

Leviticus 5:1-6 • Unclean Things

Introduction

If we take care to really read Leviticus, and not just rush through it, we will find it still applies to us today. To be sure, the physical sacrifices have been assumed by the Person and work of Christ, but God's Law isn't limited to rote instructions on how to carry out ritual sacrifices and offerings—it's filled with personal instruction intended to guide us in maintaining a faithful walk in Him.

Whenever God provides a list of things, we always want to carefully check each one. They not only teach about the particular characteristics of something as a whole, but we often discover that how and what God groups and categorizes together is not the way that we might do it. Such is the case with this list of "unclean things".

¹“Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration to testify when he is a witness, whether he has seen or otherwise known, if he does not tell it, then he will bear his guilt. ²Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean beast or the carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, though it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he will be guilty. ³Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort his uncleanness may be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty. ⁴Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty in one of these.

⁵“So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. ⁶He shall also bring his guilt offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin.

[Read v.1-6]

Q: Begin by listing the 4 specific issues described in v.1-4.

1. Not providing complete testimony for the public record (v.1)
2. Touching any unclean thing (v.2)
3. Touching any human uncleanness (v.3)
4. Swearing—making an oath or promise—thoughtlessly (v.4)

Q: Are these things that you would naturally think of as objects that all belong to the same category, things that are all naturally related to one another?

A: Most likely they appear to be 2 different categories mixed together, the 1st and 4th items having to do with oaths or speech and the 2nd and 3rd things having to do with uncleanness.

Q: Why might they actually be related from God's point of view? How would you guess that they all belong to the same category?

A: God views our speech as “clean” or “unclean”. “Clean” if it comes from a pure heart that follows through to do what was stated, “unclean” if it does not.

And He said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.) And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the heart of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Mark 7:18-23

Then I said,

“Woe is me, for I am ruined!

Because I am a man of unclean lips,

And I live among a people of unclean lips;

For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Isaiah 6:5

[Continued on the next page.]

Leviticus 5:1-6 • Unclean Things, Page 1 of 2

Q: How seriously does God take His own Word?

*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
And do not return there without watering the earth
And making it bear and sprout,
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.
Isaiah 55:10-11*

Application

- *How seriously do you consider your speech to be an extension of your witness and walk in Christ?*
- *Have you ever thoughtlessly spoken ill of another, even in the heated passion of the moment, even if you “didn’t really mean it”?*
- *How do you feel about the knowledge that wrong speech or promises are seen to be just as unclean as the dirtiest of things in God’s eyes?*

⁴Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty in one of these.

[Read v.4]

Q: What is the condition identified by God; is it to swear thoughtlessly to do only evil?

A: No, it also includes “or to do good”.

Q: Why are they equally “unclean” in the eyes of God?

A: Because it’s about keeping one’s word under control to begin with regardless of the intent, and to follow through with actually doing it. They **both** equally result in harm.

*But let your statement be, “Yes, yes” or “No, no”; anything beyond these is of evil.
Matthew 5:37*

Application: *Have you ever given someone a commitment because you thought they wanted to hear it or that you had no intention of following through? Did you think it wasn’t an issue because it wasn’t directly harmful in an evil sense? How will you undertake such commitments in the future?*

[Read v.5-6]

⁵“So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. ⁶He shall also bring his guilt offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin.

Q: Is it enough to just be aware of such sins and make a mental note to not repeat them? What is required in the Law?

1. “...he shall confess that in which he has sinned”. (v.5)
2. “...he shall also bring his guilt offering to the LORD for his sin...” (v.6)
3. “...the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin.” (v.6)

Q: How does this apply to us living under the New Covenant?

A: We make confession and come to Christ for atonement.

Application: *Is there any uncleanness that your speech has brought about that needs to be brought before Christ?*