

# 119

## MINISTRIES

*“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”*

### **Parashah Points: Shemini – Holy Food**

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Shemini (Shem-ee-nee), which is Hebrew for “Eighth,” and it goes from Leviticus 9:1 to Leviticus 11:47.

This Torah portion tells of the inauguration of Aaron’s priesthood, the deaths of Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu, and lists God’s dietary instructions to His people.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to present just a thought on holiness.

In the New Testament, when the apostle Peter was writing to followers of Yeshua, he instructed them to be “holy.” In fact, he said, [“As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’”](#) (1 Peter 1:15-16).

So Peter says that followers of the Messiah are to be holy in *all* their conduct. But what does that mean? Well, since Peter appeals to the written Word of God as his authority, we can get some insight into what he means by looking at what he was reading—the Old Testament Scriptures.

This command to “be holy” occurs a few times in the Torah, always in the midst of various commandments regarding how God’s people are called to live. For instance, it occurs in Leviticus 19, which is essentially a list of commandments ranging from “honor your father and mother” to “love your neighbor as yourself”—things that all Christians would agree we should be doing.

But remember, Peter said we are to be holy in *all* our conduct. With that in mind, this command to be holy actually appears in this week’s Torah Portion—right in the midst of God’s commandments about what not to eat:

#### **Leviticus 11:45-47**

[For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. \*\*You shall\*\*](#)

**therefore be holy, for I am holy.** This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

This passage occurs directly after a list of qualifications that an animal must have in order to be permitted as food. Animals that meet the qualifications are considered “clean” and can be eaten, but animals that don’t meet those qualifications are considered “unclean” and must not be eaten.

So being holy in *all* our conduct, as Peter says, would include being holy even in what we eat. That means followers of the Messiah ought to be following God’s dietary instructions throughout Leviticus 11. For instance, that is to be understood to be not eating what the Bible calls unclean animals, such as pork and shellfish.

This is something that many Christians tend to gloss over when they read Peter’s first epistle. When believers see Peter’s call to holiness, they already have their own preconceived understanding of what being holy means, perhaps based upon their denomination’s traditions.

But our definition of holiness is not what matters; Peter’s definition is what matters. His definition is based on the Scriptures he quoted, and more importantly, Peter’s definition is based on the Scriptures, which means that it is also based on God’s definition. His understanding of being holy included not eating unclean animals. Therefore, may we be holy in *all* our conduct—including what we eat.

**Some related 119 teachings to this subject are:**

- [“Acts 10 – Peter’s Vision”](#)
- [“Hebrew Root of Holy”](#)

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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