

**Leviticus-Numbers**  
**June 14, 2009**  
**Being Holy (or “Don’t Be Zapped by God”)**  
**Leviticus 10-11**

**I. Role of Priests**

What is the role of Priests? Do they do any good?

If one has Priests, what are the expectations of them?

While the people of Israel were to follow the LORD, the Priests were set up to be an intermediary between man and God. As such, the behavior of Priests were important as their acts should be a model for others to follow. If the priest fail, then the people were likely to fail as well.

**Hosea 6:4**

**my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. “Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God,**  
**NIV**

**II. Leviticus 10: A Scary story**

Note that the glory of the LORD appears before Aaron at the end of Chapter 9.

Verses 1-2: Strange Fire

What is the strange/profane/unauthorized fire?

Why did God punish the two sons of Aaron so severely?

Do we see any other similar situations in the Bible?

What can we learn from this episode?

Note: We are not sure what Nabab and Abihu did wrong other than that they did that which God had not commanded? Some suggestions have been:

1) They put hot coals in their censers which were not from the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 16:12; Ex. 30:9)

2) The prohibition against intoxicating drinks which followed lead some to believe they may have been drunk (Lev. 10:8-10)

3) Their attempt to enter the Holy Place at an inappropriate time (Lev. 16:1-2)

Notice the passage that proceeds chapter 10:

**Lev. 9:22-24**

**22 Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, sblessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. 23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, 24 and tfire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they ushouted and fell on their faces.**

**NKJV**

Verse 3: An explanation?

### Lev10:3

3 And Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.’ ” So Aaron held his peace. NKJV

Verse 4-5: Cousins take bodies outside camp

Verses 6-15: Warnings by Moses, God, and then Moses again.

Why are there so many warnings?

Verses 16-20 Another failure...the other two sons of Aaron have apparently not correctly handled an offering; Aaron was also apparently involved.

Why did God not kill Eleazar and Ithamar as well? Why not Aaron too?

Since the remaining Priests have eaten incorrectly, God apparently decides to give some laws of correct eating immediately in the next chapter.

### III. Chapter 11: Good Food

Verses 2-8: Cloven-hoofed, cud-chewing land animals are clean and may be eaten. Other animals are unclean and may not be eaten.

Verses 9-12: Only fishes that have fins and scales may be eaten

Verses 13-19: Certain named birds, probably birds of prey, may not be eaten.

Verses 20-23: Flying insects may not be eaten, but hopping insects are edible.

Verses 24-28: Touching the dead carcass of an unclean animal makes a person unclean. He must wash.

Verses 29-38: Other swarming animals, e.g. mice, are also unclean. If an animal is found dead in a vessel, then the vessel is also unclean and must be destroyed or purified.

Verses 39-40: Clean animals, which die of natural causes, become unclean, unfit to eat, and a source of pollution.

Verses 41-43: A somewhat incomplete summary of the above.

What was it important to God for the Israelites to be “clean”?

Some claim that it kept the Israelites healthier; other state that it kept them separate from the other nations; other claim that there is some kind of morality associated with the animals that could and could not be eaten.

Perhaps, a simpler explanation can be seen in the following comment by John Calvin:

*“For it is the best instrument for enabling them daily to learn with greater truth and certainty what the will of the Lord is which they aspire to follow, and to conform them in this knowledge; just as a servant who desired with all his soul to approve himself to his master.”*

*“The law acts like a whip to the flesh, urging it on as men do to a lazy sluggish ass. Even in the case of a spiritual man, inasmuch as he is still burdened with the weight of the flesh, the Law is a constant stimulus, pricking him forward when would indulge in sloth.”* (Institutes of the Christian Religion, translated by Henry Beveridge, Vol. 1, 1964, page 304)

Since eating is done daily, perhaps several times daily, it brings one back to a consideration of what God would have His people to do.

Verses 44-45: What are the significance of these verses:

**Lev. 11:44-45**

**44 I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. 45 I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.**

**NIV**

What is the significance of this passage? It is given as part of the food laws, but its application goes far beyond eating correct or incorrect foods. Take the following passages: 1 Peter 1:15-16 (direct quote), Eph. 1:4, Heb 12:14, Matt 5:8, Matt. 5:48.

Notice also the connection of this passage with the use of “holy” in Chapter 10. The two chapters are highly connected through the use of “holy” and the eating correctly.

#### **IV. Assumed Weaknesses of Passages**

Bible critics find much to grumble about when they read these two chapters.

In Chapter 10, they see God as being a violent, uncouth entity and therefore is inconsistent with the NT.

In Chapter 11, they see what they think are contradictions, such as:

-Do rabbits really chew their cud?

-Do insects have four legs?

-Do camels have cloven hooves?

-Are bats really birds?

(Hint: Current usage of terms might not be the same as in ancient Hebrew.)

How would you answer them?

#### **V. Staying Holy**

-How does it make you feel when God says that He has called you to be holy...that you should be holy, just as He is holy?

-What can you do to stay holy...to become more holy?

-How much leeway does God give you in your failure to live as He wants you to live? Why does He give you any leeway?