

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
10-12-22

Deuteronomy 26

Bringing The Firstfruits To The Priest – Verses 1-4

¹ When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, ² take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name ³ and say to the priest in office at the time, “I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.” ⁴ The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

26:1 When you come into the land: The Promised Land lay just across the Jordan River, and though there were formidable obstacles (such as a Jordan River swollen by Spring floods and the mighty armies of Canaanites), God still assured them that they will come into the land.

26:2 Some of the first of all the produce of the ground: Numbers 18:12 speaks of the firstfruits that must be regularly brought to the priests, but the firstfruits described here in Deuteronomy 26 seem to be a special offering of firstfruits, from the first of the harvest they gain in the Promised Land.

26:1-4 The Festival of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-14) was a reminder to the people of all God had provided for them. When they arrived in the Promised Land, the people were to recite a confession of faith that would retell the story of their small beginnings in Egypt, their growth into a mighty nation, and their journey to claim and conquer the land given them by God.

The Words Of Thanks And Praise At The Giving Of Firstfruits – Verses 5-10

⁵ Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: “My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. ⁶ But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labor. ⁷ Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. ⁸ So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; ¹⁰ and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, LORD, have given me.” Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him.

26:5 And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: This wonderful confession of thanks remembered the history of Israel from the time of Jacob and his family in the land of Canaan, to the family’s going down into Egypt, and to the eventual deliverance and Exodus into the Promised Land.

26:5 went down to Egypt and sojourned there: Israel spent some 400 years in Egypt. Yet in the course of God’s eternal plan, it was nothing more than a sojourn. We can often focus so much on our own time of trial or misery that we think that it defines our whole life; God saw Israel’s experience in Egypt as a sojourn.

26:5 Few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous: This was the major reason God had for sending Jacob and his family on their sojourn in Egypt. When they lived in Canaan, there was great risk of the family just assimilating with the wicked, pagan peoples around them. To prevent this, and to allow the nation to grow, God sent them down to Egypt, which was a very racist society, and who would not intermarry with Israel. Therefore, they could go down there few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous.

26:10 And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land: This initial giving of firstfruits when Israel came into the Promised Land was an appropriate way to say “thank you” to the LORD. This giving, and all giving done with the right heart, is a proper way to worship before the LORD your God.

26:5-10 This recitation of God’s dealings with his people helped the people remember what God had done for them. What is the history of your relationship with God? Can you put into clear and concise words what God has done for you? Find a friend with whom you can share your spiritual journey. Telling your stories to each other will help you clearly understand your personal spiritual history, as well as encouraging and inspiring you both. Note: Wandering can mean lost or dying. Also, Arameans were the people of northern Syria and among the ancestors of Abraham, Jacob’s grandfather. Jacob also spent many years working in Aram for his uncle Laban to earn his wives, Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29–31).

So You Shall Rejoice – Verse 11

11 Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.

26:11 Rejoice in every good thing which the Lord your God has given to you: When we receive from the LORD, and give back to Him, it makes us rejoice. It is the proper response of a creature to his Creator, who has supplied him with all good things.

The Prayer For The Giving Of The Tithe – Verses 12-15

12 When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. **13** Then say to the LORD your God: “I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them. **14** I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done everything you commanded me. **15** Look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as you promised on oath to our ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

26:12 When you have finished laying aside all the tithe: The tithe was required of Israel every year, but every third year, the tithe was given not only to the Levites for their support (as was instructed in Numbers 18:21-24), but was to be shared by the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so they may eat within your gates and be filled.

26:12 This law is repeated from 14:28-29. The people were to give their tithe to the needy every third year. This amounts to one-third of their giving on a three-year cycle. Though we are not under

this law today, the New Testament reminds us not to forget the poor. Consider giving one-third of your annual contribution to overseas ministries, or to relief for the poor, orphans, and widows.

26:13 Then you shall say: The prayer described here shows that the giving was done with the right kind of heart. God not only wants us to give, but to give with the right heart.

A Call To Complete Obedience – Verse 16

¹⁶The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.

26:16 This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments: Deuteronomy 4:1 began this long section with the words Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe. From Deuteronomy chapter 4 through chapter 26, Moses has reminded Israel of God's commands. Now he exhorted them to keep the commands.

26:16 therefore you shall be careful to observe them: Sometimes we need to be instructed regarding the law of God; sometimes we need to be reminded regarding the law of God. But most often, we need to be exhorted regarding the law of God. We know what to do, but we need to be encouraged to actually do it.

Israel's Proclamation – Verse 17

¹⁷You have declared this day that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws—that you will listen to him.

26:17 Today you have proclaimed the Lord to be your God: Israel was to proclaim two things. First, that the Lord to be their God. Second, that they will walk in His ways and keep His statutes. The two go together, because the identity of our God is always demonstrated by the direction of our obedience.

God's Proclamation – Verses 18-19

¹⁸And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. ¹⁹He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.

26:18-19 The LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people: Israel's obedience to the LORD would be more than rewarded. God promised that He would exalt an obedient Israel, to set them high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor.