Refreshed IN THE WORD
For thy word hath quickened me
PSALM 119:50

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 13

Welcomed into God’s Family

Day Thirteen · Leviticus 12

Walk through Leviticus 12, meet Mary and Joseph at the temple, and discover how Jesus welcomes us into God’s family. Complete verses appear beside simple explanations, with questions and prayer to share with friends.

For personal reading and study with friends

King James Version · Complete Scripture passages

Read and share online

Read one section at a time. Take turns reading the verses aloud, discuss the questions, and choose one practical response. Every passage referenced in the teaching is included in full.

Let’s begin together

Let’s pray: Father, thank You for giving us Your Word. Help us understand this chapter with care and without shame. Open our eyes to Jesus and to the welcome You give us through Him. Teach us to treat children, parents, and every person with love. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Study 12 explored clean and unclean in Israel’s daily life. Leviticus 12 now explains what happened after a woman gave birth. We will read all eight verses in small portions, then see how these instructions appear in the story of Jesus.

Torah means instruction. These laws belonged to God's covenant with Israel, a relationship with promises and responsibilities. We begin with that setting. Then we listen to what Luke and the apostle Paul teach us about Jesus.

Our main truth: Jesus entered Israel's covenant life and came to redeem us. Through faith in Him, we are welcomed into God's family.

1. Read "unclean" carefully

Leviticus 12:1-2

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.

God gave Moses instructions for the people of Israel. After the birth of a son, the mother had a seven-day period of ritual uncleanness. “Ritual” means this concerned the rules for worship and holy things. The verse compares this period with the time of a woman’s monthly bleeding.

Giving birth was not a moral wrongdoing. “Unclean” here describes a temporary condition under these laws; it does not mean that the mother was bad, that her body was shameful, or that her baby was unwanted. We must understand the word in its setting.

2. A sign of the covenant

Leviticus 12:3

3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

On the eighth day, a baby boy was to be circumcised. Circumcision was a physical sign of the covenant. This instruction had a history that began before Moses. God had already spoken about it to Abraham.

Genesis 17:9-11

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

“Thy seed” means Abraham’s descendants, and “token” means sign. Circumcision marked the covenant relationship God established with Abraham and his descendants. Leviticus continues that instruction in Israel’s life. Later, Luke tells us that Jesus also received this sign.

3. Different days did not mean different value

Leviticus 12:4-5

4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

5 But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

After the first seven days for a son, there were thirty-three more days of purification, making forty days in all. After the birth of a daughter, there were fourteen days followed by sixty-six more, making eighty days. During this time, the mother's contact with holy things and the sanctuary was restricted.

"Hallowed" means holy, or set apart for God. "Threescore and six" means sixty-six. The chapter gives different periods for a son and a daughter, but it does not explain why. We should be honest about what the passage leaves unanswered.

These numbers do not say that girls are less valuable or that a mother who has a daughter has done something worse. The passage describes ritual rules, not a ranking of people's worth. Later in this study, Paul makes clear that men and women belong equally in Christ.

Why is it helpful to admit when the Bible gives an instruction without explaining every reason behind it?

4. God provided a way for the mother to return

Leviticus 12:6-7

6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest:

7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female.

When the days were complete, the mother brought offerings to the priest at the tabernacle. The priest offered them before the Lord, and she was declared clean. The chapter gives a clear ending to her time of purification.

The offering called a “sin offering” in English served here in purification. Its name does not mean that having a baby was a sin. In this passage, making atonement was part of the God-given way to deal with ritual uncleanness and restore the mother’s access to holy things.

Leviticus 12:8

8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

If the mother could not afford a lamb, she could bring two birds instead. In the older English wording, “turtles” means turtledoves, not reptiles. One bird was for the burnt offering and the other for the purification offering.

Notice the ending: she would be clean. God’s provision included someone with limited money. A smaller offering did not leave her with a second-class result. This helps us think about how we welcome people whose resources are different from ours.

5. These instructions lead us into Jesus’ story

Luke 2:21

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Jesus was born into a Jewish family. His parents followed the instruction for the eighth day, and He received the name Jesus. Luke shows us that Jesus' life took place within the covenant story of Israel.

Exodus 13:1-2

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

There was also an instruction about the firstborn. "Sanctify" means set apart for God. This helps us understand the next verses in Luke: they describe both the mother's purification and the presentation of Jesus to the Lord. These are connected events, but they are not the same instruction.

Luke 2:22-24

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to Jerusalem and offered the birds named in Leviticus 12. Their offering matched the provision for a family that could not afford a lamb. God’s Son entered a family that used this humble provision.

The purification offering concerned Mary after childbirth. It was not a confession that Jesus had sinned, and it did not mean that giving birth to Him was wrong. Reading Leviticus carefully helps us understand what this family was doing in Luke.

6. Simeon saw God’s salvation

Luke 2:25-28

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Simeon was waiting for God to comfort and restore His people. That is the hope behind “the consolation of Israel.” The Holy Spirit led him to the temple, where he held Jesus and praised God. An ordinary-looking baby was the promised Christ, God’s chosen Messiah.

Luke 2:29-32

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Simeon recognized God's salvation in Jesus. "Gentiles" means people from the nations outside Israel. Jesus would bring light to them and glory to Israel. This promise reaches beyond one household and one nation.

Luke 2:33-35

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Simeon also spoke of opposition and sorrow. People would respond to Jesus in different ways, and Mary would experience deep pain. Following God does not mean a family will never hurt. Even in this joyful moment, the story prepares us for the costly work Jesus came to do.

7. Anna shared the good news

Luke 2:36-38

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Anna was an older widow and a prophetess, a woman who spoke God's message. She worshiped, prayed, gave thanks, and told others about Jesus. Her years and her loss did not make her unimportant. She had a part in sharing the hope of redemption, God's rescue.

Luke 2:39-40

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

After carrying out the instructions, the family returned to Nazareth. Jesus grew as a real child, and God's grace was upon Him. Luke brings together a young family, a faithful man, and an older woman around the same Savior. Each has a place in this part of the story.

Who might we overlook because of their age, family situation, or income? How could we show that person care?

8. God's Son came to bring us into the family

Galatians 4:4-5

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Paul explains why God sent His Son. Jesus was born of a woman and lived under the law. He truly entered the human story and Israel's covenant life. He came to redeem, which means to rescue and set free, so that we could receive adoption into God's family.

Galatians 4:6-7

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Adoption means being received as a child who fully belongs. Paul says that God gives His Son's Spirit to His children. "Abba" means Father. We can come to God with the trust of children speaking to a loving Father.

An heir is someone who receives an inheritance. Paul is talking about sharing in what God promises His children through Christ, not a promise that every believer will become wealthy. Our place in the family comes through Jesus; we do not buy it or earn it by being impressive.

9. Women and men share the same welcome

Galatians 3:26-29

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Paul says that we are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. He describes baptism as being clothed with Christ, a picture of belonging to Him. He then names differences people often use to divide others: background, social position, and being male or female.

Those differences do not make some believers more fully God’s children than others. Women and men who belong to Christ share in the promise. When Paul speaks of “sons” and “heirs,” this welcome includes daughters too. No one needs to feel like a less important member of God’s family.

We began with rules for a mother's purification in ancient Israel. We then saw Mary and Joseph obeying those instructions, Simeon and Anna recognizing Jesus, and Paul explaining our adoption. The connection is clear: the Son who entered Israel's story brings people into God's family through faith in Him.

Talk it over with friends

1. How is a temporary condition of ritual uncleanness different from choosing to do something wrong?

2. What did the provision of two birds mean for a mother who could not afford a lamb? Where do we see that provision in Jesus' story?

3. What did Simeon and Anna recognize about Jesus that other people might have missed?

4. How could knowing you belong to God through Christ change the way you pray and welcome others?

Put it into practice

Speak with care. Avoid words that shame someone because of their body, their income, or their family situation. Use words that show respect and make room for honest questions.

Offer practical help. Ask a family with a new baby, a caregiver, or an older friend what would help them this week. A meal, a simple task, or time spent listening can express love.

Pray as someone who belongs. Read the memory verse slowly, thank God for His welcome through Jesus, and bring Him one honest need. Then choose one person to welcome with that same kindness.

A verse to carry with you

Galatians 4:7

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Remember: through Christ, you are welcomed as God’s child. Let that truth shape the way you see yourself and the way you treat others.

Let’s pray together

Father, thank You for meeting people in the real details of life. Thank You for sending Jesus and welcoming us into Your family through Him. Help us understand Your Word without putting shame on others. Teach us to care for mothers, fathers, children, older people, and those with little money. Give us the faith of Simeon and the thankful voice of Anna. By Your Spirit, help us live as Your children and share Your kindness. In Jesus’ name, amen.

I love you, my friends.

Scripture and sources

Scripture text was checked against the King James Version published by eBible.org. The complete verses are reproduced with their historical wording. Verse numbers and layout are adapted for reading; editorial footnotes are omitted. Tap any Scripture reference to view its source.

Bible edition and text