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# Pearl Seeking

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## TREASURING HIS WORD

Let's do a quick overview of the entire Torah portion:

Monday:	Deut. 26:1-15	First-fruits and 3 <sup>rd</sup> tithe declaration and presentation to the priest
Tuesday:	Deut. 26:16-27:8	Covenant proclamations; Instructions for stone altar construction at Mt. Eybal, with Torah inscriptions
Wednesday:	Deut. 27:9-26	Curses spoken from Mt. Eybal for disobedience
Thursday:	Deut. 28:1-14	The blessings pronounced for obedience
Friday:	Deut. 28:15-29:8	Additional curses pronounced for disobedience; Preamble to renewal of the Sinaitic covenant

In this week's Parsha Pearls lesson, we will take a look at further instructions for the children of Yisra'el to follow when they enter the land. The focus is upon presenting their first-fruits and tithes at the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses, and taking care of the Lewite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow within your gates. Yahweh then reiterates the Covenant He is making with Yisra'el to become a set-apart people. Now, let's read Deut. 26.

## PARSHA POINTS

### *First-Fruits*

- Take some of the first of all the fruits of the soil from your land that Yahweh your Elohim is giving you, and put it in a basket (**tene**) and go to the *place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses* to make His Name dwell there - 26:2
- You shall approach the priest and say, "I shall declare today to Yahweh your Elohim that I have come to the land which Yahweh swore to our fathers to give us" - 26:3
- The priest will take the basket from your hand and place it before the altar of Yahweh your Elohim - 26:4
- You shall answer and say before Yahweh your Elohim (26:5-10):
  - My father was a perishing Aramean, and he went down to Mitsrayim and sojourned there with few men, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and numerous
  - The Mitsrites did evil to us, and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us
  - We cried out to Yahweh, Elohim of our fathers, and Yahweh heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression
  - Yahweh brought us out of Mitsrayim with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with great fear and with signs and wonders



- He brought us to this place and has given us this land, 'a land flowing with milk and honey'
- See, I have brought the first-fruits (**reshith p'ri**) of the land which You, O Yahweh have given me
- Then you shall place the first-fruits before Yahweh your Elohim, and bow down before Yahweh your Elohim - 26:10
- You shall rejoice in all the good which Yahweh your Elohim has given to you and your house, you and the Lewite and the stranger who is among you - 26:11

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Tithe

- When you have completed tithing all the tithe of your increase in the third year, and have given it to the Lewite, to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, and they have eaten *within your gates* and are satisfied, then you shall say before Yahweh your Elohim (26:12-15; 14:28-29):
  - I have put away the set-apart portion from my house, and also have given it to the Lewite, and to the stranger, and to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all Your command which You have commanded me
  - I have NOT transgressed Your commands, nor have I forgotten
  - I have NOT eaten any of it when in mourning
  - I have NOT removed any of it for any unclean use
  - I have NOT given any of it for the dead
  - I have obeyed the voice of Yahweh my Elohim
  - I have done according to all that You have commanded me
  - Look from Your set-apart dwelling place, from the heavens, and bless Your people Yisra'el and the land which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, 'a land flowing with milk and honey'



### Covenanting with Yahweh

- Today, Yahweh your Elohim is commanding you to (26:16; 6:5; 10:12; 13:3):
  - do these laws and right-rulings
  - *guard* and do them with all your heart and with all your being
- You have, today, caused Yahweh to proclaim to (26:17):
  - be your Elohim
  - walk in His ways
  - *guard* His laws, His commands, His right-rulings
  - obey His voice
- Yahweh has caused you to proclaim today to (26:18; 7:6; 14:2):
  - be His people
  - be a treasured possession (**am segullah**), as He has spoken to you
  - *guard* all His commands
- Yahweh has set you high above all nations, which He has made, for a praise, and for a name, and for esteem, and for you to be a set-apart people (**am kadosh**) to Yahweh your Elohim, as He has spoken - 26:19; 7:6; Lev. 20:26



# DIGGING DEEPER

Parents/Teachers may choose to use these prompts for further discussion of the Torah portion.

- Research what first-fruits are - the different kinds and their significance. When are they supposed to be brought to the priest? (Ex. 23:19, 34:26; Lev. 19:23-25)
- Chapter 26 contains precisely prescribed declarations which one must pronounce when presenting their first-fruits to the priest (26:5-10). Why do you think Yahweh required this?
- What does the phrase, "My father was a perishing Aramean" mean? Does it relay that Abraham our forefather was someone of no prestigious descent, occupation or location? Why do you think Yahweh wants them to always relate their entry into the land with 'remembering' where they came from?
- Discuss Yahweh's consideration of the Lewite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow when He commands that they are to be taken care of at His feasts.
- Discuss the 3<sup>rd</sup> tithe, and the declaration one must make before Yahweh that they did not *steal or borrow* from it for any reason (26:13-14). Do you think it would be easy for a Yisra'elite to make this declaration falsely, fully aware that they were lying and would be held accountable? Do you think they could get away with it? Was there a way for the priest to know?
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> tithe is also known as the poor tithe, for it takes care of those in need. Since the poor are still among us, do you think that this tithe applies in our lives even though we are not in the land?
- If Yahweh calls us His treasured possession and has set us above the nations, how should we be walking in order to be worthy of that title?

