

# DEUTERONOMY

## Chapter 16

### *Passover*

**“Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 And you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the LORD your God, from the flock or the herd, at the place that the LORD will choose, to make his name dwell there. 3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. 4 No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the flesh that you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain all night until morning. 5 You may not offer the Passover sacrifice within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, 6 but at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it, there you shall offer the Passover sacrifice, in the evening at sunset, at the time you came out of Egypt. 7 And you shall cook it and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose. And in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. 8 For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work on it.**

**16:1–17** 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)

**16:2** *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** 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** *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)

*The Feast of Weeks*

**9 “You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. 10 Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. 11 And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there. 12 You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.**

**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)

*The Feast of Booths*

**13 “You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress. 14 You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns. 15 For seven days you shall keep the feast to the LORD your God at the place that the LORD will choose, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful. 16 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given 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** *will be altogether joyful.* 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)

**16:13–17** 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)

#### *Justice*

**18 “You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. 20 Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the LORD your God is giving you.**

**16:18–20** 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** 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)

#### *Forbidden Forms of Worship*

**21 “You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the LORD your God that you shall make. 22 And you shall not set up a pillar, which the LORD your God hates.**