

Leviticus 12 | Sunday May 11, 2025

Leviticus 12:1-8 ESV

(1) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (2) “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. (3) And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. (4) Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying. She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed. (5) But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her menstruation. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying for sixty-six days. (6) “And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, (7) and he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. (8) And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.”

These parts of Leviticus are hard for us to comprehend. Some of the laws go into specific details about life that are hard to connect with or see the heart of. Yet, it is amazing to see how the Old Testament, Leviticus included, gets talked about in the rest of the Word.

Psalm 119:93 ESV

(93) I will never forget Your precepts, **for by them You have given me life.**

God’s Word, even the instructions in Leviticus give life. I want to be clear; they are not a list of rules in how to be saved. Yet, in these commands God is revealing His character, and the life that is found in Him. These commands reveal the life that comes from being in His presence. It is sin that corrupts the life that we are to find in Him.

Romans 7:10-14 ESV

(10) **The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.**

(11) **For sin**, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

(12) So **the law is holy**, and **the commandment is holy** and **righteous** and **good**.

(13) Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! **It was sin**, producing death in me through what is good, **in order that sin might be shown to be sin**, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

(14) For we know that **the law is spiritual**, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

God’s Word, His commandments, were twisted by sin. The Law is described as **holy, righteous, good, and spiritual**. It is our sin that corrupts it and brings death. Sin always takes something good from God and missuses it. **Our sin is exposed through the law, and it is shown for the death that it brings in contrast to the life God offers.**

Leviticus 11-15 teaches what is clean and unclean. It was meant to show the contrast between the holiness and life being close to God brings and the death and separation being apart from Him brings. **Being clean is moving towards His life, and the wholeness found in Him.** Being

unclean is moving away from that life. Being unclean is not directly sin **but it is a result of the pollution sin brings**. We are in sin cursed bodies on a sin cursed planet, our very nature is polluting and unclean. There are laws about bodily functions and parts of life that seem very normal/ natural to us, and it is hard to understand why it is viewed as unclean. In part this is due to the fact that our sinful polluting nature is normal to us. Leviticus 12 describes parts of childbirth that are viewed as unclean. This is hard to grasp as children are a heritage and reward.

Psalms 127:3 ESV

(3) Behold, **children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.**

To better understand God's perspective of holiness and cleanliness, we must see what **God's original intent of life and wholeness are** and how sin has corrupted them.

Genesis 1:27-28 ESV

(27) **So God created man in His own image**, in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them.**

(28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it**, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God created both genders in His own image. God cannot be summarized by only one of the genders but both are needed to see His image in us. The first command God gave to Man and Woman was to be fruitful and multiply. Before sin had entered the world, God wanted humanity to have children and a lot of them. **So having children, and child birth is part of God's original holy plan for life.** Yet sin came in and corrupted this plan.

Genesis 3:6 ESV

(6) So when **the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight** to the eyes, and that the tree **was to be desired** to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband **who was with her, and he ate.**

The perfect state of life and fellowship with God did not last long. The serpent deceived Eve. Verse 6 gives all the things the serpent coaxed Eve into looking at instead of looking to God for direction. Eve is the first to partake of the fruit, but then Adam who has been silent during the deception of his wife willingly disobeys God and eats of it as well. As God comes to them, He reveals the curses their actions have caused.

Genesis 3:13-16; 20 ESV

(13) Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "**The serpent deceived me**, and I ate."

(14) The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

(15) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring **and her offspring; he shall bruise your head**, and you shall bruise his heel."

(16) To the woman he said, "**I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.** Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."

(20) **The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all**

living.

As God gives the curses, He speaks of a future offspring of Eve who will be able to give the death blow to the serpent's head. God's plan for humanity to have kids will continue even with sin, **but now the process is cursed**. Childbearing will now involve tremendous pain. As a life is brought into the world, **there is now a reminder of the curse and death**.

Romans 5:12 ESV

(12) Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man**, and **death through sin**, and **so death spread** to all men because all sinned—

Eve was deceived and **is never given credit for the first sin in scripture**. Adam is held accountable and sin is viewed as coming through His act of disobedience. Through Adam all are sinners, and through him, through the father, the sin nature is passed down. And with the sin nature comes death. So, what should have been a tremendous moment when Eve gave birth to Cain is now the birth of a sinner.

Genesis 4:1 ESV

(1) Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "**I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.**"

Eve named her baby Cain, a word play on the Hebrew word "gotten." She had an expectation that Cain was the offspring God had promised. She thought she had "gotten" the one God promised. Yet, because of Adam, Cain was born a murderous sinner. **God's life-giving plan of children had been corrupted by sin**. Childbirth itself was now corrupted by sin and involves pain, and uncleanness.

Leviticus 12:1-4 ESV

- (1) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
- (2) "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears **a male child**, then she shall be **unclean seven days**. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean.
- (3) And **on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised**.
- (4) Then she shall continue for **thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying**. She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed.

40- a period to endure, testing, trial

40- days of rain in the flood

40- years in wilderness for Israel

40- weeks of pregnancy

The process of birth was now **a reminder of the curse of sin** and the woman was unclean after giving birth. For 7 days she was viewed as unclean and could pass her uncleanness to others simply by touch, then for the next 33 days, she was partially unclean and could not enter into the tabernacle. After the birth of a boy she would be unclean a total of **40 days**. The birthing process includes blood and discharge and her uncleanness lasted this entire duration. **Blood purifies and is used to make atonement and yet it is also viewed as one of the most defiling unclean things throughout Leviticus**. This period of uncleanness served as a reminder of the pain and

curse that has come to the miracle of birth.

It was also practical as it gave the women a time to heal and recuperate from birth. Relations with her husband would have been forbidden during this time, and her responsibilities limited as she had to be careful what she came into contact with. Practically **this period of uncleanness was a God given maternity leave.** This time is **cut short** for a male child in part due to the circumcision that takes place on the eight day.

Genesis 17:10-13 ESV

(10) This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring after you: **Every male among you shall be circumcised.**

(11) You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and **it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.**

(12) **He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.** Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,

(13) both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. **So shall My covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.**

The male child in whom the sin nature would be passed through needed to be circumcised on the eight day. It was a sign of God's covenant with the people of Israel. A reminder that the flesh was no value and after physical birth they needed a rebirth in Him. God created this world, the old creation in 6 days, then rested on the 7th, **the 8th day in Leviticus will point to the new birth, or God's new creation.** It is viewed as the first day of the week, **the day Jesus was resurrected.**

Colossians 2:9-12 ESV

(11) In Him also **you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,**

Circumcision was a symbol to remind the people that the flesh is no help in pursuing God. **The circumcision was a reminder of the sin nature that he would pass on to his children.** It was meant to point Israel to their need **for the new life that could only be found in the messiah, Jesus.** The mother's need for purification was reduced as the boy was circumcised. This was not the case for a baby girl.

Leviticus 12:5 ESV

(5) But if she bears **a female child,** then she shall be **unclean two weeks,** as in her menstruation. And she shall **continue in the blood of her purifying for sixty-six days.**

For a baby girl the mothers contagious uncleanness does not stop on day 8 with the circumcision but continues until day 14. Then she remained unclean for another 66 days which meant **80 days in total.** Many explanations have been given for why it is longer for a baby girl. **Most of the cultures of the day had purification processes for a mother** to go through and most had a longer purification for having baby girls then baby boys. Some see in this a disparaging or prejudice attitude toward woman. An attitude that is reflected in the **nonbiblical, Jewish prayer in the Talmud,** (Menachot 43b:17-18) where a man is to praise God every morning for not making him **a gentile, slave, or woman.**

Sin corrupts the life and holiness that is found in God's truth. Both genders are made in God's image and **one is not to be elevated over another**. The purification time for a baby boy is shortened with his circumcision. This is not an option for a baby girl and the time purification time is full. Each birth is a reminder of sins' curse on childbearing. **A female child will give birth to more sinners, and full purification is needed**. Child birth is a unique gift to women. **Through child birth another sinner will come into the world, causing more defilement**. The purification time does not devalue women **but points out the defilement our sin nature has caused**.

Leviticus 12:6-8 ESV

- (6) "And when the days **of her purifying** are completed, whether **for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring** to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting **a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering,**
- (7) and he shall offer it before the LORD **and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood.** This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female.
- (8) And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take **two turtledoves or two pigeons,** one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. **And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."**

After the purification time of either 40 or 80 days **the mother was to bring a burnt offering and a sin offering**. It was the same offering for both a son or daughter. It is important to notice that it is the mother who is called to bring the offering to the priest. This is not done by her husband. God is calling women to worship Him through the tabernacle. Women are not devalued by God but elevated and invited to come worship.

Galatians 3:27-28 ESV

- (27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, **there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

The two genders were created to be compliments of each other. Yet too many misunderstand God's intent and women are viewed inferior. In Christ there is neither male nor female. **This does not get rid of our unique identity in our genders but affirms we are not accepted by God based on our gender**. We are all one in Jesus and are accepted by His blood. The mother had access to the tabernacle. The burnt offering showed dedicating the whole life of the child to God. The sin offering is harder to understand. **Giving birth is not a sin, and yet another sinner has been brought into the world**. This is a view of childbirth that we do not think about, yet David understood it.

Psalms 51:3-5 ESV

- (3) For I know my transgressions, and **my sin is ever before me.**
- (4) Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment.
- (5) **Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

David understood that at His birth, He was a sinner. He understood the depth and defilement of His sin nature. **Since the curses of the garden the sin nature is passed through the father and another sinner is brought into the world by the mother**. What should be a celebration of

new life is a reminder of sin and death that sin causes. The amazing news is there was one birth that did not follow this pattern.

1 Timothy 2:13-15 ESV

(13) For Adam was formed first, then Eve;

(14) and Adam was not deceived, **but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.**

(15) **Yet she will be saved through childbearing**—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

Jesus was born of a virgin. A human father could not be part of the process so that he would not pass on the sin nature. **Eve was deceived and so God could use a woman to bring the messiah into the world.** We can be saved because a sinless baby was born who was willing to die. Our permeating sinfulness is undone because Jesus is perfect.

Romans 5:21 NLT

(21) So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, **now God's wonderful grace rules instead,** giving us right standing with God **and resulting in eternal life through Jesus** Christ our Lord.
