

180425-4 Leviticus 12, Uncleaness for Childbirth – Craig Thurman

The last chapter concerned the dietary law for the nation of Israel. There are two reasons for this regulation. First, the LORD was pleased to do so. Second, it separated Israel from all the nations of the earth. (cf. Lev.20.25, 26) At this chapter we remembered that both man and beast originally ate only plant matter (Ge.1.30), and that immediately after the Noahic flood the LORD instituted eating flesh for food. (Ge.9.3) Those who propose that Israel, prior to the giving of this law, was already eating a restricted diet of clean meats have erred. Also, it cannot be said that the indiscriminate eating of meats from clean and unclean animals, that was good for food, was wrong before this time. As it was after Christ, so it was before the Law, *1Ti.4.4, For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. Ro.14.14, ... there is nothing unclean of itself ...* Be careful not to become entangled with the issues of the Law. Keep to the plain teachings of Scripture. The churches, Jews and Gentiles in this setting, have no such rule. Those who promote this in the churches promote confusion.

Chapter 12

1 ¶ *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

2 *Speak unto the children of Israel,*

Notice again that this law is given to Israel. It doesn't belong to the nations, and it doesn't apply to the churches of Christ. Undeniably, there is among these laws things which if other nations *borrowed* they would have a better society, and perhaps healthier.

Due.4.6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?

8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

And we read,

Ps 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

Beyond question Ps.33.12 applies to Israel. There has never been another nation which has had God as the LORD, except we say it rather loosely. But there is undoubtedly a natural blessing to be had for any natural society of people that will *borrow* the greater portion of these laws that were given to Israel and frame their government accordingly. On the other hand, as a society corrupts from that which they know is right God brings all sorts of temporal judgments such as disease, famine, pest infestations, etc.

saying, If a woman have conceived seed,

conceive seed, תִּזְרִיעַ, thaz-ree-a[g], Hiphil (causative active) 3ps. fem. suffer, of the root זָרַע; only this once in Hiphil; so she has been caused to conceive seed.

If she has received the seed of life which is from a man ...

and born a man child:

male

a man child, זָכָר, za-kar, masc. sing. noun; KJV, tss. *a male* (Ge.1.27; 5.2), *man child* (Ge.17.10), *mankind* (Lev. 18.22, and so meaning *male-kind*); the counter-part to the male is the נִקְבָּה, *female* (v.5).

The conception has come to full term so that she has brought forth, in this case, a male.

then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.

[womanly] malady

separation for, תַּדָּת, nid-dath, fem. sing. noun תַּדָּת; KJV, separation, put apart, her flowers, unclean thing, filthiness, monstrous woman, removed

her infirmity, דַּוָּתָהּ, d^e-vo-thah, Qal infin. w/3psf. suffix of דַּוָּתָהּ, da-vah; only this once; the adj. דַּוָּתָהּ, is tss. sick, menstrual cloth, faint (only used 5 times in the O.T.); see also, דַּוָּתָהּ, an adj, tss. faint; and דַּוָּתָהּ, a masc. noun tss. sorrowful, languishing; dict. to be feeble, frail, to have a malady (it is not the same as sin)

Immediately after childbirth she is declared unclean, not because of any sin, but because her body is purging itself at this time. This cycle of purging for women is called here an *infirmity*. So, after childbirth she is greatly restricted to contact with others, and incidentally her baby, as if she was in menses. In this case she is confined for seven days because she birthed a male child.

Le 15:19 And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.

Le 15:25 And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean.

Women had already a custom, but the LORD here regulates Israel's woman.

Ge 31:35 (Rachel) And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

shall be circumcised, יִמּוּל, Niphal (simple passive) fut. w/3psm suffix, of מוּל, mool.

This is a reiteration of what was already given to Abraham in Genesis chapter 17. This physical sign or mark was the LORD's way of claiming His people. (cf. Ge.17.7-14)

Difficulty:

There is a major point about the sojourn of Israel that we need to consider. The law that they were receiving was, for the most part, in anticipation of Israel's coming into the land of Canaan.

Le 20:22 Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out.

Deu.4.1 ¶ Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ... 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. 7 For what nation

is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? 8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

Though some of the things concerning the sacrifices have begun to be implemented as it mostly relates to national Israel, some of the more personal matters did not appear to have been employed. Yes, they observed a Sabbath day rest, and the major feast of Passover at least once during their sojourn. (Nu.8.1-3) But, for example, no son of Israel born during the time of Israel's sojourn was circumcised. (cf. Jos.5.5) For this reason it is difficult to imagine Israel observing Passover as their sons came of an age to eat it. That was not allowed by the LORD. *Ex.12.48 ... no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

It has been proposed that the number of Israelites which came out of Egypt were as high as 6,000,000 people; that they could have had approximately 264 births per day, or 90,000 per year. These being uncircumcised it is very difficult to think that the Israelites partook of Passover after the second year that they left Egypt. (cf. J-F-B Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p.464)

So, it might be true that much of the law was not enacted until after that Israel came into Canaan. After leaving Egypt, Israel may have soon exhausted their flocks and grains for food. (Ex.10.26; 16.3; Nu.11.6) They must have the flock animal for the Passover; wheat for unleavened bread, and circumcision for every male in the house.

4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days;
remain in her cleansing of blood
(a restoring or healing process of her body)

she shall then continue, תִּשָּׁב, Qal fut. 2 & 3psm. of יָשַׁב; to dwell, abide, continue, remain, inhabit, tarry, et al.

her purifying, טְהַרָה, to-h^o-rah, fem. sing noun; KJV, *purifying, cleansing*; the adj. טָהוֹר is tss. *clean, pure and fair*; the masc. noun (directly in the following statement), is tss. *cleanness, purifying*; and the verb, טָהַר, *cleansed, clean, purged, pronounce, purify*.

she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

The mother continued in her separation as her body continues to purge itself, though this period of time is not so confined as the first seven days were. But she is not to touch hallowed things, not come into the sanctuary, which must mean that she was not to come into the court of the Tabernacle. (cf. Gill, vol. 1, p.596, v.4) It cannot mean the sanctuary proper as only Aaron and his sons ever came into this compartment during the times of their ministry.

Exception to this was when the tabernacle was dismantled or reared up. Then the sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari performed their assigned duties.

Gershon: the coverings for the tabernacle, and all of the hangings about the court, at the court gate, and tabernacle door. (Nu.3.25, 26)

Kohath: all of the furniture and the vail before the mercy seat. (Nu.3.31)

Merari: the tabernacle frame and the court hardware. (Nu.3.37, 37)

Later, when the Temple is built the sanctuary could mean come into this place.

The total time of separation for the mother is 40 days for the birth of a male child.

5 But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks,

a maid child, אִמָּה־נַקְיָה, v^e-eem n^e-qey-vah, fem. sing. noun; so, the exact counter-part to the male and tss. *female* (Ge.1.27;5.2); *maid child* (Lev.12.5), *a woman* (Lev.15.33; Jer.31.22); the counter-part to the female is the *male*, זָכָר (v.2).

Instead of seven days for the male child.

as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

So, the time of separation is doubled for bearing a female child. Instead of seven days it is 14 days of strict separation. Then following this time follows another period of 66 days instead of 33, bringing the total time to 80 days for a female birth.

6 ¶ And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering,

cf. Lev.1.10-13; which is to be voluntary, offering a yearling of the sheep, killing it on the north side of the altar; and consuming the entire sacrificial victim upon the brazen altar, but washing the inwards and legs in water first. (Christ offering up Himself to God for a sweet smelling savor.)

and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering,

The sin offering would be Christ giving Himself up for us. (Tit.2.14) The least of the sin offerings that could have been offered. The only matter that has been considered in this chapter is the fact that the woman was declared unclean at childbirth. Once the days of her separation have been met, and provided that she has ceased from menses, she may bring these offerings.

There is nothing inherently wrong with an undefiled marriage bed, conception, or child birth. (Ge. 1.26; Heb.13.4); but as sinners,

generally speaking, a sinner has been born. The offering is *for her*, the mother (v.7), not the child.

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest:

7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood.

fountain, spring

from the issue, מִמְּקוֹר, mim-m^e-qor, defective for מִמְּקוֹר, which has the preposition מִ, *from* to מְקוֹר, ma-qor and tss. *issue, fountain, well, well spring, spring*; the verb, קוֹר, qoor, KJV, *have digged* (waters, 2Ki.19.24; Is.37.25), *cast out* (wickedness, Jer.6.7), *destroy* (the children, Nu.24.17), *breaking down* (the walls, Is.22.5)

What is the sum of the matter concerning this mother? It is that when her issue has ceased during this set time she may come and offer her sacrifices. Until this time, and until the issue ceases, she is banned by the LORD to have her usual place or fellowship among the people. She was especially confined during the first or second weeks, and continued with a restriction about holy things over the succeeding 33 or 66 days. (cf. Lk.1.60, 61, where it is clear that Elizabeth has some contact with others after her initial separation.) But once she is *healed* she may offer the sacrifices to the LORD, and she is reconciled so that she may once again take her place among the people and resume fellowship with them.

This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female.

Notice that the sacrifice for the uncleanness contracted by the mother for childbirth is the same whether she bore a male or a female. Every notion which says that the female sex is somehow worse, or somehow a sub-human species false. This woman incurred the same defilement for the birth of the one as for the other.

8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering:

The fowl offered for sin. (Lev.5.8, 9, under the trespass offering) So, offering these sacrifices say that the ill effects for which she was unclean are past.

It is this text that was given some 2,500 years before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ which reveals the condition of poverty into which our Savior was born. (Lk.2.24)

and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

and ... shall make an atonement, וְכִפֶּר, v^e-ki-per, Piel (Intensive) pret., 3psm. suffix, of the root כָּפַר; v.7, and make an atonement.

So, after childbirth, because the woman's body was undergoing a purification process, she is separated for 40 to 80 days, and at the end of this time she is to offer her sacrifices, and by doing so acknowledge before all that she has been healed and desires to be reconciled back to the LORD and His people. So, she is atoned or reconciled from her uncleanness on the basis of these offerings.

This Scripture was literally understood and applied by the Israelites, and it concerned women which would bear children. I think we all understand that. But typically and practically, there is something for us, the N.T. believer. It is in the common issues of life that we might contract some kind of contamination. There is some uncleanness in us. We have some kind of an open wound that has been left unbound and untreated. And rather than forsaking it we bring it with us everywhere we go and contaminate those that we come into contact with; particularly so, the sanctuary or holy courts where is the fellowship of the saints. It is for this reason that the congregation can separate from the company of this one until the issue is resolved. When the unclean can say in his heart that he has received cleansing, that the matter is past, then he can be restored to fellowship

with the Lord and with the saints. Most of us are aware of our need to forsake and confess sin. And I think most of us also know that any less than this will result in chastening from the Lord.

Le 15:31 Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them.