

Deuteronomy 26:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:

Analysis

And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. This declaration forms the culminating act of the firstfruits offering, a liturgical ritual prescribed in Deuteronomy 26:1-11. The Hebrew word bikkurim (בְּכָרִים, "firstfruits") refers to the initial and best portion of the harvest, acknowledging God as the ultimate source of all provision. By bringing the firstfruits, the worshiper publicly confesses that the land, the harvest, and indeed all blessings flow from Yahweh's gracious covenant faithfulness.

The phrase "which thou, O LORD, hast given me" emphasizes divine gift rather than human achievement. This counters the natural human tendency toward self-sufficiency and pride (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). The act of setting the basket "before the LORD thy God" transforms agricultural produce into a sacred offering, moving the transaction from the economic sphere to the spiritual realm. The subsequent command to "worship before the LORD thy God" indicates that giving flows from adoration—worship precedes and motivates generosity.

Theologically, this practice establishes several vital principles:

1. God owns all things and we are stewards
2. giving the first and best honors God's priority
3. gratitude should be expressed tangibly, not merely verbally

4. worship integrates all of life, including economic activity.

This ceremony foreshadows Christ as the ultimate "firstfruits" (1 Corinthians 15:20-23), the first and best offering given to God, and our giving in response to His grace (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Historical Context

The firstfruits ceremony took place annually after Israel entered Canaan and began agricultural life in the Promised Land. This ritual marked the transition from wilderness wandering to settled cultivation, from manna dependence to land productivity. The ceremony occurred during the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), fifty days after Passover, when the wheat harvest was gathered.

Archaeological evidence from ancient Near Eastern cultures shows widespread firstfruits offerings to various deities, but Israel's practice was distinctly covenantal. The accompanying recitation (Deuteronomy 26:5-10) rehearsed salvation history—from Jacob's sojourning to Egyptian bondage to exodus and conquest. This transformed a common agricultural ritual into a confession of faith and remembrance of redemptive history.

The basket of firstfruits typically contained barley, wheat, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates—the seven species characteristic of Canaan's bounty (Deuteronomy 8:8). The priest's reception of the basket and its placement before the altar symbolized God's acceptance of both gift and giver. Later Jewish tradition (Mishnah tractate Bikkurim) elaborated this ceremony with processions, music, and communal celebration, making it one of Israel's most joyful worship events. For a people recently liberated from slavery, offering the first produce of their own land was profoundly meaningful—a tangible expression of freedom, ownership, and covenant relationship with Yahweh.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the principle of giving God the 'firstfruits' rather than leftovers challenge our modern approach to finances, time, and talents?
2. In what ways does connecting our giving to worship (as in 'worship before the LORD thy God') transform the act of generosity from duty to delight?
3. How does remembering God's past faithfulness (as Israel did in this ceremony) strengthen our trust in His present and future provision?
4. What does it mean practically to acknowledge that everything we have is a gift from God rather than the result of our own effort and skill?
5. How does Christ as the ultimate 'firstfruits' offering shape our understanding of stewardship and sacrificial giving in the New Covenant?

Interlinear Text

הִנֵּה הַעֲדָת הָ	H6258	הִנֵּה אָתִי	H2009	הִנֵּה אָתִי And now behold I have brought	H935	אֶת	H853	רִאשִׁית	H7225	פָּר ִ	H6529
בְּאַדְמָה הַ	H127	אֲשֶׁר	H834	לִי נָתַת	H5414	יְהִי הָ	H0	וְהַנְּחַת	H3068	לִפְנֵי	H6440
of the land	H127	hast given	H834	the LORD	H5414	me And thou shalt set	H3240	before	H3068	thy God	H430

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