

Numbers 18:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it.

Analysis

And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it.

This verse extends the firstfruits principle beyond the three staples (verse 12) to include all early-ripening produce. Bikkurei (בִּכּוּרֵי, "first ripe") emphasizes earliest maturity—whatever reached edibility first belonged to God and His priests.

"In the land" (ba-aretz, בְּאֶרֶץ) refers to Canaan, the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. This command anticipated Israel's settlement and agricultural life, showing God's faithfulness to bring them into land-based prosperity. The repetition of the purity requirement ("every one that is clean in thine house") reinforces that participating in holy provision demands holy living.

Early fruit represented hope and thanksgiving—farmers brought the first taste of harvest before knowing whether the full crop would succeed. This required faith that God would bless the remainder. Similarly, Christian giving of firstfruits (before knowing whether we'll have enough) demonstrates trust in God's continued provision. Proverbs 3:9-10 promises that honoring God with firstfruits ensures fuller barns—generosity to God never impoverishes His people.

Historical Context

The Festival of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-14) and later Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21) celebrated agricultural beginnings. Deuteronomy 26:1-11 prescribes a liturgy for bringing firstfruits to the temple, including recounting God's faithfulness from Abraham through the Exodus. This connected present abundance with salvation history. The practice continued through the Second Temple period. Jesus's resurrection occurred during Firstfruits Festival (day after Passover Sabbath), making Him literally the "firstfruits" (1 Corinthians 15:20) of the resurrection harvest—the first and guarantee of the full harvest to come.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'first ripe' blessings in your life should be consecrated to God before you enjoy the full harvest?
2. How does bringing firstfruits—before knowing the full crop will succeed—require and build faith in God's provision?
3. In what ways is Christ as 'firstfruits' of resurrection your guarantee of future bodily resurrection and eternal life?

Interlinear Text

בְּכֹרֶי י	כָּל	אֲשֶׁר	בְּאֶרֶץ מ	אֲשֶׁר
And whatsoever is first ripe	H3605	H834	in the land	H834
H1061			H776	
יָבִיאוּ	לַיהוָה	כָּל	יְהוָה ה	לְךָ
which they shall bring	unto the LORD	H0	H1961	H3605
H935	H3068			
טָהוֹר	בְּבֵיתְךָ	יֹאכְלֶנּוּ:		
shall be thine every one that is clean	in thine house	shall eat		
H2889	H1004	H398		

Additional Cross-References

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.
