

## “Blood That Washes Blood” (Lev. 12)

1. Context (1-2, 7)
  - a. Categories (spheres)
    - i. Without: e.g. animals (ch. 11)
    - ii. Within: e.g. discharges and disease (chs. 12-15)
  - b. Conditions (status)
    - i. Ceremonial Defilement (2)
      1. Procreation is by design (Gen. 1:28) thus not sinful or morally compromising.
      2. Such is acknowledged as a blessing (Ps. 127:3; 128:3).
      3. Moreover, “childlessness was looked on as the height of misfortune (Gen. 15ff.; 1 Sam. 1) and sometimes as the judgment of God (Lev. 20:20; Deut. 28:18).”<sup>1</sup>
      4. “On the more fundamental question of why any discharge should make a person unclean, the Bible gives no explicit answer. Keil<sup>5</sup> suggests that because decaying corpses discharge and cause pollution, so every bodily discharge is a reminder of sin and death. For Douglas,<sup>6</sup> a bleeding or discharging body lacks wholeness and is therefore unclean. Loss of blood can lead to death, the antithesis of normal healthy life. Anyone losing blood is at least in danger of becoming less than perfect and therefore unclean. Thus blood is at once the most effective ritual cleanser (“the blood makes atonement,” 17:11) and the most polluting substance when it is in the wrong place. This is profound. Our greatest woes result from the corruption of our highest good, e.g., speech, sex, technology, atomic power.”<sup>2</sup>
    - ii. Moral Defilement (7)
      1. The greater context is that of The Fall thus sacrifices always had an element of propitiation. In fact, the multiplied pain of childbearing is due to original sin (Gen. 3:16).
      2. *Psalm* 51:5 is not a declaration that David was a product of his mother’s sin. Nor is it a statement on the act of intercourse w/in the marriage institute as sin. Rather, it is a proclamation that sin nature is passed down like biology e.g. DNA from humanity’s federal head Adam cf. Ro. 5:12. →
      3. The Gospel is found in vv. 13-21.
2. Circumstances (2-5)
  - a. Childbearing Order
    - i. Males: Unclean a week (then circumcision) and then 33 days.
    - ii. Females: Unclean 2 weeks and then 66 days.
  - b. Creation Order: Adam and then Eve from Adam.
  - c. Condemnation Order
    - i. Gen. 3:14 Serpent, Gen. 3:16 Woman, & Gen. 3:17-19 Man.
    - ii. This order is matched with that of these purity laws i.e. the animals (ch. 11), the women (ch. 12), & the men and general congregation (chs. 13-15).
  - d. Complimentary Order

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<sup>1</sup> Wenham, G. J. (1979). *The Book of Leviticus* (p. 187). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

<sup>5</sup> Keil, pp. 374f.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 51, followed by Porter, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Wenham, G. J. (1979). *The Book of Leviticus* (p. 188). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

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- i. Virtue (Responsibility) Individuals are responsible for their cleanness though none of us is innately holy and morally pure.
  - ii. Value (Priority) Both male and female are made in God’s image and have equal value. Although some commentators attempt to offer a reason for a cultural view that the mother needed twice as long cleansing from a female birth because females were seen as less valuable – this makes no sense to me logically. If they are of less value then they would seem to be less of a fuss. The price of payment demands more for the higher of a thing’s (or person’s) value cf. Mat. 13:45-46; Lu. 12:48. If then, males were valued higher, more ought be demanded regarding purification. And the offering for consecration is the same for both genders.
- e. Cultic Order
- i. These are not unlike the laws regarding unclean animals, tattoos, crops, clothing, etc.
  - ii. The ceremony of circumcision was a sign in men that they were set apart unto God’s covenant community and the assembly alienation of bleeding women so too signified covenant distinction.
  - iii. Two gender specific laws communicate two sides of one sanctified life. Circumcision represents a separation from the world and the separation from assembly represents what moral impurity does to communion with the holy God.
  - iv. The cultic order is given to reflect the creation order in that there are complimentary genders with respective roles yet equal value. Such laws dually represent moral order, as stated earlier.
  - v. Both creation order and sin’s consequences are seen in 1 Tim. 2:13-15 which distinguishes designed roles for gender as well as maintaining equal individual accountability to the Law.
  - vi. Although liturgical observances, sacraments, etc. do not atone for our sins – for only the blood of Christ can wash us clean – we practice such thereby demonstrating our purification. Our corporate worship serves as a witness and indictment to a lost and unclean world.
3. Consecration (6-8)
- a. I should note that Luke recorded Jesus’ parents performed this very law and sacrifice. Also of note is that they offered the poorer offering of two doves (Lu. 2:22-24).
  - b. Again we come back to sacrifice, the indispensable means of atonement and cleansing. His purpose is to make us clean and pure and such demands sacrifice.
  - c. Sin alienates us from God (e.g. Ps. 14:3; Mat. 7:23) as seen in the purity laws thus we must alienate ourselves from sin/evil. We are called to be of the spiritual circumcision which cuts off the world of sin and consecrates us to holiness and life (God Himself). Re: circumcision of the heart see Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; Ro. 2:25-29.
  - d. Because we are not pure and holy, even from birth (Ps. 51:5), we are easily tainted by sin even though we have been forgiven. Those who trusted and obeyed the covenant laws were clean because of such yet were easily made unclean during ordinary and even necessary functions of life. Jews were to maintain ceremonial purity via such cleansing laws yet they were like the Gentiles in their sinful nature. And so Gentiles were to be incorporated into the same covenant which would later be fulfilled in Christ.
  - e. Jesus was holy and sinless and thus He was impervious to defilement unlike us. He touched the lepers and instead of being infected, He healed them! He even experienced the ultimate end of uncleanness – death – and came through it victoriously (Acts 2:24).

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- f. This passage ends: “So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.” In order to make clean those who were defiled by blood, blood was spilt. And this is what Christ has done for His Bride e.g. Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:14.

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Life is in the blood when it is flowing in our bodies yet when it is flowing out of our bodies, the loss is indicative of imperfection and death. Therefore blood is indicative of both life and death. God has inserted signs of sin into nature including animal and human life – which don't necessarily indicate fault of the particular animals or humans. As stated, “Nature is red [bloody] in tooth and claw.” Animals are torn by other animals for food. Disease and unpleasant cycles of biology plague our bodies. And though not our fault per se; all decay, deformity, destruction, depravity, and death originate in the original sin of Adam (cf. Ro. 8:20; 5:12ff.). Therefore, nature is graciously endowed with a prodding witness of sin. Moreover, God gave Israel laws which provided them opportunity provide atonement for such. These purifications laws in Leviticus are a gracious provision and we can take such to heart today. For if we repent, we find that the High Priest has already atoned for our multitude of sins that we may be presented blameless and pure.