatures are considered unclean. Therefore, among insects, only those with wings have the possibility of being clean. However, having wings alone is not sufficient, as the wings of insects are not designed for long-distance flight. The key consideration is how these insects behave when constrained by their environment. If they use their four legs to crawl on the ground, they are deemed detestable and unclean because they are unable to break free from the dominion of the earth.

Verse 21: “Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth.”

Among creatures that have wings and crawl on four legs, those with legs and joints that allow them to leap on the ground are considered clean, and the Israelites could eat them. Having legs with joints refers to the insects' ability to jump because of the joints in their legs. When faced with danger, they can leap powerfully to escape a dangerous environment.

In terms of spiritual application, under God's sovereign authority, saints are often placed in difficult environments, surrounded on all sides. The only way out is to leap upwards, transcending the situation. The Apostle Paul experienced this kind of environment. In 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, he writes, "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not

forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."

Paul was hard-pressed on every side, perplexed, and in this situation, the only way out was to leap upwards. The life of Jesus Christ was his power to leap. At this time, Paul not only needed the power to jump, but he also needed joints in his legs. As Paul says in Ephesians 4:16, "from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

Paul speaks here of the building up of the church, where each part must perform its function. The translation in the Chinese Union Version conveys the original meaning, which is that through the joints that supply strength, the body's individual functions are developed. Clearly, Paul is one of the supplying joints in the body of Christ. Through the power of the life supply of Christ, strength flows to the joints between the legs and feet, enabling Paul to leap and transcend his difficulties.

Verse 22: "These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind."

The Bible lists four types of insects: locusts, crickets, grasshoppers, and katydids. These four types of insects are clean, and the Israelites were allowed to eat them. Among the winged insects, only those specifically listed as clean could be eaten, meaning that the countless other kinds of insects not mentioned, possibly millions or even billions, were not to be eaten. This contrasts with the description of birds, where only the unclean ones are listed, meaning that all others, apart from those named, were permitted for consumption.

From a spiritual perspective, birds inherently have a heavenly, transcendent position, while insects are confined to earthly environments. This shows that there are aspects of God's sovereign arrangement that we must accept. On the other hand, when we are free to choose, it becomes clear that, as New Testament believers, the position we take is critically important.

When we are in the right position—a heavenly position—we encounter mostly what is clean, needing only to avoid a few unclean things. But if we are in the wrong position, remaining on earthly ground, the outcome is reversed; most things will be unclean, and we must actively seek cleansing.

Today, insects are rarely included in everyday diets. However, when Moses led the 2 million Israelites through the wilderness for 40 years, food was scarce, except for the manna that God provided daily. Occasionally, God would send quail to satisfy their craving for meat. Locusts were common in the wilderness and likely became a significant food source for the Israelites. In the New Testament, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, lived in the wilderness and ate locusts and wild honey.

Verse 23: “But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you.”

Among the insects that have wings and four legs, those that cannot jump but only crawl on the ground are considered detestable by the Israelites and are unclean, and therefore should not be eaten. Next, from verses 24 to 28, there is a conclusion regarding these four types of creatures. The distinction between clean and unclean creatures has already been clearly defined.

Let’s quickly review: land animals that chew the cud and have split hooves are considered clean; aquatic creatures with fins and scales are clean; for birds, apart from those specifically listed as unclean, the rest are clean; and among insects, only those with wings and legs that enable them to jump are clean. The conclusion that follows primarily emphasizes how to handle contact with the carcasses of unclean creatures.

Verse 24-25: “By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.”

Unclean creatures should not be eaten, and if you accidentally touch the carcass of an unclean creature, you will be unclean until evening. If you intentionally take the carcass of an unclean creature, not only will you be unclean until evening, but you will also need to wash your clothes. For example, a horse is unclean and cannot be eaten, but it is permissible to ride a horse for errands. If an Israelite's horse dies and he touches the horse's carcass, he will become unclean until evening. During this time, anyone who comes into contact with him will also become unclean. If he not only touches the horse's carcass but also handles it, such as lifting the horse's carcass, then he will be unclean until evening and will also need to wash his clothes.

Here we see a principle: the uncleanness brought about by death is contagious and can spread. Therefore, caution is necessary. Dear brothers and sisters, for New Testament believers who are saved by grace, there is generally a relative sensitivity towards sin, as their conscience will accuse them, prompting them to confess and repent to deal with their sins. God's forgiveness is also timely; whenever you repent and confess, your sin is forgiven.

On the other hand, believers are often not sensitive to death. However, here the Bible tells us that spiritual death is more serious than sin. After committing sin, confessing and repenting leads to immediate forgiveness. But if you touch death, you will be unclean for a period of time, lasting until sunset. Thus, spiritual death is far more serious than sin. Logically, we can understand this because the result of sin is death, and death is naturally more serious than sin.

Yet in our experiences, it is quite the opposite. When we commit a moral error, our conscience condemns us, prompting us to repent and confess quickly. However, on the other hand, when we become indifferent toward God and lose the desire to gather, often withdrawing from the church and from God's presence, we are actually experiencing spiritual death. Yet in such situations, we do not feel much.

This is precisely the most serious aspect of death because it results in a lack of feeling.

Therefore, the next time we encounter such a situation, we must hold onto God's word and not wait until we feel something; that will be a long process. When you realize that you have touched spiritual death, you must acknowledge that you will be unclean for a time until evening. In Israel, a day begins in the evening, which means that when a new day arrives, you will be able to regain strength. Until then, regardless of whether you feel anything, you must confess and repent.

If you not only touch spiritual death but also participate in and experience spiritual death, you must also wash your clothes. Clothes symbolize our conduct in daily life; we must confess and repent before God for what we say and do, until we are cleansed by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 26: “The carcass of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. “

This section mentions that animals that do not have split hooves and do not chew the cud are considered unclean and cannot be eaten. The Chinese Union Version translates it as "Anyone who touches them shall be unclean." Since this portion discusses the carcasses of clean animals, the KJV directly translates it as "Anyone who touches the carcass of these shall be unclean until evening."

Verse 27: “And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. “

The four-legged animals that walk on their paws are considered unclean. Cows and sheep have hooves, and in addition to their hooves, they have paws that do not touch the ground; therefore, the hooves make contact with the earth, making cows

and sheep clean. However, if an animal walks on its paws without hooves, its paws come into contact with the ground, making it unclean. Household pets like cats and dogs are also considered unclean. If such an animal dies and you touch its carcass, you will be unclean until evening.

Verse 28: “Whoever carries any such carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It is unclean to you.”

If a household pet dies and you handle its carcass, you will not only be unclean until evening, but you must also wash your clothes. Thank the Lord that we are in the New Testament; these ritual laws have all been abolished since the coming of Jesus Christ. The ritual laws pointed towards Christ; the Old Testament is a shadow, while Christ is the substance. Once the substance that represents reality has come, the shadow is no longer needed. Therefore, New Testament believers do not need to observe the ritual laws. When we read these regulations, we must discover their underlying spiritual significance so that we can apply them.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank you! In the process of our growth, you have prepared various environments for us. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God. Help us to be people who love God and know how to look up to the provisions that come from You in our circumstances. Especially when You place us in difficult situations where we feel surrounded and pressed on every side. I ask that, on one hand, You grant us the power of life, and on the other hand, let our feet grow joints so that we can leap and overcome the limitations of our circumstances. Help us to learn to not seek for You to remove the environment but to ask for sufficient grace within the environment, enabling us to rise above all limitations. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!