

April 14: Deut. 26:1-19

- I. Presentation of the first fruits offerings (verses 1-11)
- II. Presentation of the third year tithe (verses 12-15)
- III. Interlude: verses 16-19

Verse by verse:

- I. Presentation of the first fruits offerings (verses 1-11)

"Then it shall be, when you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, and you possess it and live in it, ² that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground which you bring in from your land that the LORD your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name. ³ You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'I declare this day to the LORD my God that I have entered the land which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'⁴ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. ⁵ You shall answer and say before the LORD your God, 'My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation.⁶ And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us. ⁷ Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression; ⁸ and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders; ⁹ and He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ Now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O LORD have given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God; ¹¹ and you and the Levite and the alien who is among you shall rejoice in all the good which the LORD your God has given you and your household.

- a. This the last chapter concerning Moses' second speech.
- b. Moody Bible Commentary: *Moses here closed off an extended exposition on specific legislation that began in chap. Chapter 26 also serves as a transition to the next major section of the book, which begins in chap. 27. This chapter forms a bracket with Dt 12, the beginning of the major section of "statutes and judgments" (12:1) in the book. Deuteronomy 12:6 anticipated the bringing of special offerings after the nation possessed the promised land, and Moses closed this section (in chap. 26) with instructions regarding special tithes and offerings. The focus on the opening and closing passages of this key section of Deuteronomy has been on injunctions regarding appropriate worship—a key theological message of the book. This may explain why the first fruits offering was not mentioned in the list of holidays in Dt 16, in order to heighten its role here in this section of Deuteronomy. This offering in 26:1-11 and the special tithe mentioned next (vv. 12-15) were to be presented soon after they entered the land. This provided a smooth transition to another act of worship at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (chaps. 27–28), to be performed after they entered the land. They were to take some of the first of all the produce of the ground ... in a basket and take it to the central sanctuary (v. 2). Apparently this was a one-time offering for the first generation, since much of the wording here would apply only to the special audience Moses was addressing on the plains of Moab. When the worshiper arrived at the central sanctuary, he was to make a public statement to the priest proclaiming, I declare this day to the LORD my God that I have entered the land which the LORD swore to our fathers to give*

us (v. 3). Then the priest was to take the basket of produce and set it before the altar (v. 4). Then a second longer credo-like statement was to be said in rehearsing the nation's pilgrimage and the Lord's faithfulness. In this second declaration the worshiper was to say, My father was a wandering Aramean (v. 5). The father is Jacob since he was the one who went down to Egypt ... few in number but came out a mighty nation. The word wandering refers to the unsettled nomadic nature of Jacob's family. Aramean surfaces the geographical association of Jacob with northern Mesopotamia (Paddan-aram, 400 miles northeast of Jerusalem, Gn 24:4, 10; 25:20). This confession frequently mentions the Lord's faithfulness in delivering them out of Egypt and in providing a fruitful land inheritance (vv. 6-9). This is the only time in the book where the worshiper spoke. By bringing this first fruit offering to the Lord at the central sanctuary, the worshiper was offering thanksgiving to the Lord, which is a catalyst for him, the Levites, and the foreigners living in their midst to rejoice in the Lord's goodness.¹

- c. Moses talks to them about entering the land.
- d. Once again this is the land the Lord gives them.
- e. Remember that we are in Moses' second speech about them entering the promised land.
- f. In verse 1, Moses talks to them about occupying it and possessing it.
- g. In verse 2, they are to take some of the first fruits... this means some of the first and the best of the harvest.
- h. They are acknowledging the Lord as the giver of all good gifts.
- i. This is cross referenced throughout the Pentateuch. Ex 22:29; 23:16, 19; Num 18:13; Prov 3:9²
- j. They are to take these offerings to the place the Lord chooses to establish His name. That will be Shiloh and then Jerusalem.
- k. Verse 3: they go to the priest... notice the great detail... "they go to the priest who is in office at the time." Of course this anticipates the future when who knows what priest will be in office. Keil and Delitch mention that this is not the high priest. Verse 3 begins a quote.
- l. These statements in verse 3 and verses 5- 10 is the first time the worshiper speaks in Deuteronomy (the Moody Bible Commentary shares this.)
- m. Verse 4: the priest takes the basket and sits it down by the alter of the Lord your God.
- n. Verse 5: verses 5-10 give quite a quote. The worshiper says this before the Lord his/her God.
- o. My father was a wandering Aramean... this is referring to Jacob. He went down to Egypt and "sojourned" there or "lived as a foreigner there." They were few in number but became great and a populous nation. Genesis 46:27 tells us that they had 70 people who went down to Egypt. Genesis 43 records the famine leading them to Egypt.
- p. See Deut 1:10; 10:22 about them growing as a populous nation.

¹ The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 11630-11633). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

² [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

- q. The Net Bible records: *A wandering Aramean*: This is a reference to Jacob whose mother Rebekah was an Aramean (Gen 24:10; 25:20, 26) and who himself lived in Aram for at least twenty years (Gen 31:41–42).³
- r. The ESV Study Bible records: *These verses are often regarded as an early Israelite creed, liturgically recounting God's faithfulness to his promises as the grounds of thanksgiving.*
- s. Keil and Delitch:
- t. *Jacob is called an Aramaean, not only because of his long sojourn in Aramaea (Gen. 29–31), but also because he got his wives and children there (cf. Hos. 12:13); and the relatives of the patriarchs had accompanied Abraham from Chaldaea to Mesopotamia (Aram; see Gen. 11:30). בְּמִתֵּי הָעֵט, consisting of few men (בְּ, the so-called beth essent., as in Deut. 10:22, Ex. 6:3, etc.; vid., Ewald, § 299, q.). Compare Gen. 34:30, where Jacob himself describes his family as “few in number.” On the number in the family that migrated into Egypt, reckoned at seventy souls, see the explanation at Gen. 46:27. On the multiplication in Egypt into a great and strong people, see Ex. 1:7, 9; and on the oppression endured there, Ex. 1:11–22, and 2:23ff.—The guidance out of Egypt amidst great signs (v. 8), as in Deut. 4:34.*⁴
- u. Verse 6 continues: we know the story, the Egyptians enslave them. See Ex 1:8-11
- v. Verse 7: they cry out to the Lord and the Lord hears them: Ex 2:23–25; 3:9
- w. Verse 8: they are brought out of Egypt with “a ‘mighty hand’ and an ‘outstretched arm’ and with ‘great terror’ and with ‘signs and wonders...’” **Notice the modifiers.**
- x. Verse 9 brings them to the present. Verse 9 really wraps up 38-40 years of time. God brought them to this place, a place “flowing with milk and honey.”
- y. Verse 10: the worshiper tells the priest he has brought the first of the produce which the Lord has given him. Notice that he recognizes the Lord provided this. Verse 10 says he must worship the Lord.
- z. Verse 11: They (the worshiper and the Levite and alien) should rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given you and your household. The Levite and the sojourner are the landless, they are included in the celebrations.
- aa. Keil and Delitch: *Rejoicing in all the good, etc., points to the joy connected with the sacrificial meal, which followed the act of worship (as in Deut. 12:12). The presentation of the first-fruits took place, no doubt, on their pilgrimages to the sanctuary at the three yearly festivals (Deut. 16); but it is quite without ground that Riehm restricts these words to the sacrificial meals to be prepared from the tithes, as if they had been the only sacrificial meals (see at Deut. 18:3).*⁵
- bb. As I read and study that section, I see a strong emphasis on the Lord's provision. I see a strong emphasis on the people recognizing everything they have is from the Lord.
- II. Presentation of the third-year tithe (verses 12-15)

¹² “When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in

³ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Dt 26:5.

⁴ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 956–957.

⁵ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 957.

your towns and be satisfied. ¹³ You shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments. ¹⁴ I have not eaten of it while mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor offered any of it to the dead. I have listened to the voice of the LORD my God; I have done according to all that You have commanded me. ¹⁵ Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers.'

- a. This next section is about the 3rd year tithe.
- b. A tithe means literally 10%, but they had more than one tithe, actually they ended up giving somewhere around 30% each year.
- c. Verse 12 is saying that the third year tithe would be given to the Levite, the orphan and the widow. The Moody Bible Commentary seems to make the case that this 3rd year tithe goes directly to these people. Remember, God cares about those in need. He cares about those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable.
- d. New American Commentary: Related to the ceremony of covenant renewal at the Feast of Firstfruits, both by subject matter and juxtaposition, is the ordinance concerning the third-year tithe. It mandated the setting aside of the tithe of the harvest of every third year for the purpose of meeting the material needs of the dependent of Israel including the Levite, the alien, the orphan, and the widow (v. 12). This very incumbency was dealt with earlier in Deuteronomy in the extended legislation about tithing (Deut 14:28–29), but it is reiterated here to reinforce the idea that the benevolence of God's people was to operate in two dimensions, the vertical and the horizontal. Thus the offering of firstfruits to the Lord (26:1–11) could not be separated from the beneficence to be shown to fellow kingdom citizens (vv. 12–15).⁶
- e. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary shares: the 4 categories of needy people are: Levites (landless), orphans, widows and aliens.
- f. The Moody Bible Commentary: *This special tithe offering, like the one before it (vv. 1-11), was to be presented in the third full year after the nation entered the land. It was not to be presented at the central sanctuary but was to be distributed to the Levites, strangers, orphans, and widows in their towns so that they may eat and be satisfied. Each individual worshiper was to share God's blessings with the wider community. This tithe was to be accompanied by a public statement that this tithe was being presented in direct obedience to God's specific guidelines. The worshiper also entreated the Lord to bless both the people of Israel, and the land given to them as a bountiful gift.*⁷
- g. Verse 13 begins the statement which goes through verse 15.
- h. The worshiper asks for blessings. Verse 13, "before the Lord" just means the omnipresent One. This is like Gen 27:7 (Keil and Delitch)
- i. In verse 13 the worshiper says that they have done what the commandments expect and they have not sinned.
- j. Verse 14 lists certain sins which would have likely been done by the pagans in the area.

⁶ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, vol. 4, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 335.

⁷ The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 11651-11656). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- k. The NET Bible shares: *These practices suggest overtones of pagan ritual, all of which the confessor denies having undertaken. In Canaan they were connected with fertility practices associated with harvest time.*⁸ This could have to do with being involved in the offering while mourning and unclean (Keil and Delitch suggests) Dr. Constable: Offering food to the dead (v. 14) was a Canaanite religious practice, and putting food in a grave with a dead body was a common Egyptian and Canaanite practice.⁹
- l. God's people should continue to trust Him for the fulfillment of promised blessings yet unrealized (cf. 1 Thess. 1:2–10; 2 Pet. 3:3–18).
- m. Verse 15: Heaven is declared for the first time as the Lord's special dwelling place.

III. Interlude: verses 16-19

¹⁶ "This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ You have today declared the LORD to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice. ¹⁸ The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; ¹⁹ and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken."

- a. These next several verses seem like a perfect summary and conclusion to this sermon.
- b. That are to do these statutes and ordinances.
- c. They are to be careful to do them with their heart and soul.
- d. Verse 17: they have declared the Lord to be their God. They are to walk in His ways, statutes and ordinances. They are to listen to His voice.
- e. Verse 17 is what they declare and verse 18 is that the Lord declared them to be His people. They are His treasured possession. They should keep His commandments. Verse 19: God will set them high above all nations. This is for "praise, fame, honor..."
- f. They should be consecrated... this means set apart.

⁸ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Dt 26:14.

⁹ Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003), Dt 26:12.