February 19 Answers

1) The laws regarding clean and unclean animals. These laws were related to the three **ritual** states which God instituted for Israel: the **unclean**, the **clean**, and the **ritual-holy**. They are called 'ritual states' because they set the boundaries for which ritual **actions** a person could do (or not do) and which ritual **places** a person could go (or not go). The normal ritual state for an Israelite was **clean**. They could become ritual-holy by being **sanctified**, and they could become unclean by being **defiled**. It wasn't wrong to become unclean, for the ritual states were <u>not</u> **moral** states. Indeed, it was possible to be moral-holy and unclean at the same time. However, it was not possible to be unclean and ritual-holy, and it was **dangerous** for someone who was unclean to come in contact with the ritual-holy (Lev 7:20–21; 22:3). This system of ritual states served several purposes: (1) *It **reinforced** the people's understanding of God's holiness.* God's presence dwelt in the most ritual-holy section of a ritual-holy tent, and He was served by ritual-holy priests offering ritual-holy offerings. Nothing **unclean** was to come near God's presence. (2) *It encouraged the people to **protect** that which was ritual-holy.* As they made careful distinctions in the realm of ritual states, they respected and **guarded** what was sanctified to God. (3) *It taught the people that God wanted them to **reflect** His holiness.* The ritual states caused everyone to be acutely aware of what state they were in and what could make them unclean. As the people carefully chose between the clean and unclean in the **ritual** realm, they were reminded to choose between right and wrong in the **moral** realm. The laws of clean and unclean animals supported this system. At every meal, Israel was reminded that God had set them apart as His people, and they got **practice** in making proper distinctions. What a beautiful and effective way to teach holy living!

"You are to distinguish between the holy and the common,
and between the unclean and the clean" (Lev 10:10)