

Blood and Covenant, Defending Against Feminist Theology:
A Christological Interpretation of Menstruation Laws in Leviticus

12:15-19

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Blood and Covenant, Defending Against Feminist Theology: A Christological Interpretation of Menstruation Laws in Leviticus 12:15-19

¹⁹ “When a woman has a discharge, and the discharge in her body is blood, she shall be in her menstrual impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. ²⁰ And everything on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean. Everything also on which she sits shall be unclean. ²¹ And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. ²² And whoever touches anything on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. ²³ Whether it is the bed or anything on which she sits, when he touches it he shall be unclean until the evening. ²⁴ And if any man lies with her and her menstrual impurity comes upon him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

²⁵ “If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. ²⁶ Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity. And everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. ²⁷ And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. ²⁸ But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. ²⁹ And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons and bring them to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. ³⁰ And the priest shall use one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for her unclean discharge.

³¹ “Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.” (Le 15:19–31)¹

Historically, the reality of menstruation has been considered “taboo” among many cultures and particularly in the church. When I apply the term *taboo* to menstruation I mean, an awkward predisposition to avoid speaking about the women’s nature of bleeding once a month. There are plenty of theories about the origins of this predisposition. Nonetheless, Scripture does not seem to portray this awkwardness throughout its pages.² And this is especially true about the text in view.

¹ All Scripture references will be cited from: *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016).

² Mi Young Sydney Park, “Inerrancy and Blood: Women and Christology in Leviticus 12 and 15, and Mark 5:21-43,” *Presbyterion* 45.1 (2019): 83–95.

However, the negative tone in which Scripture authors seem to write about menstruation has led many to think that there is a direct connection between the meaning of this text of Scripture and the way in which some women have been (mis)regarded as ‘inferior’ throughout history. Therefore, it is this sort of texts which have been the banner for feminist theologians to assert that, since “[t]he Bible and its texts are androcentric, [...] and they reflect a patriarchal worldview [...], readers must approach any text [of Scripture] with a fair degree of suspicion about whose interests were – and continue to be – served.”³

Leviticus is among the least read books of the Bible,⁴ and this may have something to do with the interpretative challenges of passages like this.

Is it lawful to disregard this kind of texts altogether only because of the difficulties that they present to the interpreter? I think not; but that seems to be the rule. I rather propose that a Christological interpretation of the text in view using a covenantal framework as a valid hermeneutic tool will resolve the accusation raised by feminist theologians that this text in the Bible is overall, misogynous.

For doing so, we will first examine the natural problems that this text presents, then we will analyze the text in its cultural context and the theme of blood throughout the book of Leviticus, presenting then how would a covenantal framework be useful and appropriate as a

³ Susan Brayford, “Reading Glasses: Feminist Criticism,” Academic Blog, *SBL Teaching the Bible: An e-newsletter for public school teachers by Society of Biblical Literature*, 2019, 2, https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/TB7_FeministCriticism_SB.pdf. Also, F. Klopper comments: “*The question that faces woman readers is quite simple: How to react to a document that has served as an authoritative source for the justification of patriarchy as the politics of male domination?*” See, F Klopper, “Interpretation Is All We Have. A Feminist Perspective on the Objective Fallacy” (2019): 88.

Some Feminist interpreters have gone so far as to take a text like Mark 7:14-23; change the gender of the subject from a man to a woman, and then connect it to Leviticus 15 menstrual laws to show that, biblically, in the case of a woman “*it is that which comes out of her what defiles her more than what comes in*” (sexually speaking). See, Michelle Fletcher, “What Comes into a Woman and What Comes Out of a Woman: Feminist Textual Intervention and Mark 7:14–23,” *J. Fem. Stud. Relig.* 30.1 (2014): 32–35.

⁴ Philip H Eveson, *The Beauty of Holiness: Leviticus Simply Explained*, 2012, 13.

hermeneutical tool for this passage, tying finally this passage to those which seem to handle the same theme in the New Testament.

Some Problems and Solutions

Whereas it is truth that the text presents this natural process of female physiology as defiling the woman and whoever touches her or whatever object she has touched, it might be too quick of a conclusion to assert that this text is misogynous in its nature; as well as asserting that it is not. The fact of the matter is that the text itself does not give any reason whatsoever of what the nature of this defilement might be.⁵

The text genre with which we are dealing here is law;⁶ and therefore, it would be wrong to assume that because what we read makes us feel uneasy, it was the author's purpose to produce some negative sentiments towards not only menstruation, but menstruating women as well. Unlike the poetic genre, law is not written primarily to stir the affections of the reader. Dr. John D. Currid illustrates the overarching purpose of the Levitical text as that of a manual which teach us to live in holiness.⁷

Nevertheless, the reality is that we still have a text that present menstruating women as a source of defilement. Is not this some sort of patriarchal tyrannical idea? When we strip the text out of its context, it might well be. However, in its immediate setting, the passage in view is not dealing with women's menstruation alone, but with every sort of bodily discharges either from women, or from men.

⁵ Park, "Inerrancy and Blood," 83.

⁶ Dr. Currid comments that the text is almost entirely legislative, and only two passages are written in a narrative form. However, even this narrative passages are meant to illustrate laws and are always accompanied by some legislation. See, John D Currid, *A Study Commentary on Leviticus* (Darlington, England; Webster, New York: Evangelical Press, 2004), 19.

⁷ Currid, *A Study Commentary on Leviticus*, 18–19.

The chiasmic structure of the fifteenth chapter show us laws and regulations pertaining male long-term discharges (Le 15:2–15), male short-term discharges (Le 15:16–17), women-short term discharges (Le 15:19–24), and women long-term discharges (Le 15:25–27), connected in the middle by the defilement of both men and women due to sexual intercourse (Le 15:18).⁸ Thus, setting aside any reason why it might be that a menstruating woman is a source of defilement, it is not so that we may instantly derive from the text itself that there is discrimination against women going on. As it has been well noted by Park, “there is gender parity with respect to various bodily fluids and no discrimination is evident in either the waiting period or the required sacrifices; [however, d]espite the gender parity in the structure, inequity is difficult to ignore in light of the fact that while normal seminal discharge for men is volitional, the same cannot be said of menstruation.”⁹ To this I will disagree, since there is the biological possibility of a natural, non-volitional, and furthermore, cyclical male seminal ejaculations.¹⁰ Also, later on in Scripture men who have had this nocturnal emissions are regarded as unclean as well (Det 23:10–11).¹¹ Thus, we may see that there is no such inequity in any sense. Finally, our passage in view does not even comprises every single woman, but only those in an age of fertility, therefore, to say that it is overall misogynous would be misleading to say the least.

What Could Possibly be Wrong with Bleeding?

⁸ John E. Hartley et al., *Leviticus*, Nachdr., Word Biblical Commentary [General ed.: David A. Hubbard; Glenn W. Barker. Old Testament ed.: John D. W. Watts. New Testament ed.: Ralph P. Martin]; Vol. 4 (Waco, Tex: Word Books, Publ, 2000), 205.

⁹ Park, “Inerrancy and Blood,” 84.

¹⁰ Calvin Kai-Ching Yu and Wai Fu, “Sex Dreams, Wet Dreams, and Nocturnal Emissions,” *Dreaming* 21.3 (2011): 197–212.

¹¹ “If any man among you becomes unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he shall go outside the camp. He shall not come inside the camp, but when evening comes, he shall bathe himself in water, and as the sun sets, he may come inside the camp.”

Having concede that it is true that this passage regards a menstruating woman as a source of defilement, it might be right to ask: what could possibly be wrong with bleeding? We need to remember that this is a natural process, and that a healthy woman could bleed for around 1980 days in her lifetime as a result of her menstruation.¹² Thus, we need to give a proper response as to why would it be that such a common biological process might be regarded as a source of uncleanness.

Menstrual Blood in Ancient Egyptian Medicine

We need to remember that this law was given to Israel only after they were brought out of the land of Egypt. The way in which the book begins by saying: “*The Lord called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting (Le 1:1), [...]*” indicates a continuation¹³ from the previous book, which is Exodus. Therefore, it would be fitting that the first piece of evidence that might be considered while coming to this text is to be found in an ancient Egyptian manuscript known as the *Ebers Papyrus*. Written in 1570 B.C, the Ebers Papyrus is perhaps the oldest preserved medical documentation we have available.¹⁴ It must be noted that if the dating is accurate, this manuscript was written at the time in which the Israelite nation was inhabiting Egypt (1876-1446),¹⁵ and it is therefore relevant for the current discussion since therein is contained what the Israelites might have seen as common practices of that day.

¹² This considering that menstruation begins at twelve years old, and ends around forty-five years old, and that each bleeding period lasts for five days repeating the cycle every twenty-eight days. See, Mark H. Beers, ed., *El manual Merck de diagnóstico y terapéutica [Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapeutics]* (Barcelona, España: Elsevier, 2007), 2285.

¹³ Miles V. Van Pelt, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2016), 91.

¹⁴ Lizabeth Hardman, *The History of Medicine* (Detroit: Lucent Books, 2012), 14.

¹⁵ Jr Kaiser, Walter C, and Paul D Wegner, *A History of Israel From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), chap. 7, <http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=5973469>.

In this manuscript, we do have evidence that menstruation blood was not only acknowledged as something natural, which, for the least, meant that there was no baby on the way; but because of this it was use as a treatment for at least one condition.¹⁶ The portion named Papyrus Ebers 808 = 95, 1–3 reads as follow:

“Another [remedy] to prevent the breasts from hanging (this is, because the accumulation of much milk).’ They are to be drenched with the blood of someone whose menstruation has just come. Her belly and hey thighs are to be smeared therewith; then the flow cannot be to her disadvantage.”¹⁷

In ancient Egyptian medicine, the menstrual blood flow was regarded as the antithesis of life. If a woman was menstruating, for them, this meant she was not fertile, since she was not bearing a child.¹⁸ Thus, they used menstrual blood as a remedy to the “excess of life” or living activity of the breasts which were overproducing milk. Consequently, as many other practices that God wanted the Israelites to avoid; the menstrual flow law would have prevented the Israelites to engage in this kind of magical misbehavior.

Menstrual Blood and Jewish Medicine

Yet, the Egyptians were not the only people with an ‘advanced’ healthcare system. If the Greeks are considered the fathers of therapeutic medicine, the Jews are often regarded as the fathers of preventive medicine. All the hygiene regulations have much more theological truth and value to them than merely a clinical sense; however, they are at least hygiene regulations,

¹⁶ Paul John Frandsen, “The Menstrual ‘Taboo’ in Ancient Egypt,” *J. East. Stud.* 66.2 (2007): 103.

¹⁷ The German translation from the original reads as follows: “*Anfgang von den Heilmitteln für das Verhindern, daß die beiden Brüste herabsinken. Sie (die Brüste) warden begossen mit dem Blut einer (Frau) deren Menstruation kommt, (und zwar) der Anfang davon: bestrichen warden (zusätzlich) ihr Bauch (und) ihre Oberschenkel damit; nicht kann ein Überquellen (der Brüste) an ihr entstehen.*” See, Wolfhart Westendorf, ed., *Handbuch Der Altägyptischen Medizin, Handbuch Der Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung, Der Nahe Und Mittlere Osten, Handbook of Oriental Studies. Near and Middle East 36. Bd.* = (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 683.

¹⁸ Frandsen, “The Menstrual ‘Taboo’ in Ancient Egypt,” 103.

which we must not forget. And as such they give us plenty of information of the healthcare prevention-based system that the wandering Jewish community had. Formerly in the text, the Levitical laws have spoken about food regulations (Le 11:1–45), about *postpartum* processes for cleansing (Le 12:1–8), skin diseases (Le 13:1–58; 14:1–30), house hygiene (Le 14:33–53), male discharges (Le 15:2–17) from which the first (Le 15:2–15) mention are presumably due to an infectious¹⁹ disease, and those hygienic measures that are to be taken after sexual intercourse (Le 15:18). Therefore, the context also reveals that this passage may be regarded as another hygienic measure for both natural and unnatural flows from a woman’s body.

Furthermore, where the translation renders, “*If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness[...],*” the phrase “*beyond the time of her impurity*” is formed by the Hebrew phrase נִדְתָּהּ עַל. In this phrase, the preposition עַל, has several meanings, of which *beyond* might be accurate; and the words נִדְתָּהּ which translate *her impurity*. The fact is that the words ‘*the time of*’ are not found and do not necessarily derive from the text.

Now, that may be an appropriate rendering if we are only speaking about the time period in which a blood-flow appears. Nevertheless, if we stick to the valid translation “*beyond her impurity*” as in “*in addition to*” or “*more than*” *her impurity*, this would also include any other kinds of flows such as those which come from infectious diseases as well.

I think there are two good reasons to adopt this interpretation, the first is that the phrases “*discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity*” and “*discharge*

¹⁹ Most of the commentators see gonorrhoea fitting into the description of the symptoms, I agree, however, many other infectious diseases may be in view as well. See, Hartley et al., *Leviticus WBC*, 209. Also, Currid, *A Study Commentary on Leviticus*, 203–6. And Eveson, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 195.

beyond the time of her impurity” seem to be referring to one same category: an abnormal blood-flow which is aberrant to a normal menstrual period. This would make us wonder about why would the author repeat himself in this case.²⁰ The second reason is that, if the phrase על הַ עַל translates *beyond her impurity* then we would have a more symmetric structure in comparison of how the author has dealt with the abnormal-infectious, and the normal male bodily flows, as now the text would be dealing to normal female, and abnormal-infectious female body flows as well. Thus, the passage would be referring, at least, to a preventive healthcare regulation.

Menstrual Blood and Biological Death

Like the previous argument, there is the fact that, though the author may not have known this, a deep biological connection exists between menstruation and death.

Physiologically speaking, as estradiol and progesterone levels decrease late in the luteal-secretory phase of the menstrual cycle, the stroma becomes edematous, and the endometrium and its blood vessels necrose, the tissue literally dies, leading to bleeding and menstrual flow.²¹ Thus, the expulsion of blood during menstruation is actually the combination of both living and dead human blood tissue.

It must be noticed that same author who writes this menstrual law, will write that the priests shall not become defiled by touching any dead body except for those of close relatives, and that the chief priest shall not touch any dead human being at all (Le 21:1-11). Later in the Pentateuch part of the Nazarene vow will include restraining to be near any dead body (Nu 6:6-7). Finally, a general stipulation to avoid touching the dead as well as the cleansing process if that happens will be given (Nu 19:11-21). Something that is noteworthy is that the time of

²⁰ I am not saying that there might not be good reasons for repetition, my argument is that there seems to be no necessity of it.

²¹ Beers, *El manual Merck de diagnóstico y terapéutica [Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapeutics]*, 2287.

uncleanness for those who touch a dead body and for the woman whose flow is blood is the same: seven days.

Could it be possible that the reason why the woman is regarded as unclean is that she has been in contact with dead human blood tissue? Now, before answering that, we need to go deeper, since blood is not *any* nor merely *another* kind of organic tissue in Scripture, but an extremely special one.

The Themes of Blood and Covenant

The book of Leviticus is the Bible book which uses the most the word blood (דָּם) with a total of eighty-eight appearances, which represents twenty-five percent of the use of that word in the whole Old Testament. Thus, the book itself may be able to speak something about its own theology of the blood.

What is blood? What makes it so special? To answer these questions, it might be good to analyze three chapters that speak one after another of this theme of blood. The first might be the pericope in view; which has portrayed dead blood tissue as defiling for a woman and for anyone or anything that enters in contact with her. The second chapter I want to bring to our attention is chapter seventeen, in which there is an explicit prohibition for eating blood (Le 17:10-16). And again, as in a chiasmic structure, in the middle of this blood-filled portion of Scripture there is chapter sixteen, in which the blood of the sacrificed animals is used as a mean of purifying and atonement (Le 16:1–34).

How is it that such a precious organ as the blood may be regarded as, at the same time, a defiling and a purifying agent? The answer might be given along with the prohibition of eating that blood: *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. Le 17:11”*

Since the LORD has appointed such a specific use for the blood, and having in mind that we are dealing here with a book which purpose is to be a manual for holiness, it is appropriate not only that the LORD may give us regulations of how to properly use an element which he has consecrated for such a holy purpose as purification and atonement, but also that he may freely place restrictions upon anything which has something to do with this precious element. This thought may lead us to our final consideration: the blood of the covenant.

Christological Interpretation Under a Covenantal Framework

We live in an age marked by individualism. I am not surprised when a feminist theologian states that she feels *personally* offended by the words of our text in view. However, what if the *crux* for the correct interpretation of this passage may be out of *ourselves*?

Applying a covenantal framework as a hermeneutical tool will help us to naturally link this pericope to the work of Christ. But, is it lawful to do so? I believe it is. The theme of covenant may be seen all throughout Scripture. In fact, Van Pelt has proposed the idea that the whole Bible is a covenantal document of which Leviticus may be regarded as part of the stipulations on a covenant, and that “Jesus is the theological center of the Old Testament”.²² Also, the Pentateuch as a whole, functions as a complete covenantal document. Furthermore, Packer comments that for us to understand Scripture appropriately, we must study it within a covenantal framework.²³ But, how does this work?

The Blood that Cleanses Us Some

We need to remember some facts here. When the author of Leviticus writes that God has given us the blood to make atonement by the life, he is making a direct reference to the passage in

²² Van Pelt, *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, 25–41.

²³ J. I. Packer, “Introduction On Covenant Theology,” in *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), [32]-[33].

Leviticus sixteen which stipulates how are we to use the blood for purification and atonement. At the same time, this usage of the blood comes as a fulfillment of the covenant made with Moses at Sinai. Why? Because not only God has promised Moses that he will make of Israel his people, but that he will make of them a *holy* people (Ex 19:6). Thus, cleansing is required to achieve holiness.

Therefore, Leviticus not only records a confirmation of the promise that Israel has been chosen to be the people of God (Le 26:12) but it also portrays holiness as a prerequisite for becoming such people by using the formula: “be holy, for I am holy” (Le 19:2; 20:7; 20:26; 21:8). In this way, what is in view in Leviticus sixteen is precisely the provision of that holiness which is required to be in communion with the covenant God.

How Important is Holiness?

Are not we giving too much attention to the theme of holiness? Even if all what has been said about menstrual blood is true, how bad could it be to present before the Holy God defiled by unclean blood? Our own passage answers this question: “*Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.*” How could this be? Such natural processes bearing such terrible consequences. Is it not the case that every woman menstruates, and every man has emissions? Is it not the case that anyone might be subject of an infectious disease? Yes. However, it is also the case that all of us sin daily and that does not diminish the severity of our sin. I am not saying that these natural bodily flows or that being sick are sins *per se*, and I don’t think that our texts may bear that interpretation either. The point I want to make is that regularity is not equal to normality. It is not “normal”²⁴ for man to sin, otherwise, we would

²⁴ For normal, here, I mean as *essential* to the human nature, rather than as *common* to the human experience.

continue to sin in heaven, which is an oxymoron. Neither we will have disease nor bodily flows there I presume. Especially in the case of menstruation, I do not hesitate in asserting that there is at least at some level, a connection between it and God's curse over Eve. A process that involves pain, shame, and the regular necrosis of a portion of a human organ so precious as the blood may not be regarded as normal. Menstruation is indeed a disease,²⁵ at least from a Biblical perspective. The Lord has decided to live among his people, and thus his holy place must be suitable for him who is holy.²⁶

But menstruation continuously defiles a woman's body before a holy God. Then, if she wants to continue to be able to worship in the tabernacle (and later in the temple) she needs to proceed with the appropriate cleansing rituals. The mayor problem is that, once she is cleansed, it is a matter of time for her to become defiled again.

The Blood that Cleanses Us Forever

As in Leviticus sixteen, there is another portion of Scripture which ties blood with cleansing. Hebrews' chapters eight through ten give us an argument at length on how is it that the covenant God has made with us through Jesus is better.

In the old covenant sacrificial system the sprinkled blood of animals was good, but insufficient as a perpetual sacrifice, and though it accomplished purity, it did not accomplished lasting purity; therefore, sacrifices needed to be made day after day, year after year for both the purification and the atoning for the sins of the people (Heb 9:6–10). On the other hand, the presentation of Jesus as a better covenant mediator (Heb 8:1–13) for the sacrifice that has accomplished through his blood hast the necessary and enough qualities for purifying us and

²⁵ Park comments that “in Leviticus 12 and 15, menstruation is a disease. In Leviticus 12:2, postpartum blood, likened to menstrual bleeding, is also called “(her) illness.” “Then she will be unclean seven days as she is unclean in the days of menstruation of her sickness.”” See, Park, “Inerrancy and Blood,” 85.

²⁶ R.I Vasholz, *Leviticus* (Fearn: Mentor, 2007), 176.

atonement for us once and forever (Heb 9:11–28). In fact, the author of Hebrews states that the ultimate end of those insufficient sacrifices was to point to and make God’s people long for Jesus Christ (Heb 10:1–18). But those this really has to do with menstruation?

Blood, Women and The Christ

There is a final text which I would like to bring to the argument. It might be found in Mark 5:24–34. This passage tells precisely the story of a victim of this Levitical law.

While Jesus is on his way to heal a twelve-year-old girl who is dying (Mk 5:21–23); he is interrupted by a woman who thought that by touching Jesus Christ’s garments might become healed (Mk 5:27–28). Her disease? Abnormal menstruation. The text says that she had bled for twelve years (Mk 5:25); precisely the age of that girl which Jesus is going to heal. This might jump to the reader as *a lifetime of bleeding*. Whereas it is true that the bodily pain and tiredness for such a continual loss of blood might be fearsome; we also need to acknowledge that, in the light of our passage in view, this woman was constantly unclean and she therefore could not touch anyone nor worship in the temple.

Many times, I have heard the question of what would happen if an unstoppable force collides with an unmovable object. At the surface, this passage seems to be a situation like such. This woman is regarded as the law as someone who undoubtedly will defile and make unclean anyone or anything that she touches. On the other hand, Jesus is *the* Holy of Israel himself, without sin. What happens next? The text says that when she does touch him, “*the flow of blood immediately stopped (Mk 5:29).*” How is it that Jesus was not defiled? There was another flow taking place. The narrative says that Jesus perceived that power flowed or went out of him (Mk 5:30). He didn’t even though nor plan the miracle. The power that healed the woman

did not come from Jesus' garments but from Jesus himself.²⁷ As the flow of the woman was non-volitional but was a consequence of her corrupted or fallen nature, the flow of power from Jesus was not volitional, but was a natural consequence of his holy nature. This encounter has been called the *l'insant decisive*.²⁸ And it might have well been that for both Jesus and the woman.

The finality of our text has been revealed at *l'insant*. The purpose of that law in ancient Israel might have been avoiding Egyptian practices, engaging into health-preventive care, and avoid being defiled permanently or with fatal consequences by the presence of dead tissue. But overall, the main purpose of that law for ancient Israel was one that ended at *l'insant decisive*: to look forward for him with the sufficient and necessary power to end once and for all with all impurity. That purpose was fulfilled that day. Jesus was the one every woman in Israel, and every man had been waiting for. It was going to be *his* covenant blood which would cleanse us once and forever. No more ritual impurity, no more menstrual defilement, for the blood of Christ is more holy, than our unholiness. And his cleansing and purifying power is much greater than our uncleanness. For us, today, the purpose is not to wait, but to remember that Christ has already made us holy so that we may be the people of God.

The feminist approach to this text takes away Christ from the center which lawfully, theologically and exegetically belongs to him, to put women in his place. Thus, obscuring the truth significance of a text that portrays Christ as a liberator by portraying his word as an instrument of oppression. And after doing that, blames him for what they, in their ignorance,

²⁷ Candida R. Moss, "The Man with the Flow of Power: Porous Bodies in Mark 5:25–34," *JBL* 129.3 (2010): 510.

²⁸ Barbara Baert, Liesbet Kusters, and Emma Sidgwick, "An Issue of Blood: The Healing of the Woman with the Haemorrhage (Mark 5.24B-34; Luke 8.42B-48; Matthew 9.19-22) in Early Medieval Visual Culture," *J. Relig. Health* 51.3 (2012): 668.

have done. The feminist theologians try to get read by her own means of that things that are uncomfortable for a sinner, such as accurate biblical interpretation. Like the woman with the flow, they seek hard and spend themselves in the process of their 'own liberation'. However, it is only through Christ that true freedom, cleanness, and holiness comes.

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