

Leviticus 15

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

1. Abnormal male discharges (1-15)
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, ²“Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. ³This, 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. ⁴Every bed on which the person with the discharge lies becomes unclean, and everything on which he sits becomes unclean. ⁵Anyone, moreover, who touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening; ⁶and 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. ⁷Also whoever touches the person with the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. ⁸Or 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. ⁹Every saddle on which the person with the discharge rides becomes unclean. ¹⁰Whoever 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. ¹¹Likewise, 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. ¹²However, an earthenware vessel which the person with the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water.

When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean

Many commentaries assume this is a STD but they might be wrong.

What makes this hard to know with certainty is because of the following:

1. Non-viral STDs, like chlamydia and gonorrhea, can be cured. However, they usually don't have symptoms, or symptoms can come and go, making it seem like an infection went away when it actually didn't.
2. There aren't many studies on the "natural history" of curable STD's like, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and trichomonas. Studying the natural course of a curable infection would require that scientists put their subjects at risk of the dangers of long-term infection, and no ethics board would approve such an experiment.

If left untreated, syphilis can kill, and gonorrhea can cause infertility.

Perhaps these diseases have mutated and are more severe now than they were in 1445 BC.

However, 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.

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.

However, we should not be overly concerned about who is correct concerning this matter because the Old Covenant has passed away.

Shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until evening

This phrase is repeated 6 times

Anything or anyone that the man touches becomes unclean.

And any person that touches the thing that the man touched becomes unclean.

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

¹³ **‘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.**

¹⁴ **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; ¹⁵ 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.**

Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge

After the man recovers from his illness, 7 days later he had to wash his clothes and bath his body in running water.

On the 8th day he takes two turtledoves or two young pigeons for a sin and a burnt offering

Verses 16-18

¹⁶ **‘Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening. ¹⁷ As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with 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.

¹⁸ **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

¹⁹ '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. ²⁰ Everything also on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean. ²¹ Anyone who touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. ²² Whoever touches anything on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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.

She shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days

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

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

Then in verse 29 it says,

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

Verses 25-30

²⁵ **'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. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. ²⁸ When she becomes clean from her discharge, she shall count off for herself seven days; and afterward she will be clean. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ 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.'**

Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity

This could have been caused by a number of different sicknesses.

One such case is recorded in the Gospel of Luke

See Luke 8:43-48

This poor woman had suffered for 12 years

When she becomes clean from her discharge

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 priest shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering

The sin offering indicates that some kind of wrong was done.

Verses 31-33

³¹ “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.” ³² 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, ³³ 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.

So that they will not die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle

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