

Deuteronomy 26:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.

Analysis

Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth (reshit kol-peri ha'adamah)—not merely some firstfruits but from the first, the choicest portion. The Hebrew reshit carries priority and preeminence; offering firstfruits acknowledges God's ownership and tests whether Israel trusts Him for continued provision. To consume the harvest before offering firstfruits presumes self-sufficiency and denies divine dependence.

The requirement to **put it in a basket** (tene) and **go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there** mandates pilgrimage to the central sanctuary. This centralizes worship, preventing syncretism with local Canaanite shrines. The phrase leshakken shemo sham ("to cause His name to dwell there") signifies YHWH's special presence—not that God is confined spatially, but that He meets His people at this appointed location.

The basket imagery appears again in Deuteronomy 28:5, 17 in the blessings and curses. Faithful firstfruits offering yields blessed baskets; covenant disobedience brings cursed baskets. The ceremony links agricultural prosperity directly to covenant fidelity.

Historical Context

Firstfruits festivals were widespread in the ancient Near East, but Israel's ritual distinctively combined agricultural thanksgiving with recitation of exodus deliverance. The practice anticipated settlement in Canaan's agricultural economy, contrasting with wilderness manna which required no cultivation. The central sanctuary requirement prevented the proliferation of local shrines where Canaanite religious practices might corrupt Yahwistic worship—a concern validated by Israel's later history of syncretism at local 'high places.'¹

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Do you give God the firstfruits of your income and time, or only what remains after your priorities are met?
2. How does bringing offerings to corporate worship (rather than private devotion alone) strengthen covenant community?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר תָּلַקְחֶת	מִרְאֵשׁ יְתָה	כָּל	פָּרִי	הַאֲדָמ הָ	אֲשֶׁר
That thou shalt take	of the first	H3605	of all the fruit	of the earth	H834
H3947	H7225		H6529	H127	
תְּבִיא	מִאָרָצֶךָ	אֲשֶׁר	יְהִי הָ	אֱלֹהִיךְ	נָתַת אֱלֹהִיךְ
which thou shalt bring	of thy land	H834	that the LORD	thy God	giveth
H935	H776		H3068	H430	H5414
לְךָ	וְשָׁמַת	בְּטַנָּא	וְבָلַכְתָּ	אֶל	בָּמָקָם
H0	thee and shalt put	it in a basket	and shalt go	H413	unto the place
H7760	H2935		H1980	H4725	H834
יְבָחר	יְהִי הָ	אֱלֹהִיךְ	לְשָׁכָן	שָׁמָן	שָׁמָן
shall choose	that the LORD	thy God	to place	his name	H8033
H977	H3068	H430	H7931	H8034	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:19 (References God): 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.

Exodus 23:16 (Parallel theme): And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

Exodus 34:26 (References God): The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Romans 11:16 (Parallel theme): For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

Romans 8:23 (Parallel theme): And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (Parallel theme): But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

1 Corinthians 16:2 (References God): Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Deuteronomy 16:10 (References God): And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

Ezekiel 20:40 (References God): For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.

Ezekiel 44:30 (Parallel theme): And the first of all the firstfruits of all things, and every oblation of all, of every sort of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.

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