

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

### **Leviticus 12:1-8**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we are going to read Leviticus Chapter 12 and Chapter 13. Leviticus 12 is the shortest chapter in Leviticus, containing only eight verses. Today we will read chapter 12:1-8.

Leviticus 11 talks about how, in daily life, the Israelites would come into contact with unclean things that defile a person. Therefore, through Moses and Aaron, God issued dietary regulations to help the Israelites distinguish between what is clean and unclean to maintain holiness in their daily lives. Chapter 12 goes further, tracing human uncleanness back to the source of humanity. Originally, humans do not only become unclean through daily contact; they are unclean from birth. This concept is not easy to understand, so we need to explain it further.

In Genesis 1, when God created humans on the sixth day, God said it was "very good" because humans were created in the image of God and according to His likeness. God also gave humans an exalted mission: to represent God in managing all that He created. Therefore, God commanded humans to "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28). In God's original design, childbirth was meant to be good and aligned with His will, and it would not have been unclean. However, after man sinned, sin entered the human body and made humans into flesh. John 3:6 tells us, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." What was originally a good birth has now become the birth of the flesh, and therefore birth has become unclean.

Moreover, because of sin, God said to the woman in Genesis 3:16, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children." Because of sin, the process of pregnancy and childbirth became one of suffering. Satan, by tempting humans to sin, damaged God's creation of humanity. On the surface, it seems like Satan won, but God had long prepared a plan of redemption, through the Seed of the woman, to bruise Satan's head.

God always works according to His plan, step by step, with slow progress, but it is perfect and complete. Every step is righteous and just. From Adam to Abraham, nearly 2,000 years passed, during which God gained one spiritual giant after another, creating a life line passed down through the generations. Starting with Abraham, God sought to raise up a nation and promised that Abraham's descendants would inherit the land of Canaan.

Four hundred years after Abraham, in the time of Moses, Abraham's descendants had become a numerous people—the nation of Israel—and they had fallen into slavery under the Pharaoh in Egypt. God raised up Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai. Through Moses, God revealed His will to the Israelites in Exodus 19:4-6: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." God is holy, and His people must also be holy. The dietary laws were meant to help the Israelites maintain holiness in their lives and not be defiled by external things.

The following chapters address uncleanness that comes from within a person. Chapter 12 begins with the source of humanity. Because of Adam's sin, humans are born with a sinful nature and are therefore unclean. To deal with the uncleanness of childbirth, purification is required for both the mother and the child.

**Verses 1-2: "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 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.'"**

Regarding the uncleanness of childbirth, this affects every Israelite because every person has a beginning of natural life. Although the process of childbirth is unclean because of sin, in His mercy, God provided purification laws for the Israelites. When

a woman conceives and bears a male child, she becomes unclean for seven days, just as during her time of menstruation.

Earlier, it was mentioned that in God's original design, the birth of a person was meant to be joyful and free from sorrow. However, due to man's fall, the result of sin is that the process of childbirth for women involves much suffering, and the child born carries a sinful nature from birth. Even so, God does not give up on humanity; He still intends to use humanity to triumph over Satan. Therefore, God prepared redemption for mankind, and this redemption is so complete that it starts from the very moment of birth. If a woman gives birth to a male child, she will be unclean for seven days; during these seven days, both the mother and the child are unclean. God is reminding people that sin is a serious matter. Though it was the sin of humanity's ancestors, the consequences of sin affect all generations.

**Verse 3: "And on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."**

Circumcision was a covenant that God made with Abraham when he was 99 years old. In Genesis 17:12, it says, "He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant." The background of this covenant of circumcision is that God's promise regarding Abraham's descendants had not yet been fulfilled. Abraham grew impatient and accepted the advice of his wife Sarah to have a child, Ishmael, through Hagar, her maidservant. This act of the flesh displeased God, and for 13 years, God did not appear to Abraham. When Abraham was 99 years old, God appeared to him again and reaffirmed the promise of descendants. At that time, the covenant of circumcision was established, signifying the removal of the flesh. From then on, every male child in Israel was circumcised on the eighth day.

By the time we get to Leviticus 12, God, through Moses, included circumcision in the laws that the Israelites had to observe. Once the child was circumcised, it symbolized the removal of the flesh, and the child was cleansed. Circumcision was the covenant between God and Israel.

In the early church, there was a public debate about whether Gentiles who believed in Jesus Christ and became Christians still needed to be circumcised. This is recorded in Acts 15, during the famous Jerusalem Council. The conclusion was that Gentiles who became Christians did not need to be circumcised. The Apostle Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, firmly fought the battle for the truth, ensuring that the teaching that Gentiles did not need to undergo circumcision was preserved and passed down.

Paul explained the spiritual meaning of circumcision and its application in the New Testament, as recorded in Colossians 2:11-12: "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." In this passage, Paul compares the baptism of New Testament believers to circumcision, explaining that it is Christ who performs the spiritual circumcision by removing the sinful nature of the flesh. According to Paul's explanation, baptism is the circumcision of New Testament believers.

The seven days before a male child is circumcised represent the child's natural life, and the eighth day of circumcision signifies the removal of the flesh, symbolizing resurrection life. Seven is a number of completeness, and seven days represent a complete period of time. From the New Testament perspective, this period symbolizes the life of a believer before baptism, living entirely in the flesh. Regardless of how old one is when baptized, the life before baptism represents the complete period of the seven days. Baptism is the spiritual circumcision for New Testament believers, where the old self dies with Christ, and the new self is raised with Christ. The eighth day is a number for resurrection, and after baptism, New Testament believers begin to live in the resurrection life, living in the newness of life.

**Verse 4: "She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled."**

After the male child is circumcised, he is cleansed, but the mother must continue in her purification period at home for thirty-three days. If we add the previous seven days, the mother is unclean for a total of forty days. In the Bible, the number 40 is a number for trial. Before Jesus began His ministry on earth, He went into the wilderness and was tempted by the devil for forty days. After the Israelites left Egypt, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Therefore, 40 is a number for testing. After giving birth to a male child, the mother must go through a 40-day purification period, during which she cannot touch anything sacred or enter the sanctuary.

**Verse 5: "But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity; and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days."**

If the child is a female, the mother will be unclean for two weeks, or fourteen days. While the male child is cleansed on the eighth day after circumcision, a female child does not undergo circumcision, so the additional week makes up the total of fourteen days, after which the female child is cleansed. The mother, however, must remain in her purification period at home for sixty-six days. So, if the mother gives birth to a female child, her total period of uncleanness is eighty days before she is purified.

Here, we see that the period of purification for a girl is twice that of a boy. The Bible does not tell us exactly why this is the case. Perhaps it is as Paul mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:14-15: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." Paul reminds us here that women are the weaker vessels, more susceptible to deception, and therefore, they must continue in faith, love, and holiness. This may also be a reason why the purification

period for a girl is double. However, from another perspective, having twice the rest time at home when giving birth to a girl could be seen as a form of benefit.

**Verse 6: "When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the priest."**

Once the days of purification are completed, the woman is allowed to go out. She must offer sacrifices for her child, whether it's a boy or a girl. The offerings are the same: she must offer a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering. A burnt offering involves cutting the entire animal into pieces, washing it, and burning it on the altar. It is a fire offering to God, meant to make her child acceptable before God.

She must also offer a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering. Birds were the smallest type of sacrificial animal, and the sin offering was for the sin nature of humans. Though the newborn baby is not yet capable of sinning, it is still born with an inherent sinful nature, so the smallest sacrifice is required for the sin offering. This sin offering is placed on top of the burnt offering, which is pleasing to God. The woman must bring the offerings to the entrance of the tabernacle and hand them to the priest.

**Verse 7: "Then he shall offer it before the Lord, and make atonement for her. She shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female."**

The priest will offer the burnt offering and sin offering before the Lord to make atonement for the woman. We know that both the burnt offering and the sin offering symbolize Christ. Since Adam's sin, the bloodline of humanity has been corrupted. Every person born is born with a sinful nature, and from birth is headed toward death—this is the fate of humankind. However, in God's plan of redemption,

He sacrificed His only beloved Son to deal with the problem of sin, giving humanity the chance to receive eternal life. In the Old Testament, the Israelites could remove the obstacle of sin through the offering of sacrifices. Thus, for every newborn Israelite, whether male or female, the mother must offer sacrifices after the period of purification is over, both to make the child acceptable to God and to purify herself.

**Verse 8: "And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So, the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean."**

When it comes to offerings, God is always full of mercy. If a person is poor and cannot afford a lamb, God allows her to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one for the burnt offering and the other for the sin offering. The priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.

Dear brothers and sisters, we see here how detailed God's design is, and how complete His redemption is. From birth, the sinful nature with which we are born can be cleansed through the offering of sacrifices. For New Testament believers, after we have believed in Jesus Christ and received grace and salvation, our baptism is equivalent to circumcision—it is the cutting away of our sinful nature. In this way, we are made acceptable before God.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for showing us the perfection of Your redemption through the ordinance of purification at birth. Though we, as descendants of Adam, were born with a sinful nature and lived unclean lives before knowing You, thank You for that period being complete. On the "eighth day," we have received resurrection life, and everything has begun anew. Thank You for what You accomplished on the cross for us, removing the obstacle of sin so that we can live a brand-new life in the likeness of Your resurrection. Thank You for removing our uncleanness from its source. Grant us grace to maintain close fellowship with You in our daily lives. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.