

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

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

Verse 1

Keep the passover - A feast so called because the angel that destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians, seeing the blood of the appointed sacrifice sprinkled on the lintels and door-posts of the Israelites' houses, passed over Them, and did not destroy any of their firstborn. See the notes on Exodus 12:2, and Exodus 12:3 (note), etc.

Verse 3

Bread of affliction - Because, being baked without leaven, it was unsavoury, and put them in mind of their afflictive bondage in Egypt.

Verse 11

Thou shalt rejoice - The offerings of the Israelites were to be eaten with festivity, communicated to their friends with liberality, and bestowed on the poor with great generosity, that they might partake with them in these repasts with joy before the Lord. To answer these views it was necessary to eat the flesh while it was fresh, as in that climate putrefaction soon took place; therefore they were commanded to let nothing remain until the morning, Deuteronomy 16:4. This consideration is sufficient to account for the command here, without having recourse to those moral and evangelical reasons that are assigned by the learned and devout Mr.

Ainsworth for the command. How beneficent and cheerful is the design of this institution! - Harmer, vol. i., p. 396.

Verse 16

Three times in a year - See Exodus 23:14 (note), where all the Jewish feasts are explained. See also Leviticus 23:34 (note).

Verse 18

Judges and officers shalt thou make - Judges, שופטים (shophetim), among the Hebrews, were probably the same as our magistrates or justices of the peace. Officers, שוטרים (shoterim), seem to have been the same as our inquest sergeants, beadles, etc., whose office it was to go into the houses, shops, etc., and examine weights, measures, and the civil conduct of the people. When they found any thing amiss, they brought the person offending before the magistrate, and he was punished by the officer on the spot. They seem also to have acted as heralds in the army, Deuteronomy 20:5. See also Rab. Maimon in Sanhedrin. In China, for all minor offenses, the person when found guilty is punished on the spot, in the presence of the magistrate or mandarin of justice.

Verse 21

Thou shalt not plant thee a grove, etc. - We have already seen that groves were planted about idol temples for the purpose of the obscene worship performed in them. (See on Deuteronomy 12:3 (note)). On this account God would have no groves or thickets about his altar, that there might be no room for suspicion that any thing contrary to the strictest purity was transacted there. Every part of the Divine worship was publicly performed, for the purpose of general edification.