

Deuteronomy Chapter 26 Commentary

1 And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; 2 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.

"when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein" God is directing Israel of what to do when you are in the land of promise. When they inherit their possession, they are to offer the firstfruits of the land as on offering and acknowledging of God's fulfilled promise.

We can certainly see an application to our own lives in Christ in this. When we are born again, we are given eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand, that the land of promise, for us here, is the church of Salvation by Grace, established by Jesus Christ. We are to come to the church, our present day land of promise, and present our petition to be received therein. We may have nothing to offer for entrance into the land of promise except the gift of possession that God has given by promise. That is what Israel had when they entered the land of promise, then they had to begin the warfare necessary to occupy. In other words; we come believing that we have been saved by God's grace and that we have a rightful place there.

I would point out; the offering, of firstfruits they are to bring, is after they have possession and occupy the land of promise. Once we enter the land of promise and are situated therein then we can bring forth the firstfruits of the land of promise, which we had nothing to do with producing. Since we understand that this charge is not only to the individual but also to the whole of Israel, we see that each church member can bring firstfruits and then the church as whole can bring its firstfruits. promises.

"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," What are the firstfruits of the earth spoken of here to us today? It is representative of what happens when we are born again by the Holy Spirit. What do you mean? Our firstfruits, upon being born again, are the revelations of that miraculous work, of salvation by grace, which has been accomplished in our lives. This is what we bring to the church and thereby acknowledge what God has done for us. After the new birth, you should be able and willing to come to the church and announce, God has saved me by his marvelous grace, and I now have eternal life. God has forgiven my sins through the finished work of Jesus Christ, and I bring my thanks and praise to offer unto you, that you may present my thanksgiving and praise before God.

Some other firstfruits that we bring forth are:

- We now have love for God, for Christ, and for the brethren, which is evidence that we have been born again.
- We now have eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that understand the revelations of the truths of the gospel of Jesus, the Christ.
- We now have that promise and great hope of eternal life.
- We now have that joy that is eternal.
- We now have that peace that passes all understanding.

- We now have all the blessings that come to us when we are given the gift of salvation and eternal life in Christ. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

But, you ask; what about the church as a whole bring the firstfruits? I believe that this is emblematic of the assembled body, which we are commanded to be in: ***Heb 10:23-25; 23 "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.***" and doing what the church is commanded to do, some examples:

- Singing praise and worship to our God and our Saviour,
- Praying to God, with thanksgiving for his multitude of blessings, and the bountifulness of the land of promise,
- Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the glory, honor, and praise of God, even to the salvation of the unsaved,
- And last but not least teaching the revealed truths of God's word to the congregations, through which the light of God's grace may be beheld more brightly by the members and those who are outside and looking on.

"and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there." We are also reminded; when we are born again; we need to join the church body, which is the place that God has chosen to place his name. When we make the public confession, and profession, of our faith to the church; we are giving evidence that we are born again.

However, we are to use discretion in choosing the church home. What do you mean? We see; God directs to bring the offering to the place he has chosen to place his name. Just because there is a sign that says church, it doesn't mean it is a place that God has chosen to place his name. Check the church out and verify that they are living and worshipping in accordance with ***"thus saith the Lord."*** If the body of believers be found true; then bring forth thine gift to the Lord. Do not join to a church that is practicing or exhorting ungodliness, or "thus saith the world."

What other things can we learn, and apply to our lives, from the firstfruit offerings to God? We can learn, just as Israel is being taught, put God first in all things. Prefer to give to God, first of the bounties given to you, attend your own needs, and continue by reaching out to others. We are taught the same principle in: ***Mt 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*** This is not a hard principle to understand. God plainly tells us that if we apply to him first, in all things, he will provide all the things we need to live, and to fulfill his purpose for our lives.

3 And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us. 4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

When you enter the land of promise, and God has given you victory over the inhabitants thereof; you are to collect of the first of all the fruits of the land, place it in a basket, and bring it to the Lord, in the place that He shall choose. You are to bring your offering to the priest, which is Jesus Christ our High Priest. By doing this, you are to accomplish several things:

- You are acknowledging; God has fulfilled his promise of bringing you into the land of promise.
- You are acknowledging; God has fulfilled his promise of causing the earth to bring forth its abundance, in your life, by his divine blessing.
- You are confessing; your own obedience to God's commandment.
- You are acknowledging; that God has blessed you, and your thankfulness for that blessing.
- We remember from whom, and through whom, our blessings in life come. Praise and glory to our Saviour and Lord, Jesus, the Christ, who is our High Priest.

This would be like entering the church, after being born again, and beginning to count the multitude of blessings that God has bestowed upon you, and giving thanks to God, for the multitude of his blessings in your new life. After all; Israel is in the land of promise by the gift of God, and we are in the church by the gift of God, seen in:

- ***Ec 5:19 "Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God."*** Even the Old Testament saints understood where their blessings came from.
- ***Joh 4:10 "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."*** Here, we see the source of the living water is Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.
- ***Ac 8:20 "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."*** We understand that scripture testifies; we can't work it out ourselves or purchase it with money. No amount of work will bring you the gift of salvation by grace and eternal life in Christ, it is a gift from God.
- ***Ro 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*** Salvation and eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.
- ***Eph 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"*** We understand a gift is something given us from another, without obligation to us for it. If there is some obligation attached it is no longer a gift, but has become a wage. All our eternal blessings are a gift from God.

One last thought; we aren't just acknowledging the personal blessing; we are also acknowledging the national blessing. Salvation by grace is a family thing, and we must remember all parts of the family as in:

- The head; the Godhead in heaven and immortal glory, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.
- The body; the church; all those saved by the grace of God, established by Jesus Christ as our land of promise in time.
- The individual family; our own local church body.
- The individual; our own personal blessing.

5 And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: 6 And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: 7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: 8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs,

and with wonders: 9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. 10 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: 11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.

"A Syrian ready to perish was my father," By this phrase, Israel is caused to remember their natural lineage father, Jacob, who lived in Syria with his father-in-law. This was the place where he got his wife and most of his children were born. He had fled to Syria, to escape being killed by his brother Esau.

"and he went down into Egypt," Jacob had gone down into Egypt because of a sore famine, the want of bread, and the desire to live. Again, he is seeking to live, fleeing from death by famine.

"and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:" Israel is to acknowledge that Jacob became a great nation of people while in Egypt. Remember, Jacob's whole family, when he went to Egypt, was only seventy souls. They came forth a very populous nation, through the blessings of procreation while they spent 400 years in Egypt.

"And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: 7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers," Israel is to remember and acknowledge that they became slaves in Egypt. Did you notice; it was when they were under the duress of slavery that they began to pray to God? The same is true in the life of a born again sinner, how? It is only, when we realize that we are lost and ruined sinners, laboring under bondage and weight of unpaid sin debt, that we can truly cry out to God for deliverance. Even after being born again, when everything is going good in our lives, we often forget to pray and give thanks to God; therefore, God sends us more tribulations to bring us to remembrance of him and his great mercy and love.

"And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:" Israel is to remember, and acknowledge, how they were freed from slavery and bondage by the hand of God Almighty. The same is true of us in our confessions of faith to God. We did not save ourselves. We were saved by Christ.

"And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey." Israel is to remember and acknowledge; God brought them from Egypt, and gave them the land of promise, where they now reap fruits that they didn't plant. The same is true for us today in the church.

"And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:" Notice, Israel wasn't to bring the firstfruits to the priest and then forget it. After they have made all the acknowledgements, they are to worship God. Certainly, God deserves all our worship and praise for the multitude of blessing he has bestowed upon us.

"And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." Finally, Israel was to

rejoice in this moment; when they were brought to remembrance of the multitude of the blessings of God in their lives. Rejoicing in the fact; they were the nation of people, which God chose to bear his name on earth, chosen to be the people of God. They were to rejoice; with their families, and all others with whom they were associated.

Now, let's make application of each of these blessings, and acknowledgements, to our own lives as Christians. Having entered the land of promise and being given victory and rest from the enemies; you are to come before the Lord and confess where you came from, the kind of life you lived there, the afflictions you were under bondage to, and the greatness of the deliverance by the power of Christ, acknowledging the greatness of the blessings, worship and praise the Lord, and rejoice in all the good that God has done for you.

Surely, each born again sinner has a confession to make to God, which acknowledges that they were dead and alienated from God, lost under the burden of a sin debt they could not pay. Each should acknowledge; it was the great power of salvation wrought by the power of almighty God, through our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, which delivered them from this debt and gave them new life in a land of promise, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each should worship and praise God for this wonderful multitude of blessings, and rejoice in the salvation of the Lord.

12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; 13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: 14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. 15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

Israel already had this commandment from God, seen in: ***De 14:28-29; 28 "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: 29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest."***

The 3rd year of their occupation of the land of promise, Israel was to bring their tithe to the gate. They were to share of the tithe with the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; that they may all have the necessities of life, eat thereof, and live, and thereby give praise and glory to God.

We point out that it was those who are within thy gates. Not the world at large. It is not laid upon Israel to take care of the world at large, just the portion they have been given possession of. This is a lesson for the local church bodies; you are to take care of your own, and not the world at large. Attend to the needs of your church body, your families, your friends and neighbors, and let the larger world take care of itself, which is not your responsibility but their own.

"I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them:" They are to make confession; that they know the commandments of the Lord; that they have not forgotten them; and they have obeyed them. Do you have any problems fulfilling this obligation to God? I surely fail in many ways.

"I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead:" They are to make confession to the Lord, that they have not stolen anything from the tithe, nor used any of the tithe for any other purpose. They are to confess that they have fulfilled the commandments of God, then they are to ask for God's blessings upon the nation Israel (not a prayer just for their individual blessings, but for the whole of God's people) and the land of promise, acknowledging; God had fulfilled his promise to their forefathers, by giving the land of promise as a gift from God to them. Finally, they were to acknowledge that the land of promise was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey.

To make application, of the principle set forth here, in our own lives today, consider; Israel bringing to the gates these bounties and sharing them, is emblematic of the work of evangelism. Evangelism is a work that God's people are charged with, seen in:

- **2Ti 4:5 "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."**
- **Mr 16:14-15; 14 "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."**

Have we as a church body done our work of evangelism? I dare say we have not applied ourselves very well in this area.

Today, we see a born again child of God, who has joined the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, growing in the knowledge of the bible, and coming to greater understanding of the multitude, and magnitude, of God's blessing in their lives. As we grow in knowledge, we can better put into practice living according to God's commandments. If we astutely apply ourselves to the study of God's word, and work of truth; three years after joining the church, we should be well grounded and be able to do the work of an evangelist. That is; if you have applied yourself, and the church as done their proper work in assisting you to grow in the knowledge of the truth.

By living godly lives, demonstrating by our walks and talks; we reveal to others the things we learn, and experience, on life's journey. This in itself is a work of evangelism. We should be pointing out along the way; God has done as he promised, and he given us salvation and eternal life, which salvation we are already enjoying here in time, along with all the other bounty of blessing he has bestowed upon us. After all; we are in the land of promise flowing with milk and honey.

"neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead:" How many of us can confess, with a pure conscience, that we have used the time, and/or resources, aside from all the natural blessings God has given us, given to us wisely. I have wasted away so much time, in foolishness and ungodliness, which could have been put too much better use by:

- Reading and studying God's word of truth.

- Spending time encouraging family and friends in the Lord.
- Spending time giving praise and glory to God.
- Spending time evangelizing in the church community.

There are so many things that I have not done that I should have done. As I consider this, I see how I have taken from the things that are to be tithed to God and used them on dead things. Time I have wasted pleasing my own will and flesh. God have mercy upon us, we pray!

Our prayers should not just be for our individual selves, but for our families, our church families, the church as a whole, and the lost. We should include all of God's people, the whole of the church established by Jesus Christ, those already saved, and those who are not yet saved.

16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. 17 Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: 18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; 19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

"Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God" When you are born again and have entered into the land of promise, the church; you have made a vow to God, just as Israel is here commanded to do, and God has given you the promise of his word that he will do for you, all that he has promised.

What we often forget is; many of the promises of God are based upon an "*if*" covenant, which requires that we do our part, and then God will fulfill his promise to us. Not all of God's promises are if covenants; some are God's "*shall*" covenants, which God will perform without any action on our part, they are gifts to us, such as; the eternal forgiveness of our sins and eternal life, through the finished work of Jesus, the Christ, and the establishment of our land of promise here, the church.

"And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken." We have many New Testament texts, which convey this same message, given to Israel, unto us. Here are a few:

- ***Joh 14:21 "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."***
- ***Joh 15:16 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."***
- ***Joh 15:19 "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."***
- ***Eph 1:4 "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"***

- **2Th 2:13 "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:"**
- **2Ti 2:4 "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."**
- **Jas 2:5 "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"**
- **1Pe 2:9 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"**
- **Re 17:14 "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."**

These texts need no elaboration, to certify they are blessings, and promises of hope, for the Christian. Thank you, heavenly Father, for the multitude of witnesses you have given us in your word of truth. Thank you, Lord, for the land of promise, the church of Salvation by Grace. Praise and glory and honor to your holy and matchless name! Hallelujah!