

Deuteronomy Chapter 16

Verses 1-17: The laws for the three yearly feasts are here repeated. That of the Passover, that of the Pentecost, that of Tabernacles; and the general law concerning the people's attendance. Never should a believer forget his low estate of guilt and misery. His deliverance, and the price it cost the Redeemer. That gratitude and joy in the Lord may be mingled with sorrow for sin, and patience under the tribulations in his way to the kingdom of heaven. They must rejoice in their receiving from God, and in their returns of service and sacrifice to him. Our duty must be our delight, as well as our enjoyment. If those who were under the law must rejoice before God, much more we that are under the grace of the gospel. Which makes it our duty to rejoice evermore, to rejoice in the Lord always. When we rejoice in God ourselves, we should do what we can to assist others also to rejoice in him. By comforting the mourners, and supplying those who are in want. All who make God their joy, may rejoice in hope, for He is faithful that has promised.

Moses discusses the feasts during which all the men over 20 years of age were to appear before the Lord at the central worship site. If possible, their families were to go as well (see verses 11, 14; compare Exodus chapter 23; Lev. Chapter 23; Num. chapters 28 and 29).

Verses 1-8: "Celebrate the Passover": The offering of Passover itself was to be only a lamb (Exodus 12:3-11). However, additional offerings were also to be made during the Passover and the subsequent 7 days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (compare Exodus 12:15-20; 13:3-10; Lev. 23:6-8; Num. 28:19-25). Therefore, sacrifices from both the flock and the herd were used in keeping the Passover.

Deuteronomy 16:1 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night."

"Abib": It answered to part, of our March, and part of April. "Abib" is Hebrew for "fresh ears of corn". The month was later renamed Nisan. It was an observable month, to be taken notice of. It was called Abib, from the corn then appearing in ear, and beginning to ripen. The Septuagint calls it the month of new fruit. It was appointed the first of the months for ecclesiastic things, and was the month in which the Israelites went out of Egypt, and the first Passover was kept in it, and therefore deserving of regard (see Exodus 12:2).

"For in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night": For though they did not set out until morning, when it was day light, and are said to come out in the day, yet it was in the night the Lord did wonders for them. As Onkelos paraphrases this clause; that he smote all the firstborn in Egypt, and passed over the houses of the Israelites. The door posts being sprinkled with the blood of the Passover lamb slain that night, and therefore was a night much to be observed. And it was in the night Pharaoh arose and gave them leave to go. And from that time, they were no more under his power. And from then may be reckoned their coming out of bondage (see Exodus 12:12).

Abib is the first month of the Hebrew year. It is very similar in time to our April. The Passover is a remembrance of the night that death passed over the Hebrew homes with the blood on their doors. The paschal lamb was to be prepared in memory of that night. The paschal lamb had to be a yearling of the first year from the sheep or goats. It had to be a male without blemish. It had to be consumed by the family, so the size the family could eat at one sitting had to be taken into consideration when choosing it.

Deuteronomy 16:2 "Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there."

In the month Abib, and in the night of that month they came out of Egypt, even on the fourteenth day of it at night. Between the two evenings, as the Targum of Jonathan. Which was a lamb, and typical of Christ, the Passover sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7).

"Of the flock and the herd": That is, you shall sacrifice also the offerings which were offered throughout the seven days of unleavened bread. And these were both sheep and oxen (Num. 28:19). And are expressly called Passover offerings and peace offerings (2 Chron. 30:21).

"In the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there": That is, at Jerusalem, as the event has shown. Hence we read of the parents of our Lord going up to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41).

This had to be at the chosen place of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 16:3 "Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, [even] the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life."

"Remember": This was the key word at Passover time as it is for the Lord's Supper today (compare Matt. 26:26-30; Luke 22:14-19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

This is speaking of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It overlapped the time of the Passover. Unleavened bread symbolizes the sinless body of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were to eat this bread without leavening, and remember the bitter affliction of their stay in Egypt. They came out of Egypt quickly, and there was no time for bread to rise. The unleavened bread helps them remember for all generations.

Deuteronomy 16:4 "And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there [any thing] of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning."

For before the Passover they were to search diligently every room in the house, and every hole and crevice, that none might remain anywhere (see Exodus 12:15).

"Neither shall there be anything of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning": Which may be understood both of the flesh of the Passover lamb, as Aben Ezra, according to (Exodus 12:10). And of the flesh of flocks and herds, or of the peace offerings. According to Jarchi this Scripture speaks of the peace offering of the fourteenth, which was not to remain on the first day of the feast (the fifteenth), until the morning of the second day (the sixteenth).

The number 7 means spiritually complete. We see that this feast of unleavened bread lasted 7 days. The Passover animal that was sacrificed, shall all be eaten up in one night by the family that offered it.

Exodus 12:10 "And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire."

Exodus 12:15 "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

Verses 5-6: "At the place ... God shall choose": The Passover sacrifices could no longer be slain by every family in their house (see Exodus 12:46). From this point on, the Passover sacrifices must be killed at the central place of worship.

Deuteronomy 16:5 "Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee:"

Or cities, as the Targum of Jonathan. So called because they usually had gates to them, in which public affairs were transacted. But in none of these, only in the city of Jerusalem, the place the Lord chose, might they kill the Passover and eat it, and other Passover offerings.

"Which the Lord thy God giveth thee": In the land of Canaan, and which land was given them of God.

This sacrificial lamb was symbolic of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us all at Calvary. He was crucified outside the city wall. The sacrificial animal must also be sacrificed outside the gates.

Deuteronomy 16:6 "But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt."

To place the ark and the mercy seat with the cherubim over them, where he caused his Shekinah, or divine Majesty, to dwell. And this was at Jerusalem, where the temple was built by Solomon.

"There thou shalt sacrifice the passover": Kill and eat the paschal lamb.

"At even, at the going down of the sun": Between the two evenings it was killed, before the sun was set, and afterwards at night it was eaten. The Targum of Jonathan is, "and at evening, at the setting of the sun, ye shall eat it until the middle of the night:"

"At the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt": Or as the same Targum, "the time of the beginning of your redemption out of Egypt;" which was when Pharaoh rose at midnight, and gave them leave to go. From thence their redemption commenced, though they did not actually set out until the morning.

The sacrificial lamb must not be sacrificed in the home; it must be done outside the city of the LORD's choosing. The city of God is Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 16:7 "And thou shalt roast and eat [it] in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents."

"In the morning ... go unto thy tents": After the sacrifice of the Passover animal and the eating and the night vigil which followed, in the morning the people would return to their lodgings or tents where they were staying for the duration of the feast.

This really is speaking of all sorts of cooking. Many times, the meat was boiled. This offering was to be eaten at the place of sacrifice. Then they were to return home.

Deuteronomy 16:8 "Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day [shall be] a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work [therein]."

In other places, it is ordered to be eaten seven days (Exodus 12:15). And here it is not said six only; it was to be eaten on the seventh as on the other. Though that is here distinguished from the six, because of special and peculiar service assigned to it. But not because of an exemption from eating unleavened bread on it. The Jews seem to understand this of different corn of which the bread was made, and not of different sort of bread. The Targum of Jonathan is, on the first day ye shall offer the sheaf (the firstfruits of the barley harvest). And on the six days which remain ye shall begin to eat the unleavened bread of the new fruits, and so Jarchi.

"And on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord thy God": A holy convocation, devoted to religious exercises. And the people were restrained, according to the sense of the word, from all servile work, as follows.

"Thou shalt do no work therein": That is, the business of their callings, their trades and manufactories. They were obliged to abstain from all kind of work excepting what was necessary for the dressing of food, and in this it differed from a Sabbath (see Exodus 12:16).

The Unleavened Bread Feast overlapped the Passover. It appears at the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they had a holy convocation. They came together and worshipped God.

Deuteronomy 16:9 "Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from [such time as] thou beginnest [to put] the sickle to the corn."

And then another feast was to take place, called from hence the feast of weeks, and sometimes Pentecost, from its being the fiftieth day.

"Begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn": For the sheaf of the wave offering, as the first fruits of barley harvest, which was done on the morrow after the Sabbath in the Passover week. And from then seven weeks or fifty days were reckoned, and the fiftieth day was the feast here ordered to be kept. So the Targum of Jonathan, "after the reaping of the sheaf ye shall begin to number seven weeks" (see Lev. 23:15).

This is called the Feast of Weeks. They begin counting from the second day of the Passover. They counted it from the beginning of the corn harvest. The 50th day of this feast winds up at Pentecost. Pentecost occurred 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus.

Verses 10-17: The principle of proportionate return, every person should give as he or she is able, "as the LORD your God blesses you (2 Cor. 8:12), was embodied in the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles as individuals brought a "freewill offering".

Verses 10-12: "The feast of weeks": Seven weeks later this second feast was celebrated. It was also called the "Feast of the Harvest" (Exodus 23:16) or the "day of the first fruits" (Lev. 23:9-22; Num. 28:26-31). And later came to be known as "Pentecost" (Acts 2:1). With the grain harvest completed, this one-day festival was a time of rejoicing. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, 50 days after the death of Christ at the Passover, was on Pentecost and gives special meaning to that day for Christians (compare Joel 2:28-32; Acts. 2:14-18).

Deuteronomy 16:10 "And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give [unto the LORD thy God], according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:"

The feast of Pentecost, at which time the Spirit was poured down upon the apostles (Acts 2:1).

"With a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand": There were two wave loaves which were ordered to be brought. And seven lambs, one young bullock and two rams for a burnt offering. Together with the meat and drink offerings belonging thereunto. And a kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs for a peace offering (Lev. 23:17). And besides all this, there was to be a voluntary contribution brought in their hands. For this was one of those feasts at which all the males were to appear before the Lord, and none of them empty handed.

"Which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee": No certain rate was fixed, it was to be a free gift, and in proportion to a man's abilities. Or what the Lord had blessed him with.

This freewill offering was an offering made of love and appreciation, and not of obligation. These were voluntary offerings from the people. They gave as the LORD had blessed them. These were given in addition to the burnt meat, and drink offerings.

Verses 11, 14: Celebrations of thanksgiving were not to be observed alone; the Israelites were to gather with their own families at these feasts and also reach out to “the Levite ... the stranger and the fatherless and the widow” who lived within their borders so that all could rejoice in what the Lord had done.

Deuteronomy 16:11 "And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that [is] within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that [are] among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there."

Make a liberal feast, and keep it cheerfully, in the presence of God. In the place where he resides, thankfully acknowledging all his mercies and favors.

"Thou, and thy son, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates": That dwelt in the same city, who were all to come with him to Jerusalem at this feast, and to partake of it with him.

"And the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there": Who should be at Jerusalem at this time.

This rejoicing had to do with praise and thanksgiving. This was possibly done by songs and various other types of worship. It seemed, they all entered into this worship. Their rejoicing was at the place the LORD had chosen for worship and praise.

Deuteronomy 16:12 "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes."

And now delivered from that bondage; the consideration of which should make them liberal in their freewill offering. And generous in the feast they provided, and compassionate to the stranger, widow, and fatherless.

"And thou shalt observe and do these statutes": Concerning the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, and of Pentecost. And the peace offerings and the freewill offerings belonging to them. And nothing could more strongly oblige them to observe them than their redemption from their bondage in Egypt. As nothing more engages to the performance of good works than the consideration of our spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ (1 Cor. 6:19).

Some of the thanks and praise should be directed to the fact that they were now free. They must remember, they had been in bondage in Egypt. Now they are free, and should praise the LORD continually for setting them free. They must obey the will of the LORD to stay free.

Verses 13-15: "The Feast of Booths": (Same as Tabernacles). This was also called the "Feast of Ingathering" and the "Feast of Tabernacles" (compare Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:33-43; Num. 29:12-39).

Deuteronomy 16:13 "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine:"

Which began on the fifteenth day of Tisri, or September (see Lev. 23:34).

"After that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine": And therefore sometimes called the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16). Barley harvest began at the Passover, and wheat harvest at Pentecost. And before the Feast of Tabernacles began, the vintage and the gathering of the olives were over, as well as all other summer fruits were gotten in.

"Tabernacles" were the same as the booths, in this instance. Feast of Tabernacles occurs after the Day of Atonement. This seven-day celebration is, sometimes, thought of as the time the Christians will tabernacle in heaven with God, while the wrath of God falls upon the earth. Others believe it to symbolize the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. Seven shows spiritual completeness. It is to last seven days. This is a time of extreme rejoicing. This feast is sometimes called the Feast of Ingathering. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:33-43; Num. 29:12-39).

Deuteronomy 16:14 "And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that [are] within thy gates."

At this feast of tabernacles and ingathering of the fruits of the earth. In token of gratitude and thankfulness for the goodness of God bestowed on them. The Targum of Jonathan adds, with the flute and the pipe, making use of instrumental music to increase the joy on this occasion.

"Thou and thy son" (see notes on Deut. 16:11).

We find this special time of rejoicing is for everyone. It is even specifically mentioned that the Levites should rejoice too. This is everyone who lives in the gates.

Deuteronomy 16:15 "Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice."

The feast of tabernacles still spoken of.

"In the place which the Lord thy God shall choose": The city of Jerusalem.

"Because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thine hands. Both in the increase of their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, and also in their several handicraft trades and occupations they were employed in. So Aben Ezra interprets all the works of their hands of merchandise and manufactories.

"Therefore thou shalt surely rejoice": Extremely, heartily, and sincerely, and not fail to express joy on this occasion, and manifest it by a generous freewill offering to the Lord. And a bountiful entertainment for himself, his family, friends, and others.

It seems there is no time for anything, but rejoicing during this time. If this is the time of the rapture of the church, this would certainly be reason for rejoicing. If it symbolizes the reign of Jesus on the earth, there would be tremendous reason to rejoice.

Deuteronomy 16:16 "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:"

All males were to appear "before the LORD thy God" each year. And they were not to appear before Him empty-handed, since the festival celebrated the provision of the Lord in the harvest. Each one was to give as he was able and as God had blessed him (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:12; 9:7-8).

Some of the times of worship are optional. It appears the three times mentioned in the verse above, are the times very important to practice feast and sacrifices. Unleavened Bread Feast overlaps the Feast of Tabernacles. There were really three harvests. The first of the harvest was at Passover, or Unleavened Bread. The second harvest was at Pentecost, or Feast of weeks. The fall harvest was Tabernacles. These three must be kept, to remain in good standing with God. We Christians, will be on that wilderness journey until we find our eternal home in heaven with God.

Deuteronomy 16:17 "Every man [shall give] as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee."

The quantity to be given is not fixed in the law, but the wise men appointed it, as observed on (Deut. 16:16). But it is left by the Lord to the generosity of the people, only giving this general rule, that they should do according to their ability, and as the Lord had prospered them (see 1 Cor. 16:2). So Jarchi, "every man that hath many eatables and much goods shall bring many burnt offerings and many peace offerings."

The poor give less and the rich give more, but they all give.

Verses 16:18 – 17:1: Deuteronomy (16:18-20), is an introductory call for the appointment of judges and officials who will exercise impartial justice. Deuteronomy (16:21-22), contains a prohibition against planting Asheroth and erecting a pillar, and (17:1), contains a prohibition against sacrificing to God a defective or flawed ox or sheep. These laws introduce the need for the judicial procedures dealt with in (17:2-13).

Verses 16:18 – 18:22: This portion relates to the fifth commandment and broadens the scope of authority beyond that of the parents to include:

- (1) The judges (17:2-13);

- (2) The king (17:14-20);
- (3) The priesthood (18:1-8); and
- (4) The prophets (18:9-22).

Verses 18-22: Care is taken for the due administration of justice. All personal regards must be laid aside, so that right is done to all, and wrong to none. Care is taken to prevent following the idolatrous customs of the heathen. Nothing belies God more, or tends more to corrupt the minds of men, than representing and worshipping by an image, that God, who is an almighty and eternal Spirit, present everywhere. Alas, even in gospel days and under a better dispensation, and established upon better promises, there is a tendency to set up idols, under one form or another, in the human heart.

This section deals with the responsibilities of the officials who were to maintain pure worship within the Land and to administer justice impartially.

Deuteronomy 16:18 "Judges and officers shalt thou make the in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment."

“Judges and officers”: Moses had appointed leaders at Sinai to help him in the administration of the people (1:13). Here he specified that such important leadership should continue in each city. “Judges” were those who adjudicated cases with the application of the law. “Officers” were subordinate leaders of various kinds.

These judges and officers are to decide in civil matters. They must be chosen carefully, and must judge justly among the people. On spiritual matters, the priests and the high priest decide.

Deuteronomy 16:19 "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous."

“For a gift doth blind the eyes”: Accepting a bribe was wrong since it perverted the ability of judges to act in fairness to the parties in litigation.

They must judge with no outside persuasion. They must be of high character, so they cannot be bribed. They must not give advantage to anyone, because of their station in life. They must judge righteously, because they have a judge in heaven that will judge them someday. They are greatly honored to be made judges. With greatness goes great responsibility.

Deuteronomy 16:20 "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."

Or "justice". "Justice", strict justice, and nothing else.

"That thou mayest live and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee": That is, continue in the possession of it.

God wants His people to live righteous lives. They are to live by the law He gave them. If they are to be His then they must be honest and just in all they do. They must set an example for the heathen world around them.

Verses 21-22: Grove ... altar": Asherah ("grove"), was the name of a Canaanite goddess, represented by a wooden pole, image or tree. A stone pillar symbolic of make fertility was prevalent in the Canaanite religion. These were forbidden by the first two commandments (Exodus 20:3-6; Duet. 5:7-10).

Deuteronomy 16:21 "Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee."

Of any sort of trees, as oaks or any other. Not but that it was lawful to plant trees and groves of them, but not for a religious or idolatrous use. Particularly;

"Near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee": As the Heathens did near their altars, lest it should be thought to be done for a like superstitious and idolatrous use. Which evil the Jews sometimes fell into in the times of wicked reigns. And which their good and pious kings removed and destroyed (see 2 Kings 18:4).

Much worship of false gods took place in groves. The altar of God is never to be associated with anything like that. The groves must not be near the holy altar. The fire of God is near the altar. God would even burn the trees up, if they were near. They must not be near, because they are evil.

Deuteronomy 16:22 "Neither shalt thou set thee up [any] image; which the LORD thy God hateth."

Graven or molten, of man, beast, fish, or fowl; the word signifies a "statue or pillar" which was set up for idolatry. For, as Aben Ezra observes, what was not set up for idolatry was not forbidden. As when erected in memory of any action or remarkable event (see Joshua 22:10).

"Which the Lord thy God hateth": As he does every species of idolatry, or that has any tendency to it. It being so opposite to his being, perfections, and glory. And therefore, nothing should be done like it, because it is so hateful to him.

Images are things made with hands. God is Spirit. Things you can see with physical eyes, or touch with physical hands, are forbidden. They are not God. God is the Creator of everything and everyone.

Deuteronomy Chapter 16 Questions

1. Observe the month of _____, and keep the Passover unto the LORD God.
2. What month is this on the Hebrew calendar?
3. What is Passover remembering?
4. Describe the paschal lamb.
5. Where will the Passover be sacrificed?
6. What kind of bread is to be eaten with it?
7. How many days is unleavened bread to be eaten?
8. What is this in remembrance of?
9. What does the unleavened bread symbolize?
10. What does the number 7 mean?
11. What happens to those who eat leavened bread during this time?
12. Why must they not sacrifice the Passover inside the gate?
13. The city of God is _____.
14. What type of cooking is spoken of in verse 7?
15. On the seventh day of Unleavened Bread, what do they do?
16. What are the seven weeks, in verse 9, called?
17. When do they begin counting the weeks?
18. The 50th day of this feast winds up at _____.
19. The freewill offering is not of _____, but love and appreciation.
20. Who is to rejoice before the LORD God?
21. What must they do to stay free?
22. "Tabernacles" in verse 13, were the same as _____.
23. Feast of Tabernacles occurs after the _____.
24. How long is the Feast of Tabernacles to last?

25. How many times a year must all males appear before the LORD God?
26. How much shall each person give?
27. How must the judges and officers judge?
28. How does God want His people to live?
29. Why are groves forbidden to be near the altar?