

LESSON THIRTEEN 16:1-17; 21, 22; 17:1

d. HOLY FESTIVALS (16:1-17; 21, 22; 17:1)

(These three yearly feasts are also discussed in Ex. 23:14-17, 34:23; Lev. 23; Num. 28:16—29:40.)

(1) THE PASSOVER (16:1-8)*

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto Jehovah thy God; for in the month of Abib Jehovah thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. 2 And thou shalt sacrifice the passover unto Jehovah thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which Jehovah shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 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. 4 And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days; neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. 5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee; 6 but at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell 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. 7 And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. 8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Jehovah thy God; thou shalt do no work *therein*.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:1-8

276. According to our calendar when was the month Abib?
277. In the order of observance, when were the days of unleavened bread?
278. Are we to understand from verse 5 that the Passover could not be observed in the home? Discuss.
279. Mention at least two comparisons of the sacrifice of our Passover lamb.

*An excellent study of typology relating to the passover is found in the book *Shadow and Substance*, by Victor E. Hoven. (N. W. Christian College Press, Eugene, Ore.) He also treats the other festivals mentioned here. This book is for sale from *College Press*—Joplin, Missouri.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:1-8

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 You shall offer the passover sacrifice to the Lord your God from the flock or the herd, in the place where the Lord will choose to make His name [and His presence] dwell.

3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you fled from the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may [earnestly] remember the day when you came out of Egypt.

4 No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days; nor shall any of the flesh which you sacrificed the first day at evening be left all night until the morning.

5 You may not offer the passover sacrifices within any of your towns which the Lord your God gives you;

6 But at the place which the Lord your God will choose in which to make His name [and His presence] dwell, there you shall offer the passover sacrifice in the evening at sunset, at the season that you came out of Egypt.

7 And you shall roast or boil and eat it in the place which the Lord your God will choose; and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents.

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.

COMMENT 16:1-8

Basic to a study of this feast is a knowledge of the original Passover, Ex. 12 and 13.

OBSERVE THE MONTH ABIB (v. 1)—The first Jewish month, Ex. 12:2. Lev. 23:5 specifies that the passover was to begin on the 14th day of this month, at even. The Jewish month Abib overlaps between our March and April. Smith, in his Bible Dictionary, states, "From the time of the institution of the Mosaic law downward the month was a lunar one. The cycle of the religious feasts commencing with the passover depended not simply on the month, but the moon; the 14th of Abib was coincident with the full moon . . . the commencement of the month was generally decided by observation of the new moon."

The months were often simply referred to by number, and some had more than one name. Abib, for example, is also called Nisan (Neh. 2:1).

AND THOU SHALT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER (v. 2)—The feast's name and its implications are obvious from Ex. 12:21-28. Our Paschal Lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed and we, too, have been redeemed from bondage and slavery. ". . . wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7, 8). Even as God *passed over* the houses of those Israelites who had appropriated to themselves the blood of the lamb, so God will *pass over* us, not inflicting the penalty of death, if we have appropriated unto ourselves "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29).

OF THE FLOCK AND OF THE HERD (v. 2)—Note the offerings demanded on this day in Num. 28:18 ff.

THOU SHALT EAT NO UNLEAVENED BREAD (v. 3)—Ex. 12:39 gives the reason for this. They were not only to have unleavened bread, but no leaven was to be found in their houses (see v. 4 and Ex. 12:19). Leaven is usually also a type of sin, I Cor. 5:6, 7; Gal. 5:7-9.

BREAD OF AFFLICTION (v. 3)—So called because of the affliction from which they were delivered in Egypt.

AT EVEN, AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN (v. 6)—Referring to Exodus 12, Victor E. Hoven says of the passover lamb: "It was killed at even on the fourteenth, about three o'clock (vs. 6) the time Israel came out of Egypt (Deut. 16:6), At the same time, when the daily evening sacrifice of a lamb took place in Jerusalem, the Lamb of God expired on the cross (Matt. 27:45-50)."—Shadow and Substance, p. 95.

(2) PENTECOST (16:9-12)

9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing grain shalt thou begin to number seven weeks. 10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill-offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give, according as Jehovah thy God blesseth thee: 11 and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son,

and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee, in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:9-12

280. Please read Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31 and Deuteronomy 26:1-11 to be able to understand this feast, and more especially the counting of time.
281. Why call this the feast of Pentecost?
282. Why was the purpose of this feast?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:9-12

9 You shall count seven weeks: beginning to number the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain.

10 Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the Lord your God with a tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give to the Lord your God, as the Lord your God blesses you.

11 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, and the Levite who is within your towns, the stranger or temporary resident, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place in which the Lord your God chooses to make His name [and His presence] dwell.

12 And you shall (earnestly) remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be watchful and obey these statutes.

COMMENT 16:9-12

(More on this feast in Ex. 23:16, 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31, and Deut. 26:1-11.)

This feast has several names: also called Harvest and First-fruits. It marked the *beginning* of the harvest period, and is called Pentecost (fiftieth) because they were to number fifty days after the Passover for its observance (Lev. 23:15, 16; Acts 2:1) which was on the first day of the week. Because seven weeks of seven days were numbered before it was observed during their month Sisan or Sivan, which answers to our May-June.

The giving of the first fruits, of course, honored God. In the old economy God was to be thought of *first*—how much more in the new!

(3) TABERNACLES (16:13-15)

13 Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy winepress; 14 and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. 15 Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:13-15

283. What was the purpose of the feast of Tabernacles?
 284. Read: Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:33-36; Numbers 29:12-16 to help in your understanding of this feast.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:13-15

13 You shall observe the feast of tabernacles or booths seven days, after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and wine vat.

14 You shall rejoice in your feast, you, your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, the Levite, the transient and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, that are within your towns.

15 Seven days you shall keep a solemn 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 works of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

COMMENT 16:13-15

Also called the feasts of booths, and ingathering. See Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:33-36, 39-44; Num. 29:12-16. It was on the 15th day of the 7th month, the month Tisri (our Sept.-Oct.). At this time they "gathered in the fruits of the land" (Lev. 23:39). The word "Tabernacles" (from the Heb. *sukkah* or succoth)* is translated "booths" in most of the recent versions as this word more aptly describes the "homes" of the Israelites during the week this festival was being celebrated. It was "camp meetin' time," and a memorial service to

*Gesenius says of this word: "a booth, a cot, made of leaves and branches interwoven . . ." He would render the phrase, "the feast of tabernacles (v. 13) "the feast of booths and branches."

their camping days as they came out of Egypt, as well as a "Thanksgiving Day" for the recent harvest.

AND THOU SHALT BE ALTOGETHER JOYFUL (v. 15)—This probably was Israel's most festive and joyous feast.

4. GENERAL RULES FOR OBSERVANCE

(16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1)

16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah 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 Jehovah empty: 17 every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee.

21 Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of Jehovah thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar; which Jehovah thy God hateth.

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God an ox, or a sheep, wherein is a blemish, or any thing evil; for that is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

285. To what "place" does verse 16 allude?
 286. What was to be given by every man? In what attitude?
 287. What a strange prohibition! Who would consider such a strange admixture of Jehovah and Asherah? Cf. verse 21.
 288. If a man did not have a healthy animal to offer to the Lord what should he do?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

16 Three times a year shall all your males appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, in the feast of unleavened bread, in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles or 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 which He has given you.

21 You shall not plant you any kind of tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the Lord your God which you shall make.

22 Neither shall you set up an idolatrous stone or image, which the Lord your God hates.

You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or sheep with a blemish or any defect whatever; for that is an abomination to the Lord your God.

COMMENT 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

EVERY MAN SHALL GIVE AS HE IS ABLE (v. 17)—This was true of the giving required at these feasts (whether the offerings specified were for the particular feast, or free-will offerings) and all through the ages. Paul asked each Corinthian Christian to "lay by him in store, as he may prosper" (I Cor. 16:2). "For if the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he* hath not" (See II Cor. 8:3, 12).

THOU SHALT NOT PLANT THERE AN ASHERAH OF ANY KIND OF TREE BESIDE THE ALTAR (v. 21)—See 7:2, 5, notes; 12:1-4. An "Asherah of any kind of tree" (or, as otherwise rendered, "an asherah [or pole] of any wood") has reference to the idols of wood that were made to this female diety. The commentators are not altogether agreed as to whether the name Asherah "is the name of a distinct goddess, as well as the 'poles,' 'stumps,' or 'stems' which represented her; or whether the notorious 'Ashtoreth' (Astarte) was herself worshipped under these obscene images."* In any case the rites associated with the "Asherahs" were immoral—involving the glorification—even deification—of sexual passion.

Note here that God did not want *his* worship associated *in any way* with idolatry and such sensual and evil "rites" as accompanied it. Yet there was apparently the possibility that there would be an attempt to *blend* the true religion of God with the Asherah. So the later statements that Israel "feared Jehovah and served other gods."

THOU SHALT NOT SACRIFICE . . . OX . . . SHEEP, WHEREIN IS A BLEMISH (17:1)—See also 15:21, Lev. 22:19-25. It seems probable that this exhortation was given in connection with the sacrifices to be offered at the three major festivals just mentioned.

Such animals could be eaten, but not sacrificed to *God*. There is surely a parallel here between what God demanded in an Old Testament

*Rotherham, in a Special Note on the *Destruction of the Canaanite Nations*. It is difficult to find cultured words to express the grossness of the immorality associated with these idols.

sacrifice, and the life he expects us, *through Christ*, to give to him as a Christian. We are to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (See Rom. 12:1, 2). And how thankful we can be that the perfect sacrifice of Christ compensates for our imperfection!

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The month of Abib to be observed, 1. The feast of the passover and of unleavened bread, 2-8. The feast of weeks, 9-12. The feast of tabernacles, 13-15. All the males to appear before the Lord thrice in the year, none to come empty, each to give according to his ability, 16, 17. Judges and officers to be made in all their cities, 18. Strict justice shall be executed, 19, 20. No grove to be planted near the altar of God, nor any image to be set up, 21, 22.

QUESTIONS, LESSON THIRTEEN

(16:1-17, 21, 22; 17:1)

1. Name the three yearly Jewish feasts, giving at least two names for each, and the time of year each was observed.
2. What did the Passover commemorate? (Discuss the name and its significance.)
3. Why use unleavened bread? Why was it called "bread of affliction"?
4. Explain what Paul meant when he referred to Christ as our passover.
5. How did "Pentecost" get its name?
6. What was celebrated at this feast?
7. What great New Testament event occurred on the first day of this feast?
8. Why is the *feast of tabernacles* so called?
9. What *two* things did this festival commemorate?
10. Were both men and women to attend these annual festivals?
11. Who or what were the Asherah?
12. In this lesson, what kind of sacrifice is an abomination unto Jehovah?