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**Day 49 – February 18**

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## **The Laws of Moses (1450 – 1400 BCE)**

### ***Religious and Ceremonial Laws***

**Readings: *Exodus 22:20; 23:13; 34:17; Leviticus 18:21; 19:4, 27-28; 20:1-5; 26:1; Deuteronomy 5:5-10; 12:1-15, 17-22, 26-31; 13:6-18; 14:1-2; 16:21-22; 17:2-7***

### ***Reflections:***

- These verses help capture how the Law functioned for the Israelites.
- All of the commands (e.g. laws about tattoos, hair, etc.) about association with and participation in highly sexualized pagan worship show how much God hated this fertility worship with its orgies and human sacrifice. We can understand why some Christians in the early church pushed so strongly for Christ-followers to not eat meat sacrificed to idols. Yet, in Christ we see a different perspective where participation in sexual rituals is prohibited based on the high sexual ethic of Jesus and yet there was less preoccupation with avoiding all forms of association. In other words, people could eat meat sacrificed to pagan idols if their conscience permitted it. Again, in Christ the internal heart condition takes precedence over external appearances.
- In offering true worship to God he underscores the need to take care of the Levites. They are vulnerable with no land of their own. In the kingdom, Christ-followers face this same kind of vulnerability but must look to God as their provider.
- God gives the people a promise to hold on to for when they feel like their needs are not being met in a desert: “When the Lord your God has enlarged your territory as he promised you, and you crave meat and say, ‘I would like some meat,’ then you may eat as much as you like.” What a promise of hope for the future when all of our needs will be met by God in a full and tangible way. Now for many people, this promise will find its fulfillment in the life to come. Virtually all Christ-followers will find that some area of their lives will lack significantly and these unmet needs will be used by God to teach us dependence and humble reliance on him.