

Leviticus 15

This chapter treats of uncleanness by issues in men and women; in men, a running issue, #Le 15:1-3, which defiles him, and every thing he touches, or that touches him or them, #Le 15:4-12; the cleansing from which is directed to, #Le 15:13-15; and seed flowing from him, #Le 15:16-18; in women, their ordinary courses, #Le 15:19-24; or extraordinary ones, #Le 15:25-27; and the law for the cleansing of them, #Le 15:28-31; and a recapitulation of the whole, #Le 15:32,33. [Gill]

Gill's above outline of the chapter is good, but I like Andrew Bonar's much better. I believe he has its meaning very well explained He titles this chapter, "The Secret Flow of Sin from the Natural heart typified in the Running Issue." Its key verse, Rom 7:18, *I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.* His assessment of the meaning contained herein could not be better, in my opinion. This section runs from v. 1 through v. 15. [See message on secret sin, November 26, 1995.]

Vv. 1-18

This section continues with the laws of cleanliness: For just about everything one can think of, he was unclean and had to wash himself. These laws of cleanliness would be part of the laws which Israel was to follow if they desired to be free from the pagan diseases around them.

Though this was basically a ceremonial law, it still worked to keep the people physically clean.

Being a ceremonial law, sacrifices and offerings were required, vv. 14, 15.

V. 2, the *issue* here is commonly identified as a VD, "gonorrhoea." If such is true, it is no wonder the Lord placed such requirements for cleansing: There were no "miracle drugs" at that time; thus disease had to be contained by cleanliness and quarantine.

I would suppose that VD of all kinds was very prevalent before the drugs came about: My heart goes out to the women who were forced to continue life with powerful men--kings, &c.--who were badly infected with the worse cases of VD.

V. 8, Gill points out:

...and so Maimonides {z}: and this may denote all corrupt communication which proceeds out of the mouth of evil men, whether immoral or heretical, which not only defiles the man himself, but those he converses with; for evil communication corrupts good manners:

V. 11, note the ease by which the unclean pollutes all around him.

V. 12, the earthen vessel was very porous; therefore, it was extremely susceptible to retaining infectious diseases. Gill:

and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water; and after that be used: what should be the reason why an earthen vessel defiled by touching should be broken, and a wooden vessel defiled in the same way

should not, but be rinsed and cleansed, when an earthen vessel might as well be rinsed and fit for use as that, is not easy to say; it depended upon the will of the lawgiver: according to Ainsworth, the one may signify the destruction of reprobate persons, the other the cleansing of penitent sinners.

V. 13, though the issue stops, and he is declared clean, he still must still do what is required of him by the Lawgiver. The person had to continue seven days with no physical evidence of uncleanness, and then he washed and bathed in running water, and then he was declared clean. Gill:

and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water; typical of the fountain opened in Christ to wash in for sin and uncleanness, even the fountain of his blood, which cleanses from all sin; and in which both the persons and garments of the saints are washed and made white: **and shall be clean;** in a ceremonial sense; as all that are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ are clean in a spiritual and evangelical sense.

V. 14, we are confronted with the *eighth day* again, viz. the new beginning that is found in Christ. The two birds are reminders of what took place in the previous chapters for the cleansing of the lepers, only in this case, the one is not released.

V. 15, Gill:

and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord for his issue; which, though not in itself sinful, yet might be occasioned by sin, for which the atonement was made: or, however, it was a ceremonial uncleanness, and therefore a ceremonial expiation must he made for it, typical of the atonement by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which all kinds of sin is expiated and removed.

V. 16, Gill:

And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him, &c.] Not in lawful cohabitation, nor voluntarily, but involuntarily, as Aben Ezra observes; not through any disorder, which came by an accident, or in any criminal way, but through a dream, or any lustful imagination; what is commonly called nocturnal pollution {c}; **then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even;** and so the Egyptian priests, when it happened that they were defiled by a dream, they immediately purified themselves in a laver {d} so the Jewish priests did when the like happened to them asleep in the temple {e}; see #De 23:10,11.

V. 17, the required washings again.

V. 18, Gill:

The woman also with whom man shall lie [with] seed of copulation, &c.] It seems to respect any congress of a man and woman, whether in fornication or adultery, or lawful marriage, and particularly the latter; for though marriage is honourable and holy, and carnal copulation in itself lawful, yet such is the sinfulness of nature, that as no act is performed without pollution, so neither that of generation,

and by which the corruption of nature is propagated, and therefore required a ceremonial cleansing:

they shall [both] bathe [themselves] in water, and be unclean until the even; so Herodotus {f} reports, that as often as a Babylonian man lay with his wife, he had used to sit by consecrated incense, and the woman did the same: and in the morning they were both washed, and did not touch any vessel before they had washed themselves; and he says the Arabians did the like: and the same historian relates {g} of the Egyptians, that they never go into their temples from their wives unwashed; see #Ex 19:15 1Sa 21:4.

There are several points we can make from this section dealing with ceremonially uncleanness and the required washings:

1) the unclean makes everything he touches unclean. The unclean is not made clean by the contact, but the clean is made unclean by the contact, 2 Cor 6:14,

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We must add here that every part of creation touched by fallen man is made unclean, some parts more than others.

2) the ease by which the clean is made unclean. Do we underestimate the power and effect of uncleanness upon us.

The Lord made a very "big deal" over uncleanness in this chapter. We go the other extreme and make no deal over it at all.

3) 1 Co 15:33 *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

I find it significant that this "uncleanness" is among God's people. The Lord was stricter concerning uncleanness among His people than He was the pagans: The Lord did not declare one unclean for coming into contact with pagans, but He did declare unclean those who came into contact with one of His people who was unclean.

This shows us that uncleanness on the part of God's people is more damaging to other Christians than is uncleanness on the part of the pagans: Uncleanness is expected from pagans, but not from Christians.

4) it is the clean who made contact with the unclean who must take the action, washing their flesh and clothing.

Does the required washings here not remind us of Eph 5:26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word...?* In other words, when we are "defiled" by unclean contact with others, it is very

important that we wash all over with the Word of God to remain clean.

Jessica told me last night of some required reading in their class from her English text book that contained filthy language: At her time to read, she left out the dirty words. Now, she should come home and wash in the water of the Word of God.

Heb 9:8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which [was] a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 [Which stood] only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed [on them] until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us].

The old washings for ceremonial uncleanness, exemplified by Lev 15:1- 18, were types, were pictures pointing forward to Christ and the washing that would be done through faith by Spirit of God: washings in Christ's blood and washings in the water of the Word of God.

But as we pointed out in the previous chapters, these ceremonial washings must not be totally spiritualized away: They also speak of physical cleanliness; they speak of personal cleanliness; they speak of quarantine of infectious diseases; they speak of sanitation; they speak of disinfection of clothing and "sick rooms," &c.

Thus it is genuine, Biblical Christianity that brings cleanliness to an individual, and, accordingly, to a society.

I remember talking to Sherri Devitt's sister who works for a Japanese auto plant in Ky. The company had sent her to Japan for a few weeks of training. She told of the very unsanitary conditions over there. I was surprised that an "industrialized," hi-tech nation like that would have open sewers, but she said they did. In other words, Christianity puts in sewers and cleans up its environment.

I must also say here that the modern pollution of the environment in this "Christian" nation should not be: It is a very real reproach upon Christianity. **IS IT ANY WONDER THAT THE LORD HAS TAKEN AMERICA AWAY FROM THE CHRISTIANS AND GIVEN IT TO THE PAGANS? "CHRISTIANS" HAVE POLLUTED GOD'S EARTH, and because they would not keep it clean, the Lord has given it over to the militant environmentalists.**

Can we blame the Lord?

I personally believe we are reaping a result of Darby's theories of dispensationalism: We will soon be gone, so why keep the environment clean?

If the Lord were not concerned about cleanliness, He would not have instituted all these ceremonial washings and cleansing.

Vv. 19-33

The previous section dealt with the male; now the Scripture deals with the female. She also has an issue, but though it is a different sort, the same laws concerning secret sins basically apply to the woman as did to the man above.

As we read this section, the woman with the issue of blood for twelve years who came to Christ must come to mind, Mark 5:29. She had tried every relief that man could offer for her secret uncleanness, but to no avail; she had spent all her livelihood on the dream of being made clean, but she had always looked in the wrong place. She came to Christ, and her problem was solved, WITHOUT CHARGE. The sins of man and the grace of God meet together in Christ, and grace wins out every time.

Though this section clearly speaks of ceremonially unclean as did the previous, it still had the effect of keeping the people physically clean. The end result should have been a good control of "communicable disease."

The law was quite strict concerning a woman having her "period," Lev 20:18. If her husband lay with her, they were both to be cut off from the people. Thus the married couple was forbidden intercourse during this time. Thus the law was quite harsh against a woman who was unclean, more so than against a man. Thus we see a hint of the greater responsibility in the fall of the woman.

V. 23, Gill quotes, "... and Pliny {i} speaks of menstres as very infectious, or worse, to various creatures and things, in a natural way."

V. 24, Keil points out that the reference here is not to presumptuously laying with ones wife during her time, but,

The verse before us, on the contrary, refers simply to the possibility of menstruation commencing during the act of conjugal intercourse, when the man would be involuntarily defiled through the unexpected uncleanness of the woman. [V. 1, Third Book, p 394.]

V. 25, if her "issue" last longer than it should, she is unclean until seven days after it stops. "... **she [shall be] unclean**; as long as it is upon her, and neither be admitted to her husband's bed, nor to the house of God, which made her condition a very deplorable one."

V. 27, the Lord is quite strict here: If her husband *lie with her at all*, during this time plus 7 days, he was unclean, "excluded from all conversation civil and religious," for seven days more days, v. 24.

V. 28, the issue stops, but she is unclean for another seven days. Then she washes herself, and she is now clean. Her cleansing corresponds to the male's, v. 13.

V. 29, Gill:

she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons; the same as the man that had an issue was obliged to bring. Now this is to be understood not of a woman that had an ordinary issue, or her monthly courses; for this would have been both troublesome and expensive to have

brought every month, but of a woman that had laboured under an extraordinary one; though some think every menstruous woman was obliged to this offering:

Gill, accordingly, says both the man's issue and the woman's issue was something out of the ordinary course of life. But I do not believe the context will bear that out. Did not Rachel call his period of time in her life, the curse of women? Keil treats it as a monthly ordeal.

From what I understand, the Jews regard this law as abstinence from the marriage relationship for 7 more days after the monthly period. Moreover, I have read that the woman's seed is the strongest at this time, 7 days after her period, and will produce the strongest and healthiest children. Science itself will bear this out. [I saw in a magazine while sitting in an office the other day a woman giving a "secret" of a happy sex life between her and her husband was waiting for the other seven days as required here in this law. It seems that she referred to the laws used by the Jews for the basis of her and her husband waiting.]

Vv. 29ff., requires the same basic offerings as were required of the man.

V. 31, again speaking of ceremonial cleanliness, but we cannot deny that those who followed the above laws were physically clean, and disease would have been kept to a minimum among them.

We should be as concerned of spiritual defilement, sin, as the Lord required of His people concerning ceremonial cleanliness. Of course, we have been cleansed through Christ, but that faith does not justify physical uncleanness.

Also, it is just plain good health practices to follow the Lord's time table for husband/wife relations as given in this chapter. Though the law requiring the seven day waiting period is a "ceremonial" law, those who follow it will have superior children if the children are conceived after the 7 day waiting period.

I WOULD CONCLUDE HERE THAT a reason children are so unhealthy is not only because of the basic sin being further along from Adam, but also people ignore the law of sexual intercourse: first, between man and wife as people live together, and, second, the law of intercourse within marriage--honoring the woman's time of the month plus the seven days.

Such violation will not send one to hell, but honoring God's way will produce superior children, vv. 31-33. The choice is ours.

Bonar concludes this chapter with this comment about the final section, vv. 31-33:

"No commandment of God is trivial ; hence there is here a summary of all, in order to fix the contents on the memory. The threatening, in ver. 31, teaches us that our worship in the sanctuary must be offered with inward purity, as well as outward. We must be conscious to ourselves of having been cleansed. To come into the presence of God, while aware of unremoved pollution, is to defile the tabernacle and expose ourselves to immediate curse. "The Lord our God is holy." "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably " (Heb. xii.28).