DEUTERONOMY

Chapter 16

*Passover*

**Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover of the Lord your God, because in the month of Abib he brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 Sacrifice as the Passover to the Lord your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the Lord will choose as a dwelling for his Name. 3 Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste—so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt. 4 Let no yeast be found in your possession in all your land for seven days. Do not let any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain until morning. 5 You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the Lord your God gives you 6 except in the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name. There you must sacrifice the Passover in the evening, when the sun goes down, on the anniversary of your departure from Egypt. 7 Roast it and eat it at the place the Lord your God will choose. Then in the morning return to your tents. 8 For six days eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day hold an assembly to the Lord your God and do no work.**

**16:1–17** See chart on “OT Feasts and Other Sacred Days”; see also Ex 23:14–19 and notes; 34:18–26; Lev 23:4–44 and notes; Nu 28:16–29:40. (CSB)

All males were to appear at the sanctuary for three annual pilgrim feasts: Passover (vv 1–8); the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (vv 9–12); and the Feast of Booths (vv 13–15). (TLSB)

**16:1–8** See Ex 12:1–28; 13:1–16 and notes. (CSB)

**16:1** *Abib.* See chart on “Hebrew Calendar” (CSB)

**16:2** *at the place*. In Egypt, the Passover was celebrated in homes. In the wilderness, it was celebrated in tents clustered around the tabernacle. Now Moses directs them to celebrate the Passover at a central location to maintain solidarity, since they will be living in various parts of Canaan. (TLSB)

**16:3, 12** *remember.* See note on 4:10. (CSB)

**16:3** God’s people ate hastily prepared unleavened bread at the first Passover, when they were readying to flee from the distress of captivity in Egypt (Ex 13:3–16). The NT takes up the imagery of unleavened bread as a symbol of purity and deliverance from evil (1Co 5:6–8). (TLSB)

**16:6** *on the anniversary.* Referring either to the time of day (see NIV text note), as the preceding phrases do, or to the anniversary of the day it first occurred, as the NIV has translated. (CSB)

*time you came out*. After the first Passover, God’s people were sent out of Egypt at night (Ex 12:29–32). (TLSB)

**16:7** *to your tents.* To wherever they were staying while at the festival, whether in permanent or temporary quarters. (CSB)

To the places they were staying while they were gathered together for the festival and away from their own homes. (TLSB)

**16:8** *assembly.* The Hebrew for this word probably means “closing assembly,” as the NIV translates it in Lev 23:36. (CSB)

**16:1–8** At the Passover festival, the people would remember the way God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. Today, if we forget all that God has done for us, we fall back into sinful actions and habits. Without God’s help, we find ourselves suffering the distress and affliction of slavery to sin. Our Lord Jesus has given us His body and blood to make Himself present with us and to deliver us from evil. As we celebrate the Lord’s Supper “in remembrance of Jesus, we receive the freedom from sin that He alone gives. • Lord Jesus, remember me in Your kingdom, and deliver me from all evil. Amen. (TLSB)

*Feast of Weeks*

**9 Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. 10 Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you. 11 And rejoice before the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you. 12 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees.**

**16:9** *the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain.* Abib 16, the second day of the Passover Feast. (CSB)

**16:10** *Feast of Weeks*. So named because Moses commanded a seven-week interval (v 9). Known also as the Feast of Harvest (Ex 23:16) and “day of the firstfruits” (Nu 28:26). Later it was called Pentecost based on the LXX translation of “fifty days” (Lv 23:16). (TLSB)

*freewill offering*. Made in addition to the required tithe. (TLSB)

**16:9–12** God commands His people to remember their blessings and to share from their bounty with those in need. When God has given us much, He asks much from us (Lk 12:48). By sharing what God has given you, you show your trust in His generosity. He also promises through Jesus, the Savior, that you will receive many times more than you give, in this age and in the age to come (Lk 18:18–30). • Father, since You have given me so much, give me also Your Holy Spirit so that I may be generous to all who suffer need. In Jesus’ name. Amen. (TLSB)

*Feast of Tabernacles*

**13 Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. 14 Be joyful at your Feast—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. 15 For seven days celebrate the Feast to the Lord your God at the place the Lord will choose. For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete. 16 Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the Lord empty-handed: 17 Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.**

**16:13** *seven days*. From the 15th to 22nd day of the seventh month of Tishri (Sept/Oct). Cf Ex 23:14–17; 34:22 (Feast of Ingathering); Lv 23:33–44. (TLSB)

**16:14** An exhaustive list of everyone who would dwell in the land, with special mention of those who were economically and socially vulnerable and those who could have been viewed as outsiders with no right to participate in feasting. (TLSB)

**16:15** *your joy will be complete.* As a result of God’s blessing (cf. Jn 3:29; 15:11; 16:24; Php 2:2; 1Jn 1:4; 2Jn 12). (CSB)

**16:16** *Three times a year.* The three annual pilgrimage festivals (see Ex 23:14, 17; 34:23). (CSB)

*all your males*. Men acted as representatives for their families; all the people of the land were included as participants in the times of celebration. (TLSB)

**16:17** *bring a gift in proportion.* See v. 10; cf. 2Co 8:12. (CSB)

**16:13–17** The Feast of Booths includes foreigners, who are also called to celebrate God’s gracious provision of the harvest. God gives blessings to all, even to those who are not His people (Mt 5:43–48). If we refuse to show God’s generous love to other people, our behavior is no better than that of unbelievers. The fellowship we have in Christ with people “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rv 5:9) is God’s great blessing to us. Together we experience the true unity that comes from access to God’s grace in Christ Jesus. • Lord Jesus, thank You for giving me brothers and sisters from every tribe and language and people and nation! Grant us joy together in the Gospel. Amen. (TLSB)

*Judges*

**18 Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. 19 Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. 20 Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.**

**16:18–20** Cf. 1:9–18; Ex 18:13–26. (CSB)

God commands impartial justice throughout the land. (TLSB)

**16:18** *appoint judges and officers*. Levitical priests and judges heard difficult cases at special locations (17:8–13). (TLSB)

*tribes*. Settled in specific regions. (TLSB)

**16:19** See Ex 23:8 and note. (CSB)

The judges and officers were to be blind to the status of those coming before them for judgment; the poor were not to expect partiality, or the rich, deference. On the other hand, the judges and officers were to have their eyes open to the law and to beware of bribes that would blind them to seeing the true legal standing of the disputants in a case. (TLSB)

**16:18–20** God commands impartiality in judges because He is Himself impartial in judgment (Rm 2:11). In this we stand warned: there will be tribulation and distress for all who do evil, including those within the household of God. Yet God shows His righteousness in judgment by leading us in faith to receive His mercy and forgiveness in Christ Jesus. • Lord Jesus, all my hope is in You, because You are my righteousness, my peace, and my joy. Amen. (TLSB)

*Worshiping Other Gods*

**21 Do not set up any wooden Asherah pole beside the altar you build to the Lord your God, 22 and do not erect a sacred stone, for these the Lord your God hates.**

**16:21–22** *Asherah pole … sacred stone.* See note on 7:5. (CSB)