

## Leviticus 15

Before we get into the text it might be helpful to outline the chapter.

1. Abnormal male discharges (Verses 1 thru 15)
2. Normal male discharges (16 -17)
3. Male/female intimacy (18)
4. Normal female discharges (19 - 24)
5. Abnormal female discharges (25 - 30)
6. Conclusion (31- 33)

Verses 1-12

**The Lord also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. <sup>3</sup> This, moreover, shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow or whether his body obstructs its discharge. <sup>4</sup> Every bed on which the person with the discharge lies becomes unclean, and everything on which he sits becomes unclean. <sup>5</sup> Anyone, moreover, who touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening; <sup>6</sup> and whoever sits on the thing on which the man with the discharge has been sitting, shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>7</sup> Also whoever touches the person with the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>8</sup> Or if the man with the discharge spits on one who is clean, he too shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>9</sup> Every saddle on which the person with the discharge rides becomes unclean. <sup>10</sup> Whoever then touches any of the things which were under him shall be unclean until evening, and he who carries them shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>11</sup> Likewise, whomever the one with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in water shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>12</sup> However, an earthenware vessel which the person with the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.**

**The Lord also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean.’ <sup>3</sup>This, moreover, shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow or whether his body obstructs its discharge.**

The people of that time knew what was intended by these verses because it was probably passed on thru word of mouth but that information has been lost thru time and the best we can do is make an educated guess as to what was meant.

Many commentaries assume that this was a STD. One strong point in favor of their interpretation is in verses 13 thru 15. The person offers a sin offering which would indicate it could have been an STD.

What makes this difficult to know with certainty is that non-viral STD's like chlamydia and gonorrhea often don't have symptoms or the symptoms can come and go. Also the diseases we see in our time may be different because the diseases that were present in 1445 BC may have mutated and could be quite different than the one's today.

In verses 4 thru 11, people who came in contact with the person who had a discharge were instructed to “wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water”, and he would be unclean until evening.

1. Anyone who touches his bed
2. Whoever sits on the thing on which the man with the discharge has been sitting.
3. Whoever touches the person with the discharge.
4. if the man with the discharge spits on one who is clean.
5. Whoever touches any of the things which were under him.
6. Whoever is touched by the unclean person if he hadn't rinsed his hands in water.

<sup>12</sup> **However, an earthenware vessel which the person with the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.**

This is similar to the law governing Leprosy.

Verses 13 - 15

**<sup>13</sup> ‘Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count off for himself seven days for his cleansing; he shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water and will become clean.**

**<sup>14</sup> Then on the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the Lord to the doorway of the tent of meeting and give them to the priest; <sup>15</sup> and the priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the Lord because of his discharge.**

**<sup>13</sup> ‘Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge,**

After the man recovered from his illness, however that may have come about, he had to wait 7 days and then wash his clothes and bath his body in running water.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> day he was required to take two turtledoves or two young pigeons for a sin and a burnt offering.

Verses 16 -18

**<sup>16</sup> ‘Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>17</sup> As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with water and be unclean until evening. <sup>18</sup> If a man lies with a woman *so that* there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

In this case the man becomes unclean but there is no sin involved and no sacrifice was required. However, if the emission touched any garment or any leather, it had to be washed and was unclean until evening.

**<sup>18</sup> If a man lies with a woman *so that* there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening.**

In this case the man and the woman become unclean. Again there is no sin involved and no sacrifice was required. Both were required to bathe in water and were unclean until evening.

Verses 19 - 24

<sup>19</sup> **‘When a woman has a discharge, *if* her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.** <sup>20</sup> **Everything also on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean.** <sup>21</sup> **Anyone who touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.** <sup>22</sup> **Whoever touches anything on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.** <sup>23</sup> **Whether it be on the bed or on the thing on which she is sitting, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening.** <sup>24</sup> **If a man actually lies with her so that her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.**

<sup>19</sup> **‘When a woman has a discharge, *if* her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.**

The woman was considered unclean because of the blood. Everything on which she lies or sits became unclean. Anyone who touched her bed or anything she sat on became unclean. They were required to wash their clothes, bathed in water and were unclean until evening. Again, no sacrifice was required

<sup>24</sup> **If a man actually lies with her so that her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.**

Here the man suffers the same inconvenience that the woman deals with. However, it should be noted that intercourse during a woman's period was forbidden.

See Leviticus 18:19

<sup>19</sup> **‘Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her menstrual impurity.**

Then in verse 29 it says,

<sup>29</sup> **For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people.**

## Verses 25 - 30

<sup>25</sup> ‘Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. <sup>26</sup> Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and everything on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. <sup>27</sup> Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>28</sup> When she becomes clean from her discharge, she shall count off for herself seven days; and afterward she will be clean. <sup>29</sup> Then on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them in to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>30</sup> The priest shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement on her behalf before the Lord because of her impure discharge.’

<sup>25</sup> ‘Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean.

This could have been caused by a number of different illnesses. One such case is recorded in the Gospel of Luke

See Luke 8:43-48

<sup>43</sup> And a woman who had suffered a chronic flow of blood for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, <sup>44</sup> came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. <sup>45</sup> And Jesus said, “Who is the one who touched Me?” And while they were all denying it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You.” <sup>46</sup> But Jesus said, “Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had left Me.” <sup>47</sup> Now when the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and admitted in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. <sup>48</sup> And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”

This poor woman had been unclean for 12 years. One can only imagine how isolated she must have been during that time and it is amazing that she had the ability to even get close to Jesus considering her condition. But faith looks past the law with all of its regulations and sees an opportunity for Divine help and forgiveness.

**<sup>28</sup> When she becomes clean from her discharge, she shall count off for herself seven days; and afterward she will be clean.**

When she became clean she followed the same rules set down in verses 13 thru 15 for the man who was cured of his discharge. The sin offering indicates that some kind of wrong was done.

Verses 31- 33

**<sup>31</sup> “Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness, so that they will not die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them.” <sup>32</sup> This is the law for the one with a discharge, and for the man who has a seminal emission so that he is unclean by it, <sup>33</sup> and for the woman who is ill because of menstrual impurity, and for the one who has a discharge, whether a male or a female, or a man who lies with an unclean woman.**

**<sup>31</sup> “Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness, so that they will not die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them.”**

This indicates that these regulations were set forth to prevent any unclean person from defiling the tabernacle and suffering the consequences of doing so.