

SESSION #33 (26 October 2010); Deut 14:1-21; Israel's Distinctive Cultural Views of Death and Life

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God's spokesman, the 1 st Prophet Moses
1:6 - 4:40	1 st Exposition of the Torah = <u>motivation</u> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) <u>sovereign destiny</u> of the nation (<u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 nd Exposition of the Torah
5:1 - 26:19	2 nd Exposition of the Torah = proper response to Yahweh in heart and soul
5:1 - 11:32	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the heart</u>
12:1 - 26:19	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the soul</u> (<i>nephesh</i> =life)
12:1-31	Theological unity of Israel's tribes (1 st , 2 nd , 10 th commandments)
12:32 - 13:18	Enforcement of Theological Orthodoxy (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 9 th , 10 th commandments)
14:1-21 Enforcement of Distinct Cultural Sustenance from Life to Death (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th commandments)	

Use of these narratives in our Christian life

Concept of a "sacred space" inside the creation where God's Presence dwells (not omnipresence here, but a special location where communication occurs)

Clear changes occur from dispensation to dispensation

- (1) theocracy of ancient Israel (here) (**Lev 18:28-30**)
- (2) future Millennial Kingdom (**Zech 13:2-6**)
- (3) this Church Age (supra-national in-gathering from every people group to become the royal family in the coming kingdom) indwelling HS

Review Sessions #31-32

From allegiance to God ("heart"), now we see how He expected His elect nation to live ("nephesh")

Israel was to have a "cultural uniform" to wear before all nations.

Chap 12: "Sacred space" → destruction of all rival counterfeit [sacred space] (no theological polytheism & freedom for all religions) [commandments #2 & #10—love & artistic expression of and no coveting against God]

Chap 13: "Divine Revelation" through Moses and [succeeding prophets] (#2 hallmark historically of Israel) → judgment upon every false prophet regardless of their relationships (no rival Bible) [commandments #3 & #9—integrity of language]

Chap 14: "Culture" [commandments #4,5,6,7,8—labor & family]

II. ENFORCEMENT OF DISTINCT CULTURAL SUSTENANCE FROM LIFE TO DEATH (14:1-21)

A. The uniqueness of Israel's culture

B. Cultural sustenance regarding death (14:1-2, 21c)

A culture's values show up in how death is dealt with.

14:1 children of Yahweh. . .

cut yourself. . .for the dead. . .

Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37

Modern cutting—self-harming peoples' stories:

- “It **expresses emotional pain or feelings** that I'm unable to put into words. It puts a punctuation mark on what I'm feeling on the inside!”
- “It's **a way to have control** over my body because I can't control anything else in my life.”
- “I usually feel like I have a black hole in the pit of my stomach; at least if I feel pain **it's better than feeling nothing.**”
- “I feel **relieved and less anxious** after I cut. The emotional pain slowly slips away into the physical pain.”
- Coping with suffering:

14:2 above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth

14:21c boil a kid in mother's milk

Ends this section of text dealing with death of an infant that was a pagan practice – one Ugaritic text reads: “*By the fire, seven times the heroes cook a kid in milk*”.

Another pagan ritual like cutting, except this one was discarding a creationist view of animal life. Animals die that we may live, but don't use their mother's milk that is designed to give them life as the vehicle that cooks them.

C. Cultural sustenance regarding food for life (14:3-21b)

Eating habits & diet are a key component of culture. It's hard to make dietary changes as those who have tried, know.

14:3 detestable thing

Food laws:

- (1) The 40 year sojourn utilized a transition diet of manna that lasted right up to the crossing into the land (**Josh 5:2-10**) → diet linked to life in the land.
- (2) What is the difference between “clean” and “unclean” animals?

Hygienic? Unclean food given to Gentiles & was eaten before and after the theocracy so that would imply God doesn't care for Gentile health when in **Gen 9:1-3** it was OK'd. *Purely arbitrary part of their cultural “uniform”?* In light of the rest of the commands, it would seem that God has reasons rooted in either His creation-design (e.g., circumcision on the 8th day) and/or in His use of objects as metaphors during His verbal revelation (e.g., sheep & grape vines).

Reasons not understood:

Important enough for Noah to take more animals of “clean” kinds than of “unclean” kinds so the clean animals would be more plentiful for this diet and religious sacrifices (**Gen. 7:2-3**);

May be a design feature of these clean animals that they have less of a propensity to harbor disease or that they are metaphorical of good angelic forms (**Isa. 6:1-6; Ezekiel 1; Rev. 4:6-8**).

14:4-8 chew. . .cloven hoofs [land animals]

Critics quick to point out that some listed here as “chewing the cud” don’t, but they do look as what today we call “chewing the cud” because of their style of chewing (observer-based language)

14:9-10 fins and scales [marine animals]

14:11-20 clean. . . creeping thing. . .[flying animals]

No insects.

14:21a,b alien within your gates. . .foreigner

3 classes of people

- Israelite - descendent of 12 sons of Jacob
- Ger - Gentile who agreed to become a “citizen” of Israel
- Nokree – Gentile who was on business trips within the land
- Sacred space – tabernacle/Temple and lesser degree the land itself (**Lev. 18:28-30**)

/////// SLIDE #5 [chart]

Class	Authorized behavior
Israelite (clean)	Could not eat or touch (Lev 11:23-25,28,39)
Israelite (unclean)	Could touch (but no interest on loans)
Ger	Could eat and touch (but no interest on loans and no charge for this food)
Nokree	Could eat, touch, and purchase

Gary North’s economic commentary on the Bible

Food laws enforced by guardians of the Temple (Levites), not civil authorities

Economic effects:

Price of unclean meat was [higher] because the supply was [lower]

Israelites more likely to sell the unclean to the nokree than to give to the ger.

The ger might produce unclean animals, but the only market was traveling businessmen and production pastures only available until [the Jubilee Year]

Economic effects were part of God’s design to keep the distinctives of the theocracy:

Diet was an ever-present issue to Gentiles immigrants and travelers, making the cultural distinctions real.

There was free market discrimination against unclean animals by higher prices, kept so by limitations on supply.

III. CONCLUSION

Enforcement of cultural holiness made use of key cultural components of their view of death and their view of daily living dependency upon a specific diet.

Enforcement was not always by civil judicial proceedings (tyrannical big-government legalism) but by free market principles.

Coping Strategies--Biblical

Direct Suffering	Indirect Suffering
General existence of sickness & death (fall imputation) [Gen 2:17]	Evangelistic "wake-up call" [Acts 9:1-9]
"Self-induced misery" (personal sin) Proverbs; [Gal 6:7]	A "nudge" to spiritually advance [Ps 119:71]
Judgment on sin in nations and families [Acts 17:26-27]	Evidence for evangelization of unbelievers [1 Tim 1:16]
Hell and Lake of Fire (ultimate quarantine of evil) [Matt 25:41,46]	Evidence for edification of believers [2 Cor 1:3-4]
Parental discipline in mortal life of believers [Heb 12:5-13]	Evidence in the unseen angelic conflict [Eph 3:10]
Denial of rewards (Bema seat) [1Cor 3:10-15]	

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