

Sermon #32 — *Discovering Christ in Leviticus*

Title: **A POSSESSED PEOPLE**

Text: Leviticus 11:1-47

Subject: *Things Clean and Unclean*

Date: Tuesday Evening — January 22, 2019

Readings: *Jimmy Bowman and Mark Henson*
Titus 1:15-2:15

Introduction:

God's elect are his own, peculiar people, a divinely possessed people. We see this throughout the Scriptures. We are not our own. We have been bought with the price of our Savior's precious blood.

(Titus 2:14) “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

The word “*peculiar*” does not mean “odd” or “strange.” Rather, it has the idea of “ownership.” It would be better translated “possessed.” Yet, the word “possessed” does not fully translate this adjective by which God’s elect are described. The word translated

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

“*peculiar*” in Titus 2:14 is one of those rich words that cannot really be simply translated into English accurately. It must be defined. The word means “owned, held in possession, possessed lawfully, possessed powerfully, encompassed, surrounded, protected.”

This is what God the Holy Ghost teaches us about all who are born of God. This is true concerning all God’s elect. **All who believe own the Son of God are God’s peculiarly and distinctly possessed people, purchased by the sin-atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, called by omnipotent grace, surrounded and encompassed by the incomprehensible God, under his constant protection and care.**

(Psalms 34:7) “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

This fact, the fact that God's people are a possessed people, his own peculiarly and distinctly possessed people is set before us throughout the Book of God. Tonight, I want to show you how this fact is set before us in the 11th chapter of Leviticus. — The title of my message is **A POSSESSED PEOPLE**. — My text is Leviticus 11:1-47. — Let's begin in verse 1 — Leviticus 11:1.

(Leviticus 11:1-3) “And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, (2) Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that *are* on the earth. (3) Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, *and* cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.”

In verses 4-42 the Lord God divides the clean from the unclean of all the animals in the skies, in the earth, in the rivers, and in the seas, giving very

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

specific dietary laws to the nation of Israel. Then, in verses 43-47, he tells us the reason for these laws.

(Leviticus 11:43-47) “Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. (44) For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (45) For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy. (46) This *is* the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: (47) To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.”

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

I am sure that you have, like me, read this chapter and similar passages many times and thought to yourself — “Why? What does all this mean? How does it apply to me?” Before I am done, you will have the answer.

THE SETTING

Let’s get the setting. **Up to this point the Book of Leviticus has been about one thing. The first 10 chapters of the Book are about one subject — Atonement.** Throughout those chapters the Lord God shows fallen men that he is a God willing to save and that he has made a way for fallen sinners to return to him. What great, glorious good news for our cursed race! The God of glory, against whom we have sinned, has made a way whereby he can bring sinners into union with himself! And the way is Christ! — Atonement by the sacrifice of his own dear Son! — Atonement by his precious blood!

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

Now, **beginning in chapter 11**, as if he would compel us to come to him by the blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit begins to describe our great need of grace, our great need of atonement, our great need of an effectual Sacrifice and Substitute. Here he begins to show us our utter sinfulness. The design is to shut us up to Christ and God's free grace in him.

To create in our minds a sense of our corruption and sin, a sense of the corruption and sin of our race, the Lord gives us these Levitical dietary laws, laws that were binding upon the nation of Israel throughout the Mosaic economy¹.

¹ Let it be clearly understood by all that these laws (Indeed, all the law!) were for the Jews only. Peter learned in Acts 10 not to call anything God has made common or unclean. The creatures here pronounced "unclean" were so only ceremonially, only to the nation of Israel, and only during the Old Testament dispensation. As the Holy Spirit declares in Romans 14:14, "*There is nothing unclean of itself.*" In this Gospel Age we are totally free to eat anything we wish.

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

In this chapter the Lord God laid before the nation of Israel distinctions between things clean and unclean that must be carefully attended to every day, things that would be unavoidably and constantly before their minds throughout every day, requiring them to constantly put a “*difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean*” things (Leviticus 10:10).

ATONEMENT NEEDED

Obviously, there were no moral distinctions found in the creatures themselves. A hog is not morally or spiritually inferior to a cow. Yet, by making these ceremonial distinctions, the Lord put huge billboards throughout creation to remind the chosen nation that they were a fallen, sinful people in a fallen, sinful world — A people in need of atonement!

This is the theme of chapters 11-15. — We need atonement!

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

- Chapter 11 shows us the existence of sin, the universality of corruption.
- Chapter 12 portrays the transmission of sin from one generation to another. — The woman who brought a child into the world was ceremonially defiled by the very act of giving birth, because she gave birth to a sinner.
- Chapters 13 and 14 display the vileness of sin in leprosy.
- Chapter 15 gives us a picture of original sin in all its deformity. — “*A Running Issue!*”

SHUT UP TO CHRIST

Thus, we are shut up to Christ. If we would be righteous, if we would come to God and be accepted of him, we are shut up to Christ. There is no righteousness to be had for guilty sinners, except the righteousness of God in Christ, the righteousness of God given and imputed by grace through the sin-atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, blessed

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

be God, in Christ there is righteousness of infinite merit for guilty sinners!

Proposition: These laws regarding things clean and unclean, holy and unholy were intended by God to show us spiritual things. They were given to point us to Christ and the grace of God in him. They are pictures of gospel truths.

Divisions: Let me show you the significance of these things by pointing out four things.

1. A Difference Made
2. A Distinction Maintained
3. A Defilement Manifested
4. A Discipline Motivated

A DIFFERENCE MADE

1st — **Here is a difference made.** — **As the Lord God ceremonially made a difference in the creatures, mentioned in these 47 verses, declaring some clean and others unclean, he has graciously**

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

made a difference between men, declaring some holy and others unholy.

The only difference there is between men in this world is the difference grace has made. We are all unclean and unholy by nature. We all deserve the everlasting wrath of God. But he has made some holy and clean by his free grace in Christ.

(1 Corinthians 4:7) “For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it?*”

The Lord God looks upon his people in Christ and says, “*Ye are clean!*”

- By Blood Atonement — *Righteousness Imputed!*
- By Regenerating Grace — *Righteousness Imparted!*

I trust Christ as my Substitute.

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

Upon His worth I fall!
His blood and righteousness alone
Can satisfy God's law.

He is my Wisdom, Righteousness,
My Holiness, my All!
Christ died for me. — I'm justified,
In Him before God's law!

Upon a life I did not live,
A death I did not die,
Upon Another's life and death
For mercy I rely!

Now, in my Surety I'm free;
And with His garments on,
Who died at Calvary for me,
I'm holy as God's Son!

A DISTINCTION MAINTAINED

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

2nd — **Here is a distinction maintained.** — The Lord God has made a distinction between his people and all other people (By Election — By Redemption — By Regeneration). — **It is a distinction to be maintained by us.** Yes, it is a distinction graciously maintained by God (Philippians 1:6). But it is a distinction to be maintained by us as well. — How?

The Lord gave these dietary laws to Israel and to Israel alone because he had made them to be a distinct people in the world. By this means, they were to maintain themselves as a distinct and separate people from all other nations in the world. **Because their diet was so strict, the Jews could never enter into any sort of close association with any other people.**

- The Canaanites ate anything. They would even eat an animal that had been killed by a dog and the dog itself, without any scruple.
- They could not eat at the same table with the Arabs, their nearest kinsmen, because the Arabs

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

thought nothing of eating a camel, a hare, or a coney.

- By ceremonially preventing their social intercourse with other people, the Lord arranged and secured a distinction between his people and all other people.
- The things here declared unclean were commonly objects of worship and/or spiritual veneration among the heathen. The obedient Israelite would, by his obedience, be kept from close association with his pagan neighbors, worshipping with them, and intermarrying with them.

Perhaps you are thinking — “Bro. Don, what does that have to do with us?” I’m glad you asked. **The Lord God would have us live in this world as his own peculiar people, as a people belonging to him, maintaining a distinction between the clean and the unclean.** Though these dietary laws are not, in any way, applicable to us in this Gospel Age (That which we eat and drink does not make us unclean.),

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

yet you and I are to studiously maintain a distinction between ourselves and the world (Titus 2:1-15; 2 Corinthians 14-7:1), adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. — That means that...

We are not to live like the reprobate. — (Titus 2:1-15) “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: (2) That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. (3) The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; (4) That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, (5) *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. (6) Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. (7) In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, (8) Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. (9) *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again; (10) Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. (11) For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (12) Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (13) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (14) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (15) These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

We are not to worship with idolaters. — (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) “Be ye not unequally

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

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.”

(2 Corinthians 7:1) “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

The distinction to be maintained by us is...

- Not by Peculiar Dress
- Not by Pious Sounding Speech
- Not by Outward Show — Inward realities do not need outward labels!
- But by the Great Object of Our Lives!

(1 Corinthians 10:31) “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

Look at the rule of law given in Leviticus 11:3. —

Here is a pretty good picture of the believer, one who has been made clean before God by the grace of God.

(Leviticus 11:3) “Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, *and* cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.”

- **The believer both chews the cud and is cloven footed.** — He feeds upon Christ and the gospel of his grace in his heart and soul. — He does not

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

merely hear the gospel, he relishes it! — Christ is to us the Bread of Life and the Water of Life!

- **The saved sinner is also cloven footed.** — He walks on the earth, but walks toward heaven. — He walks as a man, but walks with God. — He lives in a body of flesh, but walks in the Spirit.

In Leviticus 11:4-8 the Lord identified four unclean animals that might have been mistaken for clean ones. — The camel, the coney, the hare, and the swine. — The camel, the coney, and the hare all chew the cud, but do not divide the hoof. They were all unclean. So, too, are those represented by them.

- The doctrinal purist, who has no interest in godliness, devotion, and consecration to Christ, is like the camel, plodding along in sensuality, but still chewing the cud.
- The coney, digging in the earth and hiding in the rocks, might well represent the self-serving religionists, the cowardly person who talks a

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

good talk in the right company but refuses to confess Christ openly.

- The hare flying across the land in leaps and bounds, chewing the cud, but parting not the hoof, is a pretty good picture of the feel-good religionist, the shouting Pentecostal and religious emotionalist. — Though he chews the cud, he, too, is but an earthling. His religion is all emotion, show, and feeling.

But why did the Lord put hogs in this list at this place?

(Leviticus 11:7-8) “And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he *is* unclean to you. (8) Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they *are* unclean to you.”

The hog seems to be set before us for a distinct reason, as an emblem of those who act right outwardly. They have profession. They are outwardly

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

upright, devout, and zealous. But they are inwardly unclean. The hog is cloven footed and has a split hoof, but does not chew the cud.

The swine represents the religious Pharisee. No animal could be found that more accurately represents the self-righteous Pharisee than a hog. The Pharisee makes the cup and platter clean. His hoof is thoroughly divided. But inside there is nothing but vileness and corruption. And all his outward religious show is but as a hog wallowing in the mire of its own excrement.

Let us walk before our God in this world as men and women who are distinctly his, for Christ's sake.

- With a heart of faith in and love for Christ.
- Acknowledging and confessing our sin.
- In the Spirit, trusting Christ.
- Ever separating ourselves from the world.

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

I do not mean that we should become hermits, or that we should cease to be responsible citizens in this world. I do mean that we must deliberately and conscientiously come out of the world, maintaining the distinction our God has made by his grace. The world is always trying to get the Church to marry it. How sad that the Church seems so anxious for the hellish wedding! It was when the Church married the world in Genesis 6 that God sent the flood!

(John 15:19) “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

(1 John 2:15-17) “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (17) And the world passeth away, and the lust

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

(1 John 3:1-3) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

A DEFILEMENT MANIFESTED

3rd — **Here is a defilement manifested. — These dietary laws were so thorough, so detailed, that the Lord seems to have intended them to be a constant manifestation of the fact that so long as we live in this world we are defiled with sin and need the cleansing of Christ’s precious blood.**

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

Try to get the picture of a Jew living in those days with these words of God's law fixed in his heart and mind. — He walks out of his house into the fields, or goes over to a neighbor's, or works in the hot sun, or walks to the tabernacle to offer sacrifice to God, everywhere he goes, he sees uncleanness, defilement, sin!

- A Caravan of Camels
- A Dragon Fly
- A Field Mouse
- A Catfish
- A Dog
- A House Cat
- An Eagle
- A Hawk
- A Bat
- Insects in His Flowers

All these unclean things were outward; but they were so numerous, so universal, so inclusive that the well instructed Jew might think to himself, "So long as I

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

walk on this sin cursed earth in the body of this flesh, I cannot escape defilement and sin. I cannot even breathe without inhaling some corruption of the earth and exhaling some corruption from within. Thank God for the atonement! Thank God for the mercy-seat! Thank God for the Sacrifice!”

(1 John 1:8-10) “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

(1 John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*”

A POSSESSED PEOPLE*Leviticus 11:1-47*

(Romans 7:14-25) “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

(25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

(Romans 8:1) “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

A DISCIPLINE MOTIVATED

4th — **Here is a discipline motivated. — The laws given in these 47 verses required strict, constant discipline. The life of faith, consecration to Christ, devotion to the will and glory of God requires the same strict, constant discipline. How can such discipline be motivated?**

(Leviticus 11:43-45) “Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. (44) For I *am* the LORD your God: ye

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

shall therefore sanctify yourselves (**Literal Translation: “You have sanctified yourselves.”**), and ye shall be holy (**Literal Translation: “You have become holy.”**); for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (45) For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.”

Here are five great, powerful arguments of mercy, grace, and love by which the Lord our God calls for and claims our hearts’ devotion.

1. His Sovereign Lordship — “*I am the Lord your God.*”
2. His Saving Operations — “*I am the Lord your God that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt!*” — Redemption! — Regeneration! — Preservation! — Resurrection!
3. His Immaculate Holiness — “*Ye shall be holy, for I am holy!*”

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

4. His Special, Covenant Relationship — “*I am the Lord, your God!*”

5. His Gracious Promise — “*Ye shall be holy!*” — **Literal Translation** — “You have become holy.”

(Romans 12:1-2) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

(2 Corinthians 5:14-21) “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: (15) And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. (16) Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. (17) Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Children of God, you and I are a possessed people, Christ's "*peculiar people*," loved of God, redeemed by blood, and saved by grace. Let us seek grace from our God to conscientiously live as such every hour of

A POSSESSED PEOPLE

Leviticus 11:1-47

every day to the glory of God our Savior.

Amen.