

December 16: 14:1-21

Section:

- I. Deuteronomy 14:1-2: introduction: you are a holy people
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- V. Deuteronomy 14:21: you are a holy people

Detailed analysis:

- I. Deuteronomy 14:1-2: introduction: you are a holy people
"You are the sons of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead. ²For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.
 - a. This broader section has been focusing on the Ten Commandments.
 - b. The previous couple chapters have focused on the first commandment which is not to have any other gods before the Lord.
 - c. This likely still has to do with the forbidding of idolatry because in verse 1 and verse 21 this section begins and ends focusing on the Israelites being holy.
 - d. NET Bible shares: *Do not cut yourselves or shave your forehead bald: These were pagan practices associated with mourning the dead; they were not to be imitated by God's people (though they frequently were; cf. 1 Kgs 18:28; Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; Hos 7:14 [LXX]; Mic 5:1). For other warnings against such practices see Lev 21:5; Jer 16:5.¹*
 - e. Plus, verse 1 focuses on pagan worship which would be cutting themselves or shaving their heads for the dead and then verse 21 has a random comment about boiling a young goat in its mother's milk. That still likely has to do with pagan worship.
 - f. Verse 2 states: *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God..."* and verse 21 says the exact same phrase. This likely means that everything in between is an inclusion, which is like a parenthesis.
 - g. The emphasis should be on them as a holy people.
 - i. Are Christians also called to be a "holy" people?
 - ii. Do we act like we are a holy people?
 - h. Everything in verses 2-21 are about how they are to be holy.
 - i. Verse 1 tells who they are, notice the detail:
 - j. They are "sons" and "daughters" of the living God.
 - i. This goes along with verse 2
 - ii. The Lord has chosen them.
 - iii. They are God's own possession.
 - iv. God chose them out of all the peoples of the earth.
 - k. What do you think it means that they are a "holy" people?
 - l. Holy means "set apart," "pure," "sacred"
 - m. In a real way, being chosen means set apart.

LXX Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament, translated between 250–100 BC)

¹ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Dt 14:1.

- n. The verses 3-21 tell what that means with respect to dietary laws.
- o. Cross reference about being son and daughters of God: Rom 8:16; 9:8, 26; Gal 3:26; 1 John 3:1²

II. Deuteronomy 14: 3- 8: dietary laws, animals they can and cannot eat

³ *"You shall not eat any detestable thing. ⁴ These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, ⁵ the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep. ⁶ Any animal that divides the hoof and has the hoof split in two and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat. ⁷ Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these among those which chew the cud, or among those that divide the hoof in two: the camel and the rabbit and the shaphan, for though they chew the cud, they do not divide the hoof; they are unclean for you. ⁸ The pig, because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, it is unclean for you. You shall not eat any of their flesh nor touch their carcasses.*

- A. Verse 3 seems to like a summary.
- B. The next 4 verses show what is detestable and what is not.
- C. Leviticus 11 talks about this in much greater detail.
- D. See Ezek 4:14: *And I said, "Ah, sovereign LORD, I have never been ceremonially defiled before. I have never eaten a carcass or an animal torn by wild beasts; from my youth up, unclean meat²¹ has never entered my mouth."* ³
- E. Notice how inclusive this one verse is:
 - a. "Do not": this is a command
 - b. Eat
 - c. "any": that is inclusive
 - d. "detestable": this is a noun describing the profane.
- F. Verses 4-6 are animals they can eat
 - a. *the ox, the sheep, the goat, ⁵ the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep.*
 - b. *⁶ Any animal that divides the hoof and has the hoof split in two and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat.*
 - c. It is hard to know for sure if all these animals are translated correctly.
- G. Verses 7-8 are animals they cannot eat:
 - a. *Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these among those which chew the cud, or among those that divide the hoof in two: the camel and the rabbit and the shaphan, for though they chew the cud, they do not divide the hoof; they are unclean for you*
 - b. *The pig, because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, it is unclean for you. You shall not eat any of their flesh nor touch their carcasses.*
 - c. The pig was a major unclean animal for Israel
 - d. Later in Old Testament history Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the king of Syria, captured Jerusalem in 167 BC and desecrated the Temple by offering the sacrifice of a pig on an altar to Zeus (the Abomination of Desolation).

III. Deuteronomy 14:9-10: dietary laws of fish

⁹ *"These you may eat of all that are in water: anything that has fins and scales you may eat, ¹⁰ but anything that does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.*

- a. Remember, these all go back to them being a holy people.

² [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

²¹ **tn** The Hebrew term refers to sacrificial meat not eaten by the appropriate time (Lev 7:18; 19:7).

³ Biblical Studies Press, [*The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible*](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2005), Eze 4:14.

- b. To me, this is the simplest of the dietary laws
- c. Fish with Fins and scales you may eat
- d. No fins and scales means unclean.

IV. Deuteronomy 14:11-20: dietary laws of bird

¹¹ *"You may eat any clean bird. ¹² But these are the ones which you shall not eat: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard, ¹³ and the red kite, the falcon, and the kite in their kinds, ¹⁴ and every raven in its kind, ¹⁵ and the ostrich, the owl, the sea gull, and the hawk in their kinds, ¹⁶ the little owl, the great owl, the white owl, ¹⁷ the pelican, the carrion vulture, the cormorant, ¹⁸ the stork, and the heron in their kinds, and the hoopoe and the bat. ¹⁹ And all the teeming life with wings are unclean to you; they shall not be eaten. ²⁰ You may eat any clean bird.*

- a. Verse 11: this a simple statement.
- b. Any clean bird is okay.
- c. Lev 11:13 gets into this
- d. Verses 12-19 are birds which they cannot eat. It is hard to know for sure if all these birds are translated correctly.
- e. Again, remember that this is sacred versus profane and has to do with being a holy people.
- f. Verse 20 repeats from verse 11 "you may eat any clean bird." Verses 12-19 seem to be an inclusio, which is like a parenthesis.

V. Deuteronomy 14:21: you are a holy people

"You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the alien who is in your town, so that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

- a. See cross reference on this verse regarding not eating something that has died of natural causes: Lev 17:15; 22:8; Ezek 4:14; 44:31⁴
- b. Interesting you can give it to a foreigner or sell it.
- c. This wraps up the broader inclusio, that began in verse 1: *for you are a holy people to the LORD your God...*
- d. The last phrase (*You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk*) may have to do with pagan worship connecting it to verse 1 and pagan practices. The NET Bible shares: *This strange prohibition—one whose rationale is unclear but probably related to pagan ritual—may seem out of place here but actually is not for the following reasons: (1) the passage as a whole opens with a prohibition against heathen mourning rites (i.e., death, vv. 1–2) and closes with what appear to be birth and infancy rites. (2) In the other two places where the stipulation occurs (Exod 23:19 and Exod 34:26) it similarly concludes major sections. (3) Whatever the practice signified it clearly was abhorrent to the LORD and fittingly concludes the topic of various breaches of purity and holiness as represented by the ingestion of unclean animals (vv. 3–21).*⁵
- e. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary shares: *The prohibition against cooking a young goat (perhaps symbolic of all young animals) in its mother's milk has been interpreted as a reaction against Canaanite or other foreign religious practices (see 34:26 and Deut 14:21). The regular birth of goats near the Feast of Ingathering and their inclusion in celebratory meals may be the basis of this law. It may also be based*

⁴ [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

⁵ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Dt 14:20–21.

on an injunction to treat animals humanely, since an animal still nursing may have mother's milk in its stomach. There is also the consideration that mother's milk contains blood and would therefore corrupt either sacrificial meat or meals.⁶

⁶ Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ex 23:19.