

FIRST FRUIT OF THE NEW HARVEST

Deuteronomy 26:1-15

Introduction: Many are confused with tithes, offerings, and first fruit. Many argue over its relevancy and question when it started and ended as a concept. The bottom line becomes this, giving back to God by way of offering has always been a biblical precept and it started as the cause of the first murder. Read *Genesis 4:3-5*. Many thought tithing and first fruit are the same but they are not. First fruit is found in *Genesis 4* while tithing appears later in *chapter 14*. First fruit was intended to keep Israel in remembrance of the kindness of God, in preserving them through so many difficulties and literally fulfilling his promises. It recognizes God as the author of all blessings and consecrates our first to him. The Hebrew word for first fruits means “**PROMISE TO COME!**” (*v.1*) A key point on this is that it really says God did what he said he would do and now I trust him with this year. It takes the form of a confessional vow. I confess my weakness and his strength and vow to be obedient. In this text it is a celebration from transferring from a nomadic state to a settled agriculture community. It is a celebration of God delivering us in the face of outright attack.

PRINCIPALS

- a. The ancient concept of first fruits is based on the promotion of fertility. Assumption being I will become more fertile or productive if I give God the first. It is also a time of reflection. As we present our first fruits, we review God’s gracious dealings with his people in delivering them from oppression and bringing them to a bountiful land.
- b. A key principle to follow is that of the lump of dough *Romans 11:16* and *Num 15:17-21*. In essence the principle states by providing a blessing on the first I ensure the whole.
- c. Finally remember from *Prov. 3:9* first fruit releases praises and blessings.

THE TITHE

- a. God’s divine order of giving becomes
 1. *first fruits*
 2. *tithes*
 3. *offerings*
 4. *sacrificial giving*
- b. In regards to tithes in the Near East there was little difference between a tithe and a tax. The first fruit looks to the promise; the tithe looks back to what was received. But to the Israelite it was a time of true thanksgiving. As such they viewed it all as a time to bring a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God.

SUMMARY

Always remember first fruit represents the first of the first. It represents dedicating and devoting first things to God. Whenever increase shows up for the first time, it belongs to God. Remember the seed will never be greater than the harvest. So in *v.II* we see it is a time of rejoicing, where we eat with gladness in praise to him. But the key is it is freewill. *Deut. 16:10*

Reference scriptures:

First fruit:	<i>Ex. 13:11-13, 34:26; Lev. 23:9-14</i>
The tithe into money:	<i>Deut. 14:22-25</i>
Provides honor:	<i>Prov. 3:9</i>
The third year:	<i>Deut. 14:29</i>