

Numbers 15:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it.

Analysis

Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering—this challah (חַלָּה) offering made from the first portion of bread dough consecrated even household food preparation to Yahweh. Unlike agricultural firstfruits brought to the sanctuary, this offering occurred in the home, sacralizing domestic life. Every bread-baking became an act of worship, reminding Israel that God's claim extended beyond formal religious rituals into everyday activities.

The comparison **as ye do the heave offering of the threshingfloor** connects household bread-making to the harvest-time grain offering. Just as the threshing floor's first grain went to God, so the kitchen's first dough. This comprehensive system meant Israel couldn't separate "secular" from "sacred"—all life belonged to Yahweh. Paul echoes this principle: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Historical Context

Bread was the staple food of ancient Near Eastern diet, making this a frequent, everyday offering. Archaeological excavations reveal bread ovens in Israelite homes, typically operated by women. This offering thus particularly involved women's domestic labor, recognizing their work as worship. The practice continued in rabbinic Judaism as hafrashat challah (separating challah), still

observed by Orthodox Jews today, though without temple/priesthood, the portion is typically burned.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How can you consecrate routine daily activities as acts of worship?
2. What does God's concern for household bread-making teach about the sacred-secular divide?
3. How might viewing your work—whether cooking, carpentry, or computer programming—as offering to God transform your attitude?

Interlinear Text

כְּתָרֹם	ת	פָּרָיָם	יְמֹן	סֶלֶת	הַעֲרֵס	תְּכַם	מִן	רְאשִׁית	כְּתָרֹם	ת	פָּרָיָם	יְמֹן	סֶלֶת	הַעֲרֵס	תְּכַם	מִן	רְאשִׁית	
of the first		Ye shall offer up		as ye do the heave offering		of your dough		a cake		Ye shall offer up		as ye do the heave offering						
H7225		H7311		H8641		H6182		H2471		H3651		H853		H1637				

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 2:14 (Sacrifice): And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears.

Exodus 34:26 (Parallel theme): 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.

Nehemiah 10:37 (Sacrifice): And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

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.

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.

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: