

DEUTERONOMY

STUDY SIX | CHAPTER 16:1-17




GENEROUS
GOD,
GENEROUS
PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

Feasts and festivals are marked in the calendar to celebrate special occasions, which is exactly what Deuteronomy 16 is all about. Here we have three major Old Testament festivals, reinstated by God for use in the promised land, which are still celebrated by observant Jews today. The motivation for these celebrations is to remember the work of God, past and present. Though Israel is the main participant in these annual celebrations, they are called to include the marginalized in these feasts, as well as others not counted among the twelve tribes of Jacob. Remembering God's generosity gives rise to a joyful and generous response!

Last week's passage entered into the heart issue of loving and serving God within the context of Israel's new home, the promised land. Today's passage picks up this same theme and explores the implications that loving and serving God has for our celebrations and the resources given to those celebrations.

STUDY FRAMEWORK

-  Bible Passage
-  Study Notes + Study Questions
-  Prayer

Bible Passage

DEUT 16:1-17

- 1 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.
- 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.
- 13 You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your wine press.
- 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.



Study Notes

BACKGROUND

Structure: One way this passage can be broken down:

- vv. 1-8: The Passover
- vv. 9-12: The Feast of Weeks
- vv. 13-15: The Feast of Booths
- vv. 16-17: Give generously as God has given to you.

Calendars: “Abib” in v.1 is the old Canaanite word for the Jewish month of Nisan, which is roughly March/April in our Gregorian calendar. Abib/Nisan is the first month of the year in the ancient Mesopotamian lunisolar calendar, marking the beginning of spring. All three of the feasts in this passage are spring celebrations, which mark the beginning of the harvest season and the first signs of God’s plentiful provision.

IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

- vv 16.1-17 is focused on feasts but is part of a larger section on generosity, including tithing, debt cancellation, and Sabbath.
- Immediately following this passage are laws for leadership (16.18-18.22) and for a just society (19.1-21.23).

IN DEUTORONOMY

Moses second sermon (chapters 5-28) has 5 big sections of laws:

- 12.1-16.17: Worship/Consecration
- 16.18-18.22: Leadership
- 19.1-21.23: Ethical Conduct
- 22.1-25.19: Purity Laws
- 26.1-15: Tithes & Offerings

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

This passage draws heavily upon Israel’s history for the reinstatement of older feasts:

- vv.1-8: The Passover is instituted by God in Exodus 12, and is *the* event in Israel’s memory of God’s mercy and deliverance.
- vv. 9-12: The Festival of Weeks is first mentioned in Exodus 23.16. The practice of thanking God for a plentiful harvest is not a new one, but the promise of a new abundant beginning in the promised land is an even greater cause for celebration.
- vv.13-15: The Feast of Booths was first given in Leviticus 23.34, and serves as a reminder that during the wilderness wanderings God miraculously and generously provided for his people.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- The Festival of Weeks is also called “Pentecost” amongst Greek speakers, and is the festival where Peter preaches to the thousands (Acts 2) and the Holy Spirit gives birth to the Church.
- The Festival of Booths is mentioned only in John 7. It is one occasion that Jesus chooses to teach many in the temple.
- The Passover obviously holds a great deal of importance for Christians. It is the basis for the giving of the “Lord’s Supper” from Jesus to his disciples, and is the occasion when he forms a new covenant for our salvation. (Luke 22, Matt 26, Mark 14, John 13)

Study Questions

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Take note of the verbs in this passage. What do they reveal about the roles of God and his people here?

Q: What do these three feasts celebrate?

Q: What emotions are expressed in this passage?

STUDY TIPS

Ⓐ Pray

Ⓑ Look closely

- Commands
- Descriptions of God or His People
- Words and phrases
- Repetitions, Contrasts, Surprises
- Big Bible Words
- Characters
- Dialogue – who is talking to whom?
- Setting (timeline and place) – does it change?

Ⓒ Look at the context

- What kind of writing is this?
(eg. narrative, poetry, teaching)
- How does the dialogue progress?
- Divide the passage into its natural sections, looking for transitions in setting, speaker, or theme can help with this
- Create a heading for each section
- Summarize the section in your own words

Ⓓ Share

- In your small group share something you noticed



WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Read Deut 14.22-29, 16.18-22

Why is Passover the first festival to be celebrated?

What is Israel remembering with these festivals, and what does this reveal about Israel's motivations for feasting?

Verse 16-17 are not instructions for the festivals themselves. Why does the passage finish this way?

STUDY TIPS

Ⓐ Look at the context

- Read the passage immediately before and after
- How does the context help us understand the meaning of the text?
- Look up cross references.
- How do they help us better understand the passage?
- In your small group share how the context has added to your understanding of this week's passage.

Ⓑ Summarize the big idea

- So, what's the main idea of the passage? How would you title this passage?
- In your small group share the main idea

Ⓒ Stop to pray

- Thank God for all he has already revealed to you, and ask him to help you see Jesus more clearly, and love him more deeply, through the next steps of your study.



WHAT DOES IT REVEAL?

How do these festivals reflect the actions of God to Israel?

What are some valid responses the people should have?

Why are the festivals so important to the life of Israel?

HOW WILL I RESPOND?

Deuteronomy 16 puts the generosity of God on full display and brings with it a call to respond. What opportunities for celebrating God's generosity are there for us as Christians?

How do our weekly celebrations aid you in responding generously to God and to his people?

How do Christ's death and resurrection shape your weekly and monthly patterns of life?



