

Deuteronomy 14

January 10, 2024

Here we start to read some of the more detailed requirements of the law. The dietary restrictions are a summary of Leviticus 11 without some of the exceptions listed there.

Some of the statutes here, such as avoiding pork, have potential health benefits. But most of them seem purely spiritual. They are to make the children of Israel visibly distinct from the surrounding people and thereby identified as “*a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.*” Cutting oneself, for example, was a practice among the worshipers of Baal (1 Kings 18:28) and thus forbidden to the Israelites. And boiling a young goat in its mother’s

milk was an ancient practice in the Middle East. Forgoing it in response to His commands would mark them as His people.

As Christians we are not told to follow unusual diets or wear peculiar clothes to stand out from those around us. Our outward appearance should simply reflect the inner person. 1 Timothy 2:9 tells women how to display a modest heart to others. It is our hearts that are to noticeably differ from the world. Here’s just one example: *Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world* (Philippians 2:14-15).

Questions:

1. What does verse 1 mean by “sons of the Lord your God”? Who else is called sons of God?
2. Read verse 2. Who else are a people holy to the Lord and chosen by Him? What responsibilities does this imply?
3. In brief, what are the requirements for an animal to be clean?

4. What is the common term today for foods acceptable for observant Jews to eat?
5. Why, do you think, does verse 21 forbid eating “road kill”?
6. Some commentators call the tithes mentioned here “festival tithes,” in contrast to the regular tithes specified in Leviticus 27:30-33. What is different about these tithes?
7. Are Christians commanded to do anything similar to tithing?
8. Who is to benefit from the rule in verses 28-29?