

**Text:** Dt 26.1-19

**THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY<sup>1</sup>**

- 1. Consider:** a review of God’s faithfulness (1.6–4.40)
- 2. Covenant:** an exposition of the law (5–26)

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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- 3. Commence:** preparations for renewing the covenant (27.1–28.68)
- 4. Commit:** an exhortation to obedience (29.2–30.20)

**Deuteronomy 26.1-19**

Finally! We arrive at the end of “Sermon Two” in the book of Deuteronomy. The NASB has a heading, “Offering First Fruits” at the top of this chapter, but there is more to it than that one offering.

In the bulletin, I gave this title for tonight’s lesson: *The Holy Life of the Holy Nation*

These are the three sections of this chapter:

- Verse 1-11: The offering of first fruits, key theme: **joy**
- Verse 12-15: The presentation of the tithe of the third year, key theme: **service**
- Verse 16-19: The summary of the covenant, key theme: **commitment**

**The offering of first fruits**

The Feast of First Fruits is called the Feast of Weeks in Dt 16.9-12, it occurs fifty days after Passover (Pentecost).

Jewish tradition said that God set the date for this feast on the anniversary of the giving of the Law on Mt Sinai (Ten Commandments, Ex 20).

First Fruits is a **covenant renewal** ceremony.

The regulation anticipates the conquest, and the settling in the land.

The action of the ritual was to take some of the initial produce of the land to the place the Lord chose (the location of tabernacle/temple) and offer it to the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from an outline in Lawrence O Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 117.

The words of the ritual:

1. An acknowledgment of entrance, recognizing that **God** kept the **covenant**. (3)
2. A rehearsal of history, bringing the **promises** to **Abraham** full circle, in the person of the **offeror**. (5-10)

The ceremony closes with worship and a celebration between the offeror and the Levites who dwell with them, enjoying the blessings of the land together. (10-11)

### The tithe of the third year

The subject here is the tithe of the third year: This would be given not at First Fruits, but after the feast of Tabernacles (Booths) – the Harvest Festival.

Purpose (12): to support the dependent in the community (see also Dt 14.28-29)

- The Levite
- The stranger
- The orphan
- The widow

The tithe of the first and second year would go to the place of God's choosing (Dt 14.22-27), but in the third year the needy in the local community would receive their portion.

“One would still be giving to God by giving to his people.”<sup>2</sup>

The words of this ritual confesses the individual's obligation to God, his faithfulness to keep God's requirements, and closes with a prayer for God's blessing and keeping of the covenant (13-15).

### Bonus: The place of food in the offerings and spiritual life of Israel:

1. Food recognizes **dependence** on God (Dt 15)
2. Food points out God's **provision** for his people (Dt 8)
3. Food teaches God's people to **fear** and **trust** Him (Dt 6, 14)
4. Food shows that **true satisfaction** is found only in God's word (Dt 8)
5. Food enables joyful **participation** in worship (Dt 12, 16, 26)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, v. 4 (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 335.

<sup>3</sup> List suggested by Adam Warner Day, “Eating before the Lord: A Theology of Food According to Deuteronomy,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57 (2014): 86.

This is why God made us dependent on food for our daily lives.

## Summary of the covenant

Compare vs. 16 with Dt 5.1, and note the similarities:

Dt 5.1 ¶ Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully.

The long section from 5.1-26.16 is one unit, the obligations laid on the people for life in fellowship with God in the land he gave them.

Based on their covenant (17) God stated his purpose for the nation (18-19).

How would you summarize God’s purpose?

**God intended for Israel to be set apart from the nations, but also a beacon to the nations, calling them to repentance.**