

# Deuteronomy 26 - Confession in Worship

II. Second sermon: What Israel must do for God (Deut 4:41—26:19)

(4) Conclusion (26:1-19)

(A) Laws remembering the covenant (26:1-15)

(a) The First fruits (26:1-11)

(b) Third-year tithe (26:12-15)

(B) Moses' concluding exhortation to obey (26:16-19)

## Deuteronomy 26

(4) Conclusion (26:1-19)

(A) Laws remembering the covenant (26:1-15)

(a) The First fruits (26:1-11)

**1** "Then it shall be, when you enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an **inheritance**, and you take possession of it and live in it,

**1** "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,

**1** "When you arrive in the land that the LORD your God is about to give you as an inheritance, take possession of it and settle in it.

**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;

- "...inheritance" - the Promised Land was Israel's inheritance (not a "type" of heaven");

Cf. Deut 15:4; 19:14; 25:19)

**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.

**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.

**2** Gather all the first produce of the ground that you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is about to give you, place it in a basket, and bring it to the place where the LORD your God will choose to establish his name.

**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.

## Confession in Worship

Having delineated the rights and obligations of his people in their divine relationship, Moses instructs the Israelites in the liturgies of two confessions and a reaffirmation of the covenant. Through these confessions, acts of dedication and worship, they are to maintain a continued consciousness of God as their redeemer and sustainer and impart this to each successive generation. The first confession is the offering of the firstfruits (Ex 23:19; 34:26; Num 18:12-17). Elements of firstfruit offering are found in connection with each of the annual feasts (Deut 16). For example, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread a sheaf of first fruits was waved (Lev 23:10ff.). Also, the Feast of Weeks was called "the day of firstfruits" (Num 28:26; Cf. Ex 23:16; 34:22) and two first-fruit loaves (leavened?) were offered at it (Lev 23:15-17). [Misunderstood: the first "day of firstfruits" was "the morrow after the sabbath" after Passover]. The grape harvest was late in the year, the firstfruits of the vine could not be offered until the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. (Jesus deferred again drinking of the wine until His return...!)

3 And you shall go to the priest who is *in office* at that time and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD my God that I have entered the land which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'

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.'

3 Approach the priest who is in charge at that time and say to him, 'I acknowledge today to the LORD your God that I've arrived in the land that the LORD promised our ancestors to give us.'

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.

## Breakdown of Israel's Future History

- Deut 26:3-13; 28:1-14: the conditions of blessing to follow obedience
- Deut 31:16-21: the coming apostasy
- Deut 28:15-60: the affliction that God would bring upon Israel, while still in the land, because of apostasy
- Deut 28:32-39,48-57: Israel will be taken captive
- Deut 27; 32: the enemies of Israel would possess the Land for a time
- Deut 28:38-42; 29:23: the Land itself will remain desolate
- Deut 28:63-67; 32:26: Israel will be scattered among the nations

- Deut 28:62: the time will come when Israel will be “few in number”
- Deut 28:44-45: though punished, Israel will not be destroyed if she repents
- Deut 28:40-41; 30:1-2: Israel will repent in her tribulation
- Deut 30:3-10: Israel will be gathered from the nations and brought back to her divinely given Land

Note: Ex 23 and Lev 26 present similar material

4 Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it before the altar of the LORD your God.

4 Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

4 Then the priest will take the basket from you and place it in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

5 And you shall respond and say before the LORD your God, ‘My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and resided there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty, and populous nation.

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.

5 Then you are to affirm and declare in the presence of the LORD your God:

‘A wandering Aramean was my ancestor, who went down to Egypt and traveled there with very few family members, yet there he became a great, powerful, and populous nation.

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 treated us badly and oppressed us, and imposed hard labor on us.

6 And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us.

6 But the Egyptians oppressed us, afflicted us, and assigned us to hard labor.

6 And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:

- Second Confession: Jacob referred to as “a wandering Aramean” (RSV).... (connotes “lost” or “in peril”). He is called Aramean because the patriarchal origins were geographically, though not racially, Aramean, and because Jacob himself sojourned in Aram-naharaim during the period of the birth of his sons, the future tribal fathers of Israel. When Jacob fled from his home in Beersheva he passed through Syria (Aram) to

Mesopotamia (Aram Haharaiim, Gen 24:10, Jerusalem Bible) to live with Laban his uncle. Returning from there, Jacob was overtaken by Laban after he came through Syria at the Jabbok River where he not only face the wrath of Laban but also that of Esau his brother. Later, the famine in Canaan necessitated his migration to Egypt. When the Israelites became populous, they were oppressed by the Egyptians, but it was God who responded to their prayers and miraculously delivered them out of Egypt. It was God who enabled them to enter and conquer the land from which the firstfruits were now presented before the altar.

7 Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our wretched condition, our trouble, and our oppression;

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;

7 So we cried out to the LORD God of our ancestors, and he heard our cries and observed our affliction, trouble, and oppression.

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 out of Egypt with a mighty hand, an outstretched arm, and with great terror, and with signs and wonders;

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;

8 The LORD brought us out of Egypt with his awesome power, with great terror, signs, and wonders.

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:

- Essential aspects: rejoicing in the Lord's goodness extended to earlier generations and evidence of His sustaining grace at that time. [Shouldn't we, also?!]

9 and He has brought us to this place, and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

9 and He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

9 And then we arrived at this place, and he gave this land to us, flowing with milk and honey.

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 first of the produce of the ground which You, LORD have given me.' Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God;

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;

10 Now, look—I brought the first produce of the land that you, LORD, have given me.' Then set it in the presence of the LORD your God and worship him.

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 you, the Levite, and the stranger who is among you shall rejoice in all the good which the LORD your God has given you and your household.

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.

11 Rejoice with the descendants of Levi and the foreigner among you at all the good things that the LORD your God has given you and your family."

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.

(b) Third-year tithe (26:12-15)

**12** "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan, and to the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.

**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 your towns and be satisfied.

**12** "When you have finished your harvest, reserve the tithe in the third year (the year of the tithe), and give the entire tithe to the descendants of Levi, to the foreigners, to the orphans, and to the widows, so they may eat and be satisfied in your cities.

**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;

- Third year tithe to the poor and needy (Cf. 14:28-29). It was not brought to the central sanctuary but distributed to the Levite, the immigrant, the orphan, and the widow in the local communities

13 And you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred *portion* from my house, and have also given it to the Levite, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow, in accordance with all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not violated or forgotten any of Your commandments.

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.

13 Then declare in the presence of the LORD your God:

'I've removed the holy offering from my house and given it to the descendants of Levi, to the foreigners, to the orphans, and to the widows just as you have commanded me. I haven't violated or forgotten your commands.

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 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 acted in accordance with everything that You have commanded me.

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.

14 I haven't eaten any part of it while mourning, nor removed any part of it while unclean, nor offered any of it to the dead. I've obeyed the voice of the LORD my God and did all that he commanded me.

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.

- The Israelite publicly acknowledges before God that he as actually shared with his fellow citizens the tithe of his income according to the divine instructions

- Defilement, uncleanness, and offerings to the dead—contemporary pagan practices—had been carefully avoided (Lev 22:3; Num 19:11; Hosea 9:4)

15 Look down from Your holy dwelling place, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey just as You swore to our fathers.'

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.'

15 Look down from your holy habitation in heaven and bless your people Israel and the land that you have given us, just as you promised our ancestors—a land flowing with milk and honey.'"

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.

(B) Moses' concluding exhortation to obey (26:16-19)

**16** "This day the LORD your God commands you to perform these statutes and ordinances. Therefore you shall be careful to perform them with all your heart and with all your soul.

**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.

**16** "The LORD your God is commanding you this very day to observe these statutes and judgments. Be careful to obey them with all your heart and soul.

**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.

- The Israelites had ratified their covenant with God at Sinai (Ex 24:7)

- Here on the Plains of Moab, Moses had plainly declared the stipulations or requirements of the covenant renewal (Deut 5-25)

17 Today you have declared the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His ordinances, and listen to His voice.

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.

17 You have declared this very day that the LORD will be your God. You are to walk in his ways, keep his statutes, commands, and judgments, and obey his voice.

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 has today declared you to be His people, *His* personal possession, just as He promised you, and that you are to keep all His commandments;

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;

18 The LORD affirmed this day that you are his prized possession. Therefore observe his commands,

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 that He will put you high above all the nations which He has made, for glory, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken."

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."

19 so he may elevate you far above all the nations that he has made. Then you will live to the praise, fame, and glory of God, and so be a nation that is holy to the LORD your God, as he has promised."

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.

- In accepting the terms of this agreement—acknowledging that the Lord is their God, promising wholehearted obedience, and an attitude of listening to God’s voice—the Israelites were assured that they were His people and that they would be the foremost of all nations (v16-19)