

**Sunday, March 31**

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**Deuteronomy 16:1 - 17:20**

**16 1** “In honor of the LORD your God, celebrate the Passover each year in the early spring, in the month of Abib, for that was the month in which the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. **2** Your Passover sacrifice may be from either the flock or the herd, and it must be sacrificed to the LORD your God at the designated place of worship—the place he chooses for his name to be honored. **3** Eat it with bread made without yeast. For seven days the bread you eat must be made without yeast, as when you escaped from Egypt in such a hurry. Eat this bread—the bread of suffering—so that as long as you live you will remember the day you departed from Egypt. **4** Let no yeast be found in any house throughout your land for those seven days. And when you sacrifice the Passover lamb on the evening of the first day, do not let any of the meat remain until the next morning. **5** “You may not sacrifice the Passover in just any of the towns that the LORD your God is giving you. **6** You must offer it only at the designated place of worship—the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored. Sacrifice it there in the evening as the sun goes down on the anniversary of your exodus from Egypt. **7** Roast the lamb and eat it in the place the LORD your God chooses. Then you may go back to your tents the next morning. **8** For the next six days you may not eat any bread made with yeast. On the seventh day proclaim another holy day in honor of the LORD your God, and no work may be done on that day. **9** “Count off seven weeks from when you first begin to cut the grain at the time of harvest. **10** Then celebrate the Festival of Harvest to honor the LORD your God. Bring him a voluntary offering in proportion to the blessings you have received from him. **11** This is a time to celebrate before the LORD your God at the designated place of worship he will choose for his name to be honored. Celebrate with your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites from your towns, and the foreigners, orphans, and widows who live among you. **12** Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, so be careful to obey all these decrees. **13** “You must observe the Festival of Shelters for seven days at the end of the harvest season, after the grain has been threshed and the grapes have been pressed. **14** This festival will be a happy time of celebrating with your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows from your towns. **15** For seven days you must celebrate this festival to honor the LORD your God at the place he chooses, for it is he who blesses you with bountiful harvests and gives you success in all your work. This festival will be a time of great joy for all. **16** “Each year every man in Israel

must celebrate these three festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. On each of these occasions, all men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he chooses, but they must not appear before the LORD without a gift for him. **17** All must give as they are able, according to the blessings given to them by the LORD your God. **18** “Appoint judges and officials for yourselves from each of your tribes in all the towns the LORD your God is giving you. They must judge the people fairly. **19** You must never twist justice or show partiality. Never accept a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly. **20** Let true justice prevail, so you may live and occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you. **21** “You must never set up a wooden Asherah pole beside the altar you build for the LORD your God. **22** And never set up sacred pillars for worship, for the LORD your God hates them.

**17 1** “Never sacrifice sick or defective cattle, sheep, or goats to the LORD your God, for he detests such gifts. **2** “When you begin living in the towns the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman among you might do evil in the sight of the LORD your God and violate the covenant. **3** For instance, they might serve other gods or worship the sun, the moon, or any of the stars—the forces of heaven—which I have strictly forbidden. **4** When you hear about it, investigate the matter thoroughly. If it is true that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, **5** then the man or woman who has committed such an evil act must be taken to the gates of the town and stoned to death. **6** But never put a person to death on the testimony of only one witness. There must always be two or three witnesses. **7** The witnesses must throw the first stones, and then all the people may join in. In this way, you will purge the evil from among you. **8** “Suppose a case arises in a local court that is too hard for you to decide—for instance, whether someone is guilty of murder or only of manslaughter, or a difficult lawsuit, or a case involving different kinds of assault. Take such legal cases to the place the LORD your God will choose, **9** and present them to the Levitical priests or the judge on duty at that time. They will hear the case and declare the verdict. **10** You must carry out the verdict they announce and the sentence they prescribe at the place the LORD chooses. You must do exactly what they say. **11** After they have interpreted the law and declared their verdict, the sentence they impose must be fully executed; do not modify it in any way. **12** Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest who represents the LORD your God must die. In this way you will purge the evil from Israel. **13** Then everyone else will hear about it and be afraid to act so arrogantly. **14** “You are about to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you take it over and settle there, you may think, ‘We should select a king to rule over us like the other nations around us.’ **15** If this happens, be sure to select as king the man the LORD your God chooses. You must appoint a fellow Israelite; he may not be a foreigner. **16** “The king must

not build up a large stable of horses for himself or send his people to Egypt to buy horses, for the LORD has told you, 'You must never return to Egypt.' **17** The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will turn his heart away from the LORD . And he must not accumulate large amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself. **18** "When he sits on the throne as king, he must copy for himself this body of instruction on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. **19** He must always keep that copy with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the LORD his God by obeying all the terms of these instructions and decrees. **20** This regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud and acting as if he is above his fellow citizens. It will also prevent him from turning away from these commands in the smallest way. And it will ensure that he and his descendants will reign for many generations in Israel.

#### **Luke 9:7 - 27**

**9 7** When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, heard about everything Jesus was doing, he was puzzled. Some were saying that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. **8** Others thought Jesus was Elijah or one of the other prophets risen from the dead. **9** "I beheaded John," Herod said, "so who is this man about whom I hear such stories?" And he kept trying to see him. **10** When the apostles returned, they told Jesus everything they had done. Then he slipped quietly away with them toward the town of Bethsaida. **11** But the crowds found out where he was going, and they followed him. He welcomed them and taught them about the Kingdom of God, and he healed those who were sick. **12** Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said, "Send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they can find food and lodging for the night. There is nothing to eat here in this remote place." **13** But Jesus said, "You feed them." "But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Or are you expecting us to go and buy enough food for this whole crowd?" **14** For there were about 5,000 men there. Jesus replied, "Tell them to sit down in groups of about fifty each." **15** So the people all sat down. **16** Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. **17** They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers!**18** One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. Only his disciples were with him, and he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" **19** "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead." **20** Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah sent from God!" **21** Jesus warned his

disciples not to tell anyone who he was. **22** “The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things,” he said. “He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.” **23** Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. **24** If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. **25** And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? **26** If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. **27** I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God.”

### **Psalms 72:1 - 20**

**72** **1** Give your love of justice to the king, O God, and righteousness to the king's son. **2** Help him judge your people in the right way; let the poor always be treated fairly. **3** May the mountains yield prosperity for all, and may the hills be fruitful. **4** Help him to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy, and to crush their oppressors. **5** May they fear you as long as the sun shines, as long as the moon remains in the sky. Yes, forever! **6** May the king's rule be refreshing like spring rain on freshly cut grass, like the showers that water the earth. **7** May all the godly flourish during his reign. May there be abundant prosperity until the moon is no more. **8** May he reign from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. **9** Desert nomads will bow before him; his enemies will fall before him in the dust. **10** The western kings of Tarshish and other distant lands will bring him tribute. The eastern kings of Sheba and Seba will bring him gifts. **11** All kings will bow before him, and all nations will serve him. **12** He will rescue the poor when they cry to him; he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them. **13** He feels pity for the weak and the needy, and he will rescue them. **14** He will redeem them from oppression and violence, for their lives are precious to him. **15** Long live the king! May the gold of Sheba be given to him. May the people always pray for him and bless him all day long. **16** May there be abundant grain throughout the land, flourishing even on the hilltops. May the fruit trees flourish like the trees of Lebanon, and may the people thrive like grass in a field. **17** May the king's name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun shines. May all nations be blessed through him and bring him praise. **18** Praise the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does such wonderful things. **19** Praise his glorious name forever! Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen! **20** (This ends the prayers of David son of Jesse.)

**Proverbs 12:8 - 9**

**12 8** A sensible person wins admiration, but a warped mind is despised. **9** Better to be an ordinary person with a servant than to be self-important but have no food.