

Numbers 15:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations.

Analysis

Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations—the emphatic repetition underscores this as perpetual legislation, not temporary wilderness regulation. "In your generations" (ledorotekem, לדורותיכם) means "throughout your generations," establishing this as permanent covenant obligation. Each generation must teach the next to honor God from the first of their produce.

The generational emphasis connects to covenant continuity. God's relationship with Israel wasn't just with one generation but perpetually with their descendants. Each generation must actively choose covenant faithfulness, teaching children to give God priority in material blessings. This anticipates the Shema's command: "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (Deuteronomy 6:7). Failure to pass covenant faithfulness to the next generation led to cycles of apostasy in Judges.

Historical Context

Israel's history shows repeated patterns of apostasy when one generation failed to teach the next. Judges 2:10 records: "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD." The exile ultimately resulted from accumulated generational unfaithfulness. Post-exilic Judaism emphasized careful transmission of traditions to prevent recurrence. The New Testament continues this emphasis:

"Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6); fathers should bring up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What spiritual practices are you actively passing to the next generation in your family or church?
2. How does the generational nature of covenant faith challenge individualistic modern Christianity?
3. What would it look like to prioritize spiritual heritage as intentionally as financial inheritance?

Interlinear Text

תְּרוּמָה הִיא מִרְאֵשֶׁת
an heave offering is the first
H8641 H3068

לְדִרְךָ תִּיכְמַה
in your generations
H1755

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 29:28 (Sacrifice): And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the LORD.

