

Deuteronomy 18:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.

Analysis

The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep—(גַּאֲשִׁית דָּגָן תִּרְשֶׁב וַיְצַפְּךָב וְגַאֲשִׁית גֵּז צָאן) reshit (firstfruit) appears twice, emphasizing priority. God claims the first and best, not leftovers. The agricultural triad—grain (dagan), new wine (tirosh), and oil (yitshar)—represents Canaan's staple crops, while fleece (gez) represents pastoral wealth.

Giving firstfruits required faith: farmers gave before seeing the full harvest's yield. This trust acknowledged God as provider and owner of all. Exodus 23:19 and Numbers 18:12-13 establish firstfruits as holy to the LORD, given to priests who represented Him. The principle extends beyond agriculture—Proverbs 3:9 commands honoring God "with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase."

New Testament application: Jesus is aparche (firstfruits) of resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20,23); believers are firstfruits of God's creatures (James 1:18); the church's generous giving should follow firstfruit priority (1 Corinthians 16:2). Withholding firstfruits was covenant violation—Haggai 1:4-11 shows the consequence of putting personal comfort before sacred obligation.

Historical Context

This law governed Israel's agricultural economy throughout their history in Canaan. Firstfruits festivals (Feast of Firstfruits, Pentecost) celebrated harvest and

acknowledged God's provision. Nehemiah 10:35-37 records post-exilic Israel renewing commitment to firstfruits after neglecting them. The law assumes Canaanite settlement and agricultural lifestyle, showing Deuteronomy's preparation for life in the Promised Land rather than wilderness wandering.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Do you give God your 'firstfruits'—the first and best—or leftovers from what remains after your needs are met?
2. How does prioritizing God financially demonstrate trust that He will provide for the rest of your needs?

Interlinear Text

וְרֹאשׁ יִתְהַלֵּךְ תִּרְשַׁב וְיִצְבְּךְ בָּהּ יְרֹאשׁ יִתְהַלֵּךְ

The firstfruit **also of thy corn** **of thy wine** **and of thine oil** **The firstfruit**

H7225

H1715

H8492

H3323

H7225

וְאֶת גָּזֶב

צָאֵב

תַּתְּנֵא

לְ

of the fleece **of thy sheep** **shalt thou give**

H1488

H6629

H5414

H0

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 22:29 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.

Exodus 23:19 (Parallel theme): The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Leviticus 23:10 (Parallel theme): Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:

Leviticus 23:17 (Parallel theme): Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baken with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.