

**Adam Clarke:**

## Introduction

First-fruits must be offered to God, Deuteronomy 26:1, Deuteronomy 26:2. The form of confession to be used on the occasion, Deuteronomy 26:3-11. The third year's tithe to be given to the Levites and the poor, Deuteronomy 26:12, and the form of confession to be used on this occasion, Deuteronomy 26:13-15. The Israelites are to take Jehovah for their God, and to keep his testimonies, Deuteronomy 26:16, Deuteronomy 26:17. And Jehovah is to take them for his people, and make them high above all the nations of the earth, Deuteronomy 26:18, Deuteronomy 26:19.

## Verse 2

**Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit, etc. - This was intended to keep them in continual remembrance of the kindness of God, in preserving them through so many difficulties and literally fulfilling the promises he had made to them. God being the author of all their blessings, the first-fruits of the land were consecrated to him, as the author of every good and perfect gift.**

### Verse 5

A Syrian ready to perish was my father - This passage has been variously understood, both by the ancient versions and by modern commentators. The Vulgate renders it thus: Syrus persequabatur patrem meum, â€œA Syrian persecuted my father.â€• The Septuagint thus: Ἰδί...ἰνὶ τῷ πατρὶ μου ἀποστρέψας τὴν πλάτην αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου, â€œMy father abandoned Syria.â€• The Targum thus: xœx'x'Y x"x"xžx"x" x'xçx' xœx'x"x'x"x" x<sup>TM</sup>x<sup>a</sup> x"x'x' (Laban arammaah bea leobada yath abba), â€œLaban the Syrian endeavored to destroy my father.â€• The Syriac: â€œMy father was led out of Syria into Egypt.â€• The Arabic: â€œSurely, Laban the Syrian had almost destroyed my father.â€• The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel: â€œOur father Jacob went at first into Syria of Mesopotamia, and Laban sought to destroy him.â€•

Father Houbigant dissents from all, and renders the original thus: Fames urgebat patrem meum, qui in Aegyptum descendit, "Famine oppressed my father, who went down into Egypt." This interpretation Houbigant gives the text, by taking the x<sup>TM</sup> (yod) from the word x"x"x<sup>TM</sup> (arammi), which signifies an Aramite or Syrian, and joining it to x<sup>TM</sup>x"x" (yeabud), the future for the perfect, which is common enough in Hebrew, and which may signify constrained; and seeking for the meaning of x"x"x (aram) in the Arabic (arama), which signifies famine, dearth, etc., he thus makes out his version, and this version he defends at large in his notes. It is pretty evident, from the text, that by a Syrian we are to understand Jacob, so called from his long residence in Syria with his father-in-law Laban. And his being ready to perish may signify the hard usage and severe labor he had in Laban's service, by which, as his health was much impaired, so his life might have often been in imminent danger.

### Verse 8

**With a mighty hand, etc. - See on Deuteronomy 4:34 (note).**

### Verse 11

**Thou shalt rejoice - God intends that his followers shall be happy; that they shall eat their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, praising him. Those who eat their meat grudgingly, under the pretense of their unworthiness, etc., profane God's bounties and shall have no thanks for their voluntary humility.**

**Thou, and the Levite, and the stranger - They were to take care to share God's bounties among all those who were dependent on them. The Levite has no inheritance, let him rejoice with thee. The stranger has no home, let him feel thee to be his friend and his father.**

## Verse 12

**The third year, which is the year of tithing - This is supposed to mean the third year of the seventh or Sabbatical year, in which the tenths were to be given to the poor. See the law, Deuteronomy 14:28. But from the letter in both these places it would appear that the tithe was for the Levites, and that this tithe was drawn only once in three years.**

### Verse 14

I have not - given aught thereof for the dead - That is, I have not consecrated any of it to an idol which was generally a dead man whom superstition and ignorance had deified. From 1 Corinthians 10:27, 1 Corinthians 10:28, we learn that it was customary to offer that flesh to idols which was afterwards sold publicly in the shambles; probably the blood was poured out before the idol in imitation of the sacrifices offered to the true God. Perhaps the text here alludes to a similar custom.

**Verse 17**

Thou hast avouched the Lord - The people avouch - publicly declare, that they have taken Jehovah to be their God.

**Verse 18**

And the Lord hath avouched - Publicly declared, by the blessings he pours down upon them, that he has taken them to be his peculiar people. Thus the covenant is made and ratified between God and his followers.

**Verse 19**

Make thee high above all nations - It is written, Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people, Proverbs 14:34. While Israel regarded God's word and kept his testimonies, they were the greatest and most respectable of all nations; but when they forsook God and his law, they became the most contemptible. O Britain, even more highly favored than ancient Israel! learn wisdom by what they have suffered. It is not thy fleets nor thine armies, howsoever excellent and well appointed, that can ultimately exalt and secure thy permanence among the nations. It is righteousness alone. Become irreligious, neglect God's ordinances, profane his Sabbath, despise his word, persecute his followers, and thou art lost. But fear, love, and serve him, and thy enemies shall be found liars, thou shalt defeat their projects, and trample on their high places.

The form of confession when bringing the first-fruits, related Deuteronomy 26:4-10, is both affecting and edifying. Even when brought into a state of affluence and rest, they were commanded to remember and publicly acknowledge their former degradation and wretchedness, that they might be ever kept humble and dependent; and they must bring their offering as a public acknowledgment to God that it was by his mercy their state was changed, and by his bounty their comforts were continued. If a man rise from poverty to affluence, and forget his former state, he becomes proud, insolent, and oppressive. If a Christian convert forget his former state, the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged, he soon becomes careless, unthankful, and unholy. The case of the ten lepers that were cleansed, of whom only one returned to give God thanks, is an awful lesson. How many are continually living on the bounty of God, who feel no gratitude for his mercies! Reader, Is this thy state? If so, then expect the just God to curse thy blessings.