

Deuteronomy 16 - Feasts of Israel

II. Second sermon: What Israel must do for God (Deut 4:41—26:19)

(3) Exposition of the Decalogue (Deut 12:1—25:19)

(D) Laws arising from the fourth commandment (Deut 14:22—16:17)

(f) Feast days (16:1-17)

(E) Laws arising from the fifth Commandment (Deut 16:18—18:22)

(a) Judges and other officials (16:18—17:13)

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(a) Idolatry (16:21-22)

Deuteronomy 16

(f) Feast days (16:1-17)

1 "Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night.

1 "Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night.

1 "Observe the month of Abib, keeping the Passover to the LORD your God, because the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt during the night in the month of Abib.

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.

2 You shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God *from* the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to establish His name.

2 You shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to establish His name.

2 Then sacrifice sheep and cattle for the Passover to the LORD your God at the place where the LORD your God will choose to establish his name.

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.

3 You shall not eat leavened bread with it; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in a hurry), so that you will remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.

3 You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt.

3 You must not eat any yeast with it. Instead, for seven days eat bread without yeast—the bread of affliction—because you left the land of Egypt in haste. Remember the day you went out of the land of Egypt for the rest of your lives.

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.

- The Passover was followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, so in effect the two actually constituted one festival (Luke 2:41; 22:7; Acts 12:3-4)

— Eating bread without leaven commemorated the haste with which the Israelites had to leave Egypt (Ex 12:33-34)

— This would help them remember their quick departure from Egypt. As bread of affliction, it also symbolized the Israelites' slavery in Egypt.

4 For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in your entire territory, and none of the meat which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day shall be left overnight until the morning.

4 For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day shall remain overnight until morning.

4 Yeast is not to be seen in any of your territories for seven days. The meat is not to remain from the evening of the first day until morning.

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.

- None of the meat sacrificed in the evening of the first feast day (the Passover lamb) was to be left over to eat the next morning. It was to be burned (Ex 12:10)

5 You are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns which the LORD your God is giving you;

5 You are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns which the LORD your God is giving you;

5 "You must not sacrifice the Passover in just any of your cities that the LORD your God is about to give you.

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

6 but *only* at the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, at the time that you came out of Egypt.

6 but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, at the time that you came out of Egypt.

6 But at the place where your God will choose to establish his name, you are to sacrifice the Passover in the evening at dusk, at the time of day you left Egypt.

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.

- The first Passover had been observed in the homes of the individual Israelites. But later after the central sanctuary was built (the place where God's name would dwell (Cf. 12:5, 11; 14:23; 16:2,11; 26:1,15), the Passover could be observed only there.

- This may have symbolized Israel's birth as a nation at the Exodus, a nation meant to be a family with God as her Head

- Even though "twilight" may have meant 3 to 5pm, that could still be called in the evening when the sun was beginning to go down.

7 You shall cook and eat *it* in the place which the LORD your God chooses. In the morning you are to return to your tents.

7 You shall cook and eat *it* in the place which the LORD your God chooses. In the morning you are to return to your tents.

7 Boil and eat the Passover meal at the place that the LORD your God will choose. In the morning you may go back to your tents.

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.

8 For six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festive assembly to the LORD your God; you shall do no work *on it*.

8 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*.

8 Eat bread without yeast for six days. Then on the seventh day, hold an assembly to the LORD your God. Don't do any work."

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.

- After roasting and eating the Passover animal, the people were to return to their tents, the temporary homes of those who had come to the central sanctuary for the celebration

- In the NT Jesus Christ was identified as the Passover Lamb sacrificed for believers (1 Cor 5:7; also Cf. John 19:36 with Ex 12:46b)

— By applying the blood of Christ to themselves, that is, trusting in Him who died in their place for their sin, Christians are spared from eternal death

9 "You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from *the time* you begin to *put* the sickle to the standing grain.

9 "You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain.

9 "Count off seven weeks from when the sickle is first put to standing grain.

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.

10 Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with a voluntary offering of your hand in a proportional amount, which you shall give just as the LORD your God blesses you;

10 Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the LORD your God blesses you;

10 Then observe the Festival of Weeks in the presence of the LORD your God by giving your tribute and the freewill offering of your hands in proportion to the manner in which the LORD your God blessed you.

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:

11 and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you, your son and your daughter, and your male and female slaves, and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger, the orphan, and the widow who are in your midst, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name.

11 and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name.

11 Rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God with your son, daughter, male and female slaves, the descendants of Levi who is in your city, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow among you, at the place where the LORD your God will choose to establish his name.

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.

12 You shall also remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful and comply with these statutes.

12 You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

12 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, so keep and observe these statutes."

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

- The Feast of Weeks was a celebration of God's rich provision for His people. Therefore each freewill (voluntary) offering was to be in proportion to one's blessings from the Lord (Cf. v17; 15:14)

- Paul may have had this standard of giving in mind for Christians rather than a system of tithing when he directed the Corinthian Christians to give as each one "may prosper" (1 Cor 16:2, NASB)

13 "You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths for seven days when you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat;

13 "You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat;

13 "Celebrate the Festival of Tents for seven days after you harvest from your threshing floor and your wine press.

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

14 and you shall rejoice in your feast, you, your son and your daughter, and your male and female slaves, and the Levite, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow who are in your towns.

14 and you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns.

14 Rejoice in your festival—you, your son, your daughter, your male and female slaves, the descendants of Levi, and foreigners, orphans, and widows, who live in your cities.

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.

15 For seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, 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.

15 Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the LORD your God in the place which the Lord chooses, 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.

15 For seven days you are to celebrate in the presence of the LORD your God at the place where the LORD will choose; for the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in everything you do, and your joy will be complete.

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.

- Joy was to characterize this festival, which was also true of the Feast of Weeks (v10-11)

- The people were to be joyful in God's provision, but also (as Lev 23:42-43 indicates) they were to rejoice in their deliverance from Egypt

- The week of living in booths was to recall the journey through the desert after the nation had come out of Egypt

— Thus the autumn festival celebrated the formation of the nation through God's grace and His continuing support of her, right up to the moment of the festival

16 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths; and they are not to appear before the LORD empty-handed.

16 "Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.

16 "Every male must appear in the presence of the LORD your God three times a year at the place where he will choose: for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Seven Weeks, and the Festival of Tents. He must not appear in the LORD's presence empty-handed,

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:

- Three of the Feasts were compulsory for every able-bodied Jew: Unleavened Bread, Weeks and Tabernacles.

17 Everyone shall give as he is able, in accordance with the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

17 but each one must appear with his own gift, proportional to the blessing that the LORD your God has given you."

17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

- In a summary Moses reminded the Israelite men of their obligation to go three times a year to appear before the Lord. This did not mean, of course, that a man's family members were not to take part in the feasts. The ideal was for all family members—along with servants, Levites, aliens, the fatherless and widows—to join in the celebration (Cf. v11,14)

- Each man was to bring a gift because the keynote of each of the festivals was the joyful expression of thanks for God's rich spiritual and material blessings experienced in the past and the present. The gifts to the Lord were to be proportionate to the people's blessings (Cf. v17; 15:14)

(E) Laws arising from the fifth Commandment (Deut 16:18—18:22)

(a) Judges and other officials (16:18—17:13)

(i) Requirement of righteousness (16:18-20)

18 "You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.

18 "You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.

18 "Appoint judges and civil servants according to your tribes in all your cities that the LORD your God is about to give you, so they may judge the people impartially.

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

19 You shall not distort justice, you shall not show partiality; and you shall not accept a bribe, because a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and distorts the words of the righteous.

19 You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous.

19 You must not twist justice, show favoritism, or take bribes, because a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the speech of the righteous.

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.

- The preceding sections were mainly concerned with laws related to the worship of the Lord by His people
- This next section (16:18—18:22) deals with the responsibilities of the officials to maintain pure worship within the Promised Land and to administer justice impartially
- In the wilderness Moses at first had been the only judge of the people. But when the judicial burden became too great for him he appointed “leading men” of the tribes as military leaders, officials, and judges (1:15-18)
- So the judges appointed in each city were probably taken from that city’s council of elders (the elders functioned as a judicial body (Cf. Deut 19:12)

These leaders were to judge the people fairly (lit., “righteously”; Cf. 1:17; Prov 18:5; 24:23). Their verdicts were to conform to the righteous standards set forth in the Word of God (The *Torah* at that time). They were not to pervert justice. This implies that God had given them a heavenly pattern for their actions toward each other. If their actions did not conform to this pattern, those actions were to be changed or punished. Any nonconformity to the pattern of justice was a perversion.

20 Justice, *and only* justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

20 Justice, *and only* justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

20 You are to pursue justice—and only justice—so you may live and possess the land that the LORD your God is about to give you.”

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

(ii) What judges must address (16:21—17:3)

(a) Idolatry (16:21-22)

21 “You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of the LORD your God, which you shall make for yourself.

21 “You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of the LORD your God, which you shall make for yourself.

21 “You are not to set up a sacred pole beside the altar of the LORD your God that you will build.

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.

22 And you shall not set up for yourself a memorial stone, which the LORD your God hates.

22 You shall not set up for yourself a *sacred* pillar which the LORD your God hates.

22 Furthermore, you are not to erect for yourselves a sacred stone pillar, because the LORD your God detests these things.

22 Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth.

- Moses summed up the requirements for the judges and officials with an emphatic command to follow justice and justice alone (lit., "righteousness, righteousness you must pursue!")

- These words imply that impartial justice could be an elusive goal because of the weakness of human nature

— Therefore it was absolutely essential that the standard set forth in the Law be followed precisely

— Their lives and prosperity depended on their establishing impartial justice in the Promised Land

The first responsibility of the judges was to prevent impure worshiping practices in the land. Anything that might lead to syncretism (accommodating worship of the Lord to pagan systems of worship) was prohibited. This included any wooden Asherah pole (symbolic of Asherah, goddess of fertility and consort of Baal) or a sacred stone, a stone pillar symbolic of male fertility (Cf. 7:5; 12:3; Ex 34:13)