

Exodus 23:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

Two commands:

1. Firstfruits—dedicate first and best to God (not after enjoying your portion first).
2. Don't boil kid in mother's milk—likely a Canaanite fertility ritual.

The command bans syncretism—don't adopt pagan practices. Later Jewish tradition expanded this to complete separation of meat and dairy. The principle: God deserves first and best; pagan practices are off-limits. Firstfruits demonstrate trust—giving first without knowing what follows. Jesus is 'firstfruits of those who sleep' (1 Corinthians 15:20); the church is 'firstfruits of His creatures' (James 1:18). We give God our firsts because He gave His firstborn for us.

Historical Context

Boiling a kid in its mother's milk appears in Canaanite texts (Ugaritic literature) as a ritual practice. God's ban separated Israel from pagan fertility rites. The firstfruits offering celebrated harvest while acknowledging God as provider.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why does God prohibit adopting pagan religious practices even if their meaning is forgotten?
2. How does giving firstfruits demonstrate faith in God's provision for the rest?

Interlinear Text

רֵאשִׁית ית	בְּכֹרֵי	אֲדָמָה תְּבִיא	תְּבִיא יא	בֵּית ית
The first	of the firstfruits	of thy land	thou shalt bring	into the house
H7225	H1061	H127	H935	H1004
יְהוָה ה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְ	לֹא	תִבְשֵׁל ל	בְּחֵלֵב ב
of the LORD	thy God	H3808	Thou shalt not seethe	a kid
H3068	H430		H1310	H1423
אִמּוֹ:				
in his mother's				
H517				

Additional Cross-References

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.

Deuteronomy 14:21 (References God): Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Deuteronomy 26:10 (References God): 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:

Nehemiah 10:35 (References Lord): And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:

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.

Deuteronomy 26:2 (References God): 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.

Revelation 14:4 (References God): These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Proverbs 12:10 (Parallel theme): A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

Jeremiah 10:3 (Parallel theme): For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

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