

LESSON ELEVEN 14:1-21

3. ONE HOLY PEOPLE, DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHERS (14:1—25:19)

a. DISFIGUREMENT FOR THE DEAD FORBIDDEN (14:1, 2)

Ye are the children of Jehovah your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. 2 For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God, and Jehovah hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:1, 2

250. Why the strange prohibition in verse 1? Cf. Leviticus 21:5; Ezekial 44:20.
251. Read I Peter 2:9-12 and compare our status with Israel.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:1, 2

You are the sons of the Lord your God; you shall not cut yourselves, or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead.

2 For you are a holy people (set apart) to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a peculiar people to Himself, above all the nations on the earth.

COMMENT 14:1, 2

See also Lev. 21:5, Ezek 44:20. The message seems to be especially directed to the priests.

The heathen apparently had the practice of both shaving their heads and cutting themselves in mourning for their dead. "You shall not gash yourselves or shave the front of your heads because of the dead" (The Torah). They were not only to abstain from idolatry, but also to avoid all heathen practices connected with those who *were* idolators.

V. 2 gives the *reason* for the different type of life they are to lead. Note it carefully! The surrounding nations might become progressively worse, but *God's* people are different! They are governed and regulated (inwardly it was hoped, as well as outwardly) by different standards! They are the ones chosen of God for his own possession! Let them live, then, as the *children of God* and not the sons of Belial. Cf. 7:6, Ex. 19:5, 6.

New Testament writers speak of the church as "The Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), and his people, as his own possession, are still to show forth the glories of their owner, master, and savior. See I Pet. 2:9-12.

b. THEIR DIET A CONSTANT REMINDER (14:3-21)

Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. 4 These are the beasts which ye may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5 the hart, and the gazelle, and the roebuck, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the antelope, and the chamois. 6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and hath the hoof cloven in two, *and* cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat. 7 Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that have the hoof cloven: the camel, and the hare, and the coney; because they chew the cud but part not the hoof, they are unclean unto you. 8 And the swine, because he parteth the hoof but cheweth not the cud, he is unclean unto you: of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch.

9 These ye may eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales may ye eat; 10 and whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye shall not eat; it is unclean unto you.

11 Of all clean birds ye may eat. 12 But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the gier-eagle, and the osprey, 13 and the glede, and the falcon, and the kite after its kind, 14 and every raven after its kind, 15 and the ostrich, and the night-hawk after its kind, 16 the little owl, and the great owl, and the horned owl, 17 and the pelican, and the vulture, and the cormorant, 18 and the stork, and the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat. 19 And all winged creeping things are unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. 20 Of all clean birds ye may eat.

21 Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou mayest give it unto the sojourner that is within thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner: for thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:3-21

252. Why was God interested in the diet of His people?
253. What two qualifications were involved with the "clean" animal?
254. Name the two qualifications for the clean fish.
255. What one great lesson is taught in all these prohibitions?

256. Identify: pygarg; chamois; coney; glede; hoopoe.

257. Why not "boil a kid in its mother's milk"?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:3-21

3 You shall not eat anything that is abominable [to the Lord and so forbidden by Him].

4 These are the beasts which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,

5 The hart, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep.

6 And every beast that parts the hoof and has it divided into two, and brings up and chews the cud, among the beasts, you may eat.

7 Yet these you shall not eat of those that chew the cud or have the hoof split in two: the camel, the hare, and the coney, because they chew the cud but divide not the hoof; they are unclean to you.

8 And the swine, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you; you shall not eat of their flesh, or touch their dead bodies.

9 These you may eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales you may eat;

10 And whatsoever has not fins and scales you may not eat; it is unclean to you.

11 Of all clean birds you may eat.

12 But these are they of which you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the ospray,

13 The buzzard, the kite in its several species,

14 The raven in all its species,

15 The ostrich, the night-hawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any variety,

16 the little owl, the great owl, the horned owl,

17 The Pelican, the carion vulture, the cormorant,

18 The stork, the heron of any variety, the hoopoe, and the bat.

19 And all flying insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

20 But of all clean winged things you may eat.

21 You shall not eat of anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the stranger or the foreigner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to an alien; [they are not under God's law in this matter] but you are a people holy to the Lord your God. You shall not [even] boil a kid in its mother's milk.

COMMENT 14:3-21

See also the entire 11th chapter of Leviticus. Of animals, it was necessary that they *both* chew the cud and part the hoof before they could be eaten. Meeting half the qualifications would not do.

Among fish or marine life, it was necessary that it have both fins and scales. Again, *both* qualifications had to be met to be acceptable.

This passage has often been studied with the idea that God forbade the eating of certain animal-life and allowed the eating of others because of their intrinsic health (or nutritional) value, or lack of it. (And, of course, *many* "unclean" animals *are* rather repulsive to *most* of us! Have you ever tried broiled night-hawk? Or how about a nice plump bat? Or what about a few other "winged creeping things" we might find flying or crawling around?).

But I firmly believe the real reason for the prohibitions and allowances of these verses is not found in the *apparent* nutritional or health-giving benefits of "clean" animals over the "unclean." Rattlesnake steaks or slices of eel meat may be repulsive to many, but the meat is perfectly edible if properly prepared. As a student in Bible College, this writer several times resorted to eating inexpensive horse and colt steaks, which really weren't injurious.

The prohibitions and distinctions given here were rather for the purpose of teaching *obedience*, and to show that Israel was a *separate people*, different from all other nations (v. 2).

THOU SHALT NOT EAT ANY ABOMINABLE THING (v. 3)—i.e. any thing God had pronounced unclean, or forbidden. Originally, (or at least after the flood) there had been no such restriction. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; as the green herb [Cf. Gen. 1:29, 30] have I given you all" (Gen. 9:3). Our present scripture, as part of the Mosaic law, was a temporary and provisional one. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (I Tim. 4:4, 5). See also Mk. 7:17-19; Acts 10:9-16; Rom. 14:2, 3, 14, 20; I Cor. 6:12-14, 8:8, 10:25, 26, 30, 31; Col. 2:16, 17; I Tim. 4:1-5. As far as the true religion of *God* is concerned, there are no prohibitions upon eating flesh, providing it is not a cause of stumbling. The New Testament of course, does not discuss individual cases, doctor's recommendations, etc. *Any* thing that is harmful to the body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, is forbidden by the principle set forth in I Cor. 6:19, 20.

PYGARG (v. 5)—a kind of antelope, perhaps the addax, an antelope of Arabia and North Africa, with long loosely spiraled horns. Others believe it to be the *ibex*.

CHAMOIS (v. 5)—pronounced *shámi*. This is a small, goatlike antelope that lives now in the high mountains of Europe and south-western Asia, known for its agility in climbing steep cliffs. The chamois skin (or "shammy leather") which is still used widely for cleaning, polishing, or erasing blackboards, came originally from this animal. But most of those presently in use are from the skin of sheep or goats.

THE CONEY (v. 7)—The Hebrew word *shaphan* "is now universally considered to refer to the Syrian hyrox" (I:S:B:E:); found not only in Syria, but Palestine and Arabia. A number of other species including several that are arboreal (living among and in trees), are found in Africa. They are not found elsewhere. Their appearance more resembles a squirrel than a rabbit, though they are often associated with the latter animal. They frequently make their homes among rocks (Prov. 30:26; Ps. 104:18) which is why they are sometimes called rock-badgers (Lev. 11:5, Margin).

GIER-EAGLE (v. 12)—Most modern versions have "vulture."

GLEDE (v. 13)—a member of the hawk species. The English word is akin to *glide* (and is synonymous with kite), emphasizing its gliding motion in flight. The Heb. word is *ra-ab*, a word frequently rendered *see*, *perceive*, etc. Baumgartner says "*Red Kite . . . on account of its sharp sight.*"

KITE (v. 13)—Heb. *ayyah*, another bird noted for its keen sight, supposedly having exceptionally piercing eyes. "It takes moles, mice, young game birds, snakes, and frogs, as well as carrion for food. Its head and facial expression are unusually eagle-like" (I.S.B.E.). Gesenius: "some unclean *clamorous bird*, to which very great acuteness of sight is attributed, Job 28:7 ["falcon"] . . ."

SEAMBW (v. 15)—the A.V. has *cuckow*. The Hebrew word *shachaph* probably signifies a *seagull*.

HOOPOE (v. 18)—The A.V. has *lapwing* (a plover) now universally admitted to be incorrect. The hoopoe (Heb. *dukhiphath*) is one of the peculiar and famous birds of Palestine, having a long curved

bill and beautiful plumage. About the size of a thrush, it has a crest of feathers of gold. Its body is of mixed cinnamon-gold color, with black and white stripes across the back, tail, and wings. It nests in holes and hollow trees. "All ornithologists agree that it is a 'nasty filthy bird' in its feeding and breeding habits. The nest, being paid no attention by the elders, soon becomes soiled and evil smelling" (I.S.B.E.). It was one of the sacred birds of Egypt, where magical powers were attributed to it. In Southern Europe it is killed in migration, eaten and considered delicious. The word "hoopoe" sounds like its call.

YE SHALL NOT EAT OF ANY THING THAT DIETH OF ITSELF (v. 21)—In Lev. 17:14, 15 this law is in a context forbidding the eating of blood, and the connection is easily seen. The prohibition here would help prevent any possibility of transgressing the former one. The blood of an animal that so died (Heb. carcass) would soon coagulate, preventing draining. See also Lev. 22:8, 7:24, 11:39, 40. Health reasons may also be involved in this law.

THOU SHALT NOT BOIL A KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK (v. 21)—Also in Ex. 23:19, 34:26. This prohibition seems to be connected with magical superstitions. It appears that it was the custom of certain heathens, after they had gathered in their fruits, to take the milk of the dam after it had been used to boil its kid, and then, in a magical way to sprinkle it over their trees, fields, gardens, and orchards. Supposedly this would make them more fruitful the following year.

But it is equally probable "that the act was condemned as an outrage on the connection naturally subsisting between parent and offspring. It is thus related to the commands forbidding the killing of a cow and calf on the same day (Lev. xxii. 28), or the taking of a bird with its young (ch. xxii. 6), and to the precepts enjoining a scrupulous regard for natural distinctions—not sowing a field with mingled seed, etc. (Lev. xix. 19). . . . The lesson is that everything is to be avoided which would tend to blunt our moral sensibilities" (Pulpit). Clarke's thought is similar: ". . . the simple object of the precept seems to be this: 'Thou shalt do nothing that may have any tendency to blunt thy moral feelings, or teach thee hardness of heart.' Even *human* nature shudders at the thought of causing the mother to lend her milk to seethe [boil] the flesh of her young one! We need go no farther for the delicate, tender, humane, and impressive meaning of this precept."

QUESTIONS, LESSON ELEVEN (14:1-21)

1. What *reason* does God give for not cutting themselves, etc., for the dead?
2. What qualifications made an animal clean?
3. What if half the qualification was met?
4. What made a fish (or other marine life) clean?
5. Again, what if half the qualification was met?
6. Why all this *forbidding* (and in other cases *allowing*) on the part of God? Was there any "moral" to it?
7. Briefly, discuss what the New Testament teaches on this subject (questions 2-6).
8. Give a possible reason for God forbidding the eating of an animal not slaughtered (a carcass).
9. Give a possible reason for not boiling a kid in its mother's milk.



The Owl and Hawk

Deut. 14, 15-16