

**Deuteronomy**  
**Week 5**  
**Worship of God in Canaan**  
**Chapters 13-16:17**

**I. Chapter 13: Apostates**

For the Israelites, no compromise is acceptable concerning the one and only God. This is totally unique in ancient times. Indeed, even today, all monotheism has its roots in the OT. Since the people live in the land only so long as they worship the LORD in the correct way, the sin of going after other Gods is perhaps the worse that can be committed. Indeed, all sin comes from deviating from what the one true God wants. If they pursue other gods, God would automatically curse the Jews as has already been stated by Moses.

**Verses 1-5: False Prophets or False Dreamer of Dreams**

The standard for a prophet is high...100% accuracy in prediction. The punishment for falling short is harsh...death. Why is this apparently so important to God?

How would you know today if someone's teaching is from God?

**Verses 6-11: False Belief in Individuals**

Clearly the unbeliever can come from within the community of believers; by pointing out family members, Moses emphasizes that no one is exempt in following the one and only God. Diversity does not appear to be supported by this passage and many like it in both the OT and the NT. Why must Christians be strict in following God and following Him only?

**Verse 11-18: False Belief in Entire Communities**

Whole communities might err. Notice that the believer is not allowed to ignore the sin, but is commanded to act. When can a Christian ignore sin today?

Apparently everyone in the town must be put to death, including perhaps some who might not have participated in false worship. Even if they did not participate directly, the fact that they are still alive would have shown that they had not tried hard enough to take the required actions.

What do you think should be the "limits of toleration" for a Christian?

**II. Chapter 14: Prohibited/Proper Practices**

**Verses 1-2: Ornamental Worship**

Other cultures worshipped their gods through ornamental body decorations, such as still happens in some parts of the world, such as by South Pacific Polynesians. Cutting of the body would have included tattooing. Note: 1 Kings 18:28.

**Verses 3-21: Foods**

Compare to the expanded version in Leviticus 11.

**Verses 22-29: Regulations Concerning Tithes**

A seven-year cycle for the tithes might look like this

First two years:	Communal meals
Third year:	Tithe to un-landed/Levites
Next two years:	Communal meals
Sixth year:	Tithe to un-landed/Levites
Seventh year:	Sabbatical year (no crops)

Then the cycle would start over.

Please note that Deut. 26 also deal with the tithe. Indeed, it can be argued that all of Chapter 15 also is part of it, especially given the final section.

In this chapter, we see some ways that the ancient Israelites were commanded to separate themselves from the rest of their world. How should today's Christians separate from the world?

**III. Chapter 15: Additional Directions**

**Verses 1-11: Sabbath Forgiving of Debts**

Another sabbatical-year requirement is given. This one requires forgiving debts at the end of the seven year cycle. Debts were primarily given so that the poor could continue to eat and live. Since Christians today and the Israelites in the Promise Land are commanded to help the poor, not doing so because the Sabbath was near would have undercut the reason for loaning money in the first place.

This is interpreted a couple of ways:

1. Debts permanently forgiven in the seventh year (NIV)
  2. No interest or repayment on the debt is required. (NASB and NKJV more general)
- Interestingly, also, the NIV speaks of cancellation, the NASB speaks of remission, and the NKJV speaks of release throughout the passage.

Is there anything that you can adopt to today from verses 1-11?

**Verses 12-18: Sabbath Freeing of Slaves**

If the situation was dire enough, a person might sell themselves or might sell a family member into slavery. In a sense, internal Israelite slavery was intended for humane purposes (although we see it abused in many parts of the OT). In addition to allowing for a slave to be freed, the regulation also provides a method whereby a slave can choose to remain a slave.

**Verses 19-23: Law Concerning the Firstborn**

Exodus 13 says that the firstborn of the flocks are to be sacrificed. Apparently the sacrifice is a fellowship offering whereby those offering it eat the animal.

#### **IV. Chapter 16:1-17: The Three Annual Festivals**

All three festivals were inaugurated while the Israelites were in the wilderness, or before as in the case of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread. As such, while the differences are slight, there can be minor emphasis of rules. The later Jews, after the Diaspora, redefined again, or perhaps interpreted again, how to do these festivals. After the demise of Jerusalem, the Jews had to redefine them again. For instance, the famous statement associated with the Passover would have come into being at that time, "Next year in Jerusalem."

The past chapter ended with a discussion of laws concerning firstborn animals. This chapter begins with a discussion of the Passover. In the original Passover, the angel of death passed over the firstborn of Israel while killing the firstborn of Egypt, both animals and people. As such, there is a natural relationship of the beginning of this chapter with the end of the last one.

Why is it important for God's people to have holidays to celebrate the Lord?

##### **Verses 1-8: Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread**

Here Passover refers to the entire Passover festival, including the week after the meal, not just the Passover evening or the specific meal. While originally the Passover was done in people's houses, the central location (i.e. Jerusalem) was the place in the Promise Land; in the Wilderness, it was at the Tabernacle.

**Verses 9-12:** Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, or Feast of First Harvests/First Fruits  
Apparently the seven-week count is to begin on the Sabbath after the Passover:

##### **Lev 23:16**

**16 Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD.**

**NIV**

Again the 50 days are inclusive. So the count is the Sabbath, plus seven weeks or 1 day, plus 49 days equal 50 days.

**Verses 13-17:** Feast of Tabernacle or Ingathering

"Tabernacles" is the feast of fall harvests.

Verse 16 points out that all three feasts or festivals should be held in Jerusalem.