

Leviticus

Lesson 8

Here in lesson 8, we come to the first listing of clean and unclean foods in Leviticus chapter 11. This listing severely restricted the original list of animals and vegetation that man could eat following departure from Noah's Ark one-thousand and ninety years before the instruction in Leviticus. We find that story in Genesis 9.

Genesis 9:3 Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as *I gave* the green plant. ⁴ Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood. ⁵ Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from *every* man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. ⁶ "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

Every animal that moved on the earth and every green plant on the planet was food for Noah and his family, including everyone that would live on earth until the time of the giving of Leviticus to the Nation of Israel. No animal or plant was unclean to anyone on earth for that one-thousand and ninety years. Now, as we come to Leviticus, the LORD will restrict only the Nation of Israel to eat animals that He deemed clean. The rest of the world could still eat all the animals and plants as with Noah's instruction.

VI. The Law of the Clean and Unclean Foods (11:1-46)

A. Clean and Unclean Foods from the Land (11:1-2)

For the Nation of Israel, the LORD had a new food plan, and through Moses, He provided the law of the clean and unclean foods. He will begin with the clean and unclean foods from the land. As an introduction, we hear the LORD speaking to Moses in chapter 11 verse 1. *"The LORD spoke again to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, 'Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth.'"* (11:1-2).

When the LORD says, *"the animals that are on the earth,"* a better translation would be *all the animals on the land*. This is because, in this section, the LORD begins with land animals, then He moves to water animals and then to flying animals. Then He will summarize some special instructions that deal with all three kinds of animals.

1. Clean with Divided/Split Hoof and Chews the Cud (11:3)

In the law, clean animals have a divided or split hoof and chew the cud. Verse 3. *"Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat."* (11:3).

- First, after the animal swallows its food, it goes into a pouch called the *rumen*. From there, the animal can bring the food, now called a *cud*, back up into its mouth and chew it again. Some animals chew their cud several times before it finally goes into the stomach for full digestion.
- Second, the animal must have a completely cloven hoof. This means a hoof that splits into two toes.

This may seem like a general statement that fits either animal with a divided hoof or chews the cud, but that is not what the LORD intends. The two go together and must be together. Examples of clean animals that fit these two criteria are the oxen, sheep, goat, deer, gazelle, roebuck, ibex, and antelope. These animals are by far not an exhaustive list.

2. Unclean with any Deviation (11:4-8)

a) The Unclean Camel (11:4)

But the LORD tells the Nation of Israel that if the animal has one of the two but not the other, the animal is unclean, and he gives examples. Verse 4. *“Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these, among those which chew the cud, or among those which divide the hoof: the camel, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you.”* (11:4).

The camel is an unclean animal because it does not have the two criteria. It chews its cud, but it does not have a split hoof. With the unclean camel, its family includes the vicuna, alpaca, guanaco, llama, dromedary, and bactrian camel.

b) The Unclean Shaphan (Rock Badger) (11:5)

The second example is the same as the camel, and it is the unclean shaphan or rock badger. Verse 5. *“Likewise, the shaphan, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; ...”* (11:5).

The rock badger chews its cud, but it does not have a split hoof. The rock badger is found only in parts of Africa and extreme southwestern Asia. It is not related to the badgers we know today. Even if it was, the badgers we know are unclean. Instead, its closest living relatives are the elephants and manatees, which are also unclean animals.

c) The Unclean Rabbit (11:6)

The rabbit or hare is unclean as food for the Jews. Verse 6. *“...the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you;”* (11:6). The reason it is unclean is the same as the camel and the rock badger. It chews its cud but does not have a split hoof.

What if the difference between a rabbit and a hare? The rabbit is much smaller in size, and it also has much shorter ears than a hare. The rabbit is born blind and furless and needs its mother to help until it is weaned. The hare is born with its eyes open and fully furred. Within hours after birth, it can begin to fend for itself.

d) The Unclean Pig (11:7)

Then the LORD gives an example of an animal with a split hoof that does not chew its cud. Verse 7. *“...and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you.”* (11:7).

Some might ask the question, what is the difference between a pig and a hog. A pig is an animal that is a member of the Genus *Sus* family. A hog is a domestic subspecies of any one of the different family members of the Genus *Sus*. Pigs are found in the wild. Hogs are domestic, although some hogs have run free and become feral in various places in the world. Hogs are domestic pigs. Hogs and pigs, of any species, are unclean.

e) The Handling of the Unclean Animals (11:8)

But what about the handling of unclean animals? Could a Jew become unclean by handling such animals? Verse 8. *“You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.”* (11:8).

The prohibition at this point in the instruction concerning these animals does not make them unclean to the Jew except that they cannot be eaten and their dead bodies cannot be touched. If one of these animals dies, a Jew could not dispose of the animal. That is not the point in this verse. Instead, the point in verse 8 is that the dead animal, which must be dead to be eaten, cannot be eaten because it is unclean.

B. Clean and Unclean from the Sea (11:9-12)

1. Clean Fins and Scales (11:9)

From the examples of the clean and unclean animals of the land, the LORD turns to the clean and unclean animals of the sea. For food, the sea animals were clean if they had fins and scales.

Verse 9. *“These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat.”* (11:9).

A scale is a rigid plate that grows on the animal’s skin. In fish, the dermal scales are formed from mesoderm. They function to resist strong water currents and act as protective armor. The way they are formed allows the fish to move with great ease.

Many water animals have fins, but not all have scales. The fins are used to propel and guide the animal through the water. In this case, both fins and scales are required for the fish to be clean and edible. The two go together; both must be in place for the animal to be clean.

2. Unclean without Fins and Scales (11:10-12)

Like the land animals, the LORD explains that water animals that do not have both fins and scales are unclean. Verse 10. *“But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you, and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest. Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you.”* (11:10-12).

As a fisherman, and the Jews will be fishermen in the Promised Land, it is impossible to fish without catching water creatures without fins or scales. They are not to be eaten. Even if they die, they are not to be eaten. They are unclean. Shellfish (shrimp, crayfish, crab, lobster, clams, scallops, oysters, and mussels), corals, and eels are examples of water creatures that do not have fins or scales and are unclean for Jews to eat. In general, all these animals survive on the waste of other animals. Because they eat the unclean excrement, the animal is unclean. It does not mean that the Jew cannot touch them; it just means they cannot be eaten.

C. Unclean Fowl (11:13-19)

The LORD then turns to the animals that fly, the unclean fowl he addresses first. Verse 13. *“These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds; they are abhorrent, not to be eaten: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard, and the kite and the falcon in its kind, every raven in its kind, and the ostrich and the owl and the sea gull and the hawk in its kind, and the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl, and the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture, and the stork, the heron in its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat.”* (11:13-19).

It is quite easy to see why these fowl are unclean; they all survive on dead decaying carcasses. They are scavengers. They eat that the unclean: therefore, they are considered unclean for the Jews to eat.

D. Clean and Unclean Insects (11:20-25)

1. Unclean walk on all fours (11:20)

Moving on to the clean and unclean insects, the LORD moves immediately to insects that walk on all fours. Verse 20. *“All the winged insects that walk on all fours are detestable to you.”* (11:20).

Here we hit a slight problem. Wycliff translates this verse as follows. *“All thing of fowls that goeth on four feet, shall be abominable to you....”* Tyndale translates this verse as follows. *“And all foules that crepe ad goo apo all iiij. shalbe an abhominacion unto you.”* Both use the word “fowls”, and that carried through to the King James Bible, which says, *“All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you.”* But all the modern translations use the word *insects*, including the New King James, which says, *“All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you.”* So which is it?

The Hebrew word used is *oph*, and it means *flying creatures*. That does not help us because it can mean “fowl” or “insect.” But what fowl have four legs? None. To add to the problem, fowl, in Wycliffe and Tyndale's days, means a feathered, warm-blooded vertebrate, and it comes from the Old English *fugel*, which comes from the Germanic word for bird. We are still no closer to the answer.

The only flying animal that walks on all fours that are not an insect is a bat. But it is not a fowl. It is not a feathered animal. Yet, it is a flying creature and fits the Hebrew word. But fowl do not have “all fours;” therefore, the translation cannot mean fowl and must mean insects, but here we run into another conundrum. All flying insects, such as bees, wasps, hornets, and more, have at least six legs but use only four for walking.

2. Clean with Jointed Legs and Jump – Locust, Crickets, Grasshoppers (11:21-22)

Not all flying insects are unclean. The LORD addresses the clean insects in verse 21. *“Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on all fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth. These of them you may eat: the locust in its kinds, and the devastating locust in its kinds, and the cricket in its kinds, and the grasshopper in its kinds.”* (11:21-22).

We find that flying insects that walk on all fours and can jump are clean and edible for the Jews. The LORD names them as *“locust in its kinds, ... crickets in its kinds; and grasshopper in its kinds.”* Several varieties of locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers exist, and all are clean and edible.

3. Unclean if Touched until Evening (11:23-25)

But the LORD returns to the four-footed insects that, if touched, can cause you to be unclean until evening. Verse 23. *“But all other winged insects which are four-footed are detestable to you. By these, moreover, you will be made unclean: whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, and whoever picks up any of their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.”* (11:23-25).

The LORD knew that it was impossible to live life without encountering these unclean insects. There are more kinds of insects on the earth than any other type of animals combined. How can you be unclean by these insects? By swatting them away? No. By flicking them off your clothing? No. By killing them with your hand? Yes. By killing them on your garments? Yes. How long will you be unclean? Until the end of the evening, which today is our *afternoon*. As soon as the new day starts at six o'clock pm, the Jew will once again be clean.

E. Unclean Summary Concerning Divided but Not Split Hoof (11:26)

The LORD returns to summarize His law concerning the animals with the divided but not split hoof and those which do not chew the cud. Verse 26. *“Concerning all the animals which divide the hoof but do not make a split hoof, or which do not chew cud, they are unclean to you: whoever touches them becomes unclean.”* (11:26).

Here the LORD adds to the first prohibition of handling the unclean animals from the land. Now the LORD declares that animals such as the camel, rock badger, rabbit, and pig would make a Jew unclean even if he touched the animal.

F. Unclean Animals that Walk on Paws (11:27-28)

Also, the LORD prohibited the Jews from touching unclean animals that walk on paws. Verse 27. *“Also whatever walks on its paws, among all the creatures that walk on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, and the one who picks up their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; they are unclean to you.”* (11:27-28).

Animals that walk on paws are not only unclean for eating purposes, but they are unclean to touch when they have died. What animals walk on paws? Felids – all cats, tigers, lions, leporids, bobcats, etc. Canids – all dogs, foxes, hounds, wolves, etc. Rabbits – all rabbits, hares pikas, etc.

Bears and Raccoons. Rodents – mice, hamsters, rats, squirrels, prairie dogs, nutria, chipmunk, beaver, muskrat, porcupines, guinea pigs, gerbils, etc. Weasels – badgers, otters, ferrets, martens, minks, wolverines, etc. Not only are these animals unclean for Jews to eat if a Jew touches the dead body of one of these animals, but he is unclean until the end of the afternoon (evening).

G. Unclean Animals that Swarm (11:29-31)

1. What They Are (11:29-31)

The LORD then addresses the unclean animals that swarm and what they are. The first two have already been addressed because they fall into the category of animals with paws. Here, they are addressed again because they fall into animals that swarm in great numbers. *“Now these are to you the unclean among the swarming things which swarm on the earth: the mole, and the mouse, and the great lizard in its kinds, and the gecko, and the crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand reptile, and the chameleon. These are to you the unclean among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead becomes unclean until evening.”* (11:29-31).

When we think of the word “swarm,” most of us think about being attacked by thousands of wasps coming at us like the cloud of an angry flying army. We think of the danger coming our way. But that is not the meaning of the word “swarm” in this text. Here, when the English word was placed in the text, it meant *to gather together or to form a crowd*. When we think about it that way, when we use that definition for “swarm,” it would include animals such as the mole (weasel), mouse, lizards, gecko, crocodiles, represent animals that are seen most often gathered in crowds of like kind. They are unclean to eat for the Jew as well as unclean to touch.

2. What they Touch that is Unclean (11:32-35)

a) Articles that Must Be Washed (11:32)

But more than that, the mole (weasel), mouse, lizards, gecko, crocodiles represent animals that cause regular articles of human life to be unclean too. Verse 32. *“Also anything on which one of them may fall when they are dead becomes unclean, including any wooden article, or clothing, or a skin, or a sack—any article of which use is made—it shall be put in the water and be unclean until evening, then it becomes clean.”* (11:32).

Anything that these animals touch must be washed clean. These animals tend to constantly eliminate their body waste and therefore leave that waste on all items on which they crawl.

b) Clay Pots Must Be Broken (11:33)

We have already addressed the problem of porous earthenware or clay pots. When these animals are found in clay pots, the pots must be broken. Verse 33. *“As for any earthenware vessel into which one of them may fall, whatever is in it becomes unclean, and you shall break the vessel. Any of the food which may be eaten, on which water comes, shall become unclean, and any liquid which may be drunk in every vessel shall become unclean.”* (11:33).

Why break the clay pots? The constant evacuation of the animal waste will soak into the clay pots' pores and cannot be washed well enough to be clean. Therefore, the pot must be broken and thrown away.

Also, any food that comes from the clay pots infected by these animals must be thrown away. Even the water is unclean. If wine, or any other liquid, kept in a clay pot, is found infected by these animals, that drink is unclean.

c) Ovens and Stoves Must be Smashed (11:35)

Even if these animals, moles (weasels), mice, lizards, geckos, crawl over an oven or a stove, the stove or oven must be smashed and discarded. Verse. 35. *“Everything, moreover, on which part of their carcass may fall becomes unclean; an oven or a stove shall be smashed; they are unclean and shall continue as unclean to you.”* (11:35).

Why? Because they are unclean. Most stoves and ovens in that day were made of clay and were porous, and even with the presence of a fire, they cannot guarantee the purification from the waste of the animals.

3. What they Touch that is Clean (11:36-38)

a) Spring or Cistern (11:36)

But not all things that these animals touched were unclean. Springs and cisterns were still considered clean. Verse 36. *“Nevertheless a spring or a cistern collecting water shall be clean, though the one who touches their carcass shall be unclean.”* (11:36).

Springs and cisterns contain water that is continuously moving. Moles, mice, lizards, and geckos are going to encounter springs and cisterns. If a mouse is found dead in the spring or cistern, the water is clean, but the person who retrieves the mouse is unclean.

b) Seeds to be Sown (11:37-38)

(1) Planted it is Clean (11:37)

Seeds sprout much better if they are soaked before they are planted. If the seeds are soaked in water that has been tainted by a dead mole, mouse, lizards, or gecko, the seeds are still clean to plant. Verse 37. *“If a part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing which is to be sown, it is clean.”* (11:37).

(2) Watered with Clean Water (11:38)

However, once planted, the seeds were not to be tainted by a dead mole, mouse, lizards, or gecko. Verse 38. *“Though if water is put on the seed and a part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.”* (11:38).

Here is what this means. A dead animal can be taken from the cistern or spring water, and the water is still clean to soak the seeds. But if, after the seeds have been soaked, a dead animal is found on the seeds, the seeds are unclean and should not be planted. Once soaked, the seeds can absorb diseases from the dead animal making the seeds susceptible to death. Therefore, they are unclean.

H. Unclean Dead Animals (11:39-40)

1. The One Who Touches it is Unclean Until Evening (11:39)

Now the LORD addresses the way clean animals can become unclean. Verse 39. *“Also if one of the animals dies which you have for food, the one who touches its carcass becomes unclean until evening.”* (11:39).

The oxen, sheep, goat, turtle doves, or pigeons that die on their own or not killed and drained adequately of their blood are considered unclean, and once touched, the person is unclean until the end of the afternoon (evening).

2. The One Who Eats or Picks It Up is Unclean Until Evening (11:40)

The dead body of any edible animals which dies on their own or killed in some way other than by a person intentionally slaying the animal and processing it correctly at the time, causes that animal to be unclean to eat or even pick up. Verse 40. *“He too, who eats some of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening, and the one who picks up its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.”* (11:40).

The dead animals even cause the clothes of the person picking them up to be unclean.

I. Summary of Detestable Swarming Things (11:41-44)

Finally, the LORD summarized the law for clean and unclean edible foods. Verse 41. *“Now every swarming thing that swarms on the earth is detestable, not to be eaten. Whatever crawls on its belly, and whatever walks on all fours, whatever has many feet, in respect to every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, you shall not eat them, for they are detestable. Do not render yourselves detestable through any of the swarming things that swarm,*

and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean. For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.” (11:41-44).

J. Clean and Unclean Declaration (11:45-46)

Lastly, the LORD gives the reason for His clean and unclean declaration. Verse 45. *“For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy. This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.” (11:45-46).*

VII. The Law Concerning Childbirth (12:1-).

A. The Law for the Mother of a Male Child (12:1-4).

1. Her Uncleaness (12:1-2).

From the Law concerning unclean foods, the LORD turned to the uncleanness concerning childbirth, and He begins with the uncleanness of the mother of a male child. We begin with her uncleanness in chapter 12, verse 1. *“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean.’” (12:1-2).*

The LORD created females to have a time for cleaning their female organs used in reproduction. It takes seven days for this cleaning to take place. During that week, the females are considered unclean and therefore are not to have sexual relations with their husbands. A law concerning this issue for Israel had not been previously given. Yet, this instruction comes as the first indication that the female is considered unclean when the female body is cleaning itself. This will be addressed again in chapter 15.

But these seven days of uncleanness does not have anything to do with the time of her regular body cleaning; this is a regulation for childbirth of a male child. In this passage, we find that the LORD requires a mother of a male child to be considered unclean for the first seven days after the child’s birth, in the same way, she is unclean during the time that her body’s self-cleaning. It is in the same way, but it is not the same reason. During that uncleanness, there are several things she cannot do besides the prohibition of interacting physically with her husband. These include restrictions on where she can go, what she can do, and how she can do things. Being unclean, she cannot cook the clean foods. As soon as she touches them to prepare them for a meal, the food becomes unclean. Neither can she participate in holy things that are clean because her presence will make them unclean.

Be that as it may, the uncleanness to this degree is only for the first seven days. Why? Because on the eighth day of the male child’s life, an important event in the child’s life occurs.

2. Her Child’s Circumcision (12:3)

On the eighth day of every male child’s life in the line of Abraham and down through all the ages, the male is to be circumcised. Verse 3. *“On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.” (12:3).*

The mother is permitted to be present at this holy ceremony because her strict seven days of uncleanness is over.

3. Her Days of Purification (12:4)

But even though her uncleanness is over, the law requires thirty-three more purification days when she delivers a male child. Verse 4. *“Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.”* (12:4).

For the following thirty-three days, the mother cannot go into the Tabernacle complex for any reason. In the context of Leviticus, it is the Tabernacle complex that is consecrated within the camp of the Israelites. When the text says, *“nor enter the sanctuary,”* the word *sanctuary* means *holy*. As such, the holy would be the place of the offerings around the front of the Tent of Meeting, the holy basin of water, and the Brazen Altar. This law applied especially to the priests’ wives who would be allowed to enter the Tabernacle complex’s curtained area and eat the meals with their priestly families in the holy places. That would be forbidden during the seven days of her body’s cleaning and the added thirty-three days of purification. In verse 6, we will learn that upon the end of her purification, she would be required to present an offering at the Tent of Meeting; therefore, proclaiming her purified and able to enter the holy area within the curtains of the Tabernacle complex at the appropriate times.

B. The Law for the Mother of a Female Child (12:5ab).

1. Her Uncleanness (12:5a)

But the law of the mother for the birth of a female child is different. Verse 5a. *“But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation;”* (12:5a).

With the birth of a female child, uncleanness is extended from seven days to fourteen days. It is the same kind of uncleanness as during the time of her body’s self-cleaning every month, but for a different reason. This time is for the birth of a female child.

2. Her Days of Purification (12:5b)

Also, the days of a mother’s purification are extended from thirty-three days for a male child’s birth to sixty-six days with a female child. Verse 5b. *“...and she shall remain in the blood of her purification for sixty-six days.”* (12:5b).

Commentators of old try to explain the reasons for the difference in the unclean and purification law between a male child’s birth versus a female child, but none makes sense. However, no doubt, commentators have made much about it, stating the difference in the status in culture between a male and a female birth and after-effects on the mother’s body, but these tales cannot be proven.

C. The Law for the Offering of the Mother (12:6-8)

1. The Required Burnt and Sin Offerings (12:6-7)

To complete the law of the mother for the birth of a child, the LORD required a burnt and a sin offering. Verse 6. *“When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female.”* (12:6-7).

Upon the end of her purification, thirty-three days for the birth of a male child and sixty-six days for the delivery of a female child, the mother delivers a lamb and a pigeon or turtle dove to the door of the tent of meeting. She is now clean and can enter the holy, sacred, consecrated Tabernacle complex. The offering is the same for a male or female child. The lamb will be the burnt offering, presented at the north side of the Brazen Altar. The mother will place her hand on the head of the lamb and kill it. The priest will catch the blood and sprinkle it around the altar and pour the rest at its base. He will then stoke the fire. The mother will skin and cut up the lamb. The legs and entrails will be washed, and the priest will place all the animals except for the hide on the altar,

where it will burn all the rest of the day and all night for a burnt offering. The priest will be given the hide. The turtle dove or pigeon will be given to the priest at the west side of the Brazen Altar, where he will wring the head off, tear off the wings, sprinkle the blood around the altar, place the feathers and the crop in the coals on the east side of the altar and then put the bird parts on the Brazen Altar to be burned for a sin offering.

This passage will become especially important in the time of the birth of Jesus. He was born in Bethlehem. The family stayed there until the eighth day when He was circumcised. On the night of the eighth day, the angel told Joseph to take his family to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus left in the middle of the night. In the days following, the babies in Bethlehem are killed, Herod kills his son and the son's mother. Herod dies on April 4th, 4 BC. An angel tells Joseph that he can return to Israel because Herod is dead. Thirty-three days after the circumcision of Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus arrived at the Temple in Jerusalem with her purification offering. It would have taken the family at least three days to travel from Egypt to Jerusalem. What is the conclusion? The birth of Jesus had to occur in March of 4 BC for all the days to fall in line with this law of the purification offering at the Temple in Jerusalem.

2. The Permitted Burnt and Sin Offerings (12:8)

But not every family could afford a lamb to give as a purification offering. Just as with most of the required offerings, the LORD permits an alternative burnt and sin offering. Verse 28. *"But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean."* (12:8).

Because we know the offerings presented in chapters 1 through 7, with this alternative offering, the head of the first bird was not snapped off the bird's body, it was broken backward, and the front of the neck was nipped to release the blood. The head of the second bird was wrung from the body. All the rest of the ceremony for the birds of the burnt and sin offerings were the same as always.

In our next lesson, we will delve into the Law concerning unclean leprosy.