

RUSSELL SANDERS
4-8-2021
FIRST FRUITS
PROVERBS 3:9-10

We have studied verses 5 and 6 of chapter three of Proverbs. We remain in Proverbs to look at verses 9 and 10 which say, ***“Honour the LORD with all thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.”*** (vs. 9).

God made (created) everything so he has rightful ownership of all that we have. He only asks us to give back to Him a small portion of it. We are simply stewards (caretakers) of that which remains with us.

“First fruits” means the very first part of whatever comes into us. It is never the “leftover” portion from which we might have. Scripture instructed God’s people (Israel) to give the first of everything to be sanctified (set apart) for His purposes. This applied to animals (herds), to produce (fruit, vegetables, grains) money (gold, silver, any medium of exchange) and people (first born male child). All of this counted as “substance.”

Verse 10 gives God’s promise to those who do so faithfully. It says, ***“So shall thy barns (your storehouse) be filled with plenty...”*** The “first fruits” includes the tithe (ten percent) on everything that comes to us.

Malachi tells us that failure or refusal to tithe brings a curse upon us (Malachi 3:9). That prophet also declares God’s blessing of protection on those who are faithful in giving of the tithe (or first fruits) in that God said in Malachi 3:11, ***“I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...”*** so that you suffer no loss.

How serious was God in claiming the first of everything? God said to Moses in Numbers 8:17-18, ***“For all the first born ... are Mine, both man and beast.”*** The firstborn of the beasts (cattle, sheep, etc.) belonged to God; they were given to the priests to be sacrificed unto God. In this manner, the animals were “sanctified” unto God as a sacrifice belonging to Him.

God also said that the firstborn male in each family also belonged to Him. Did that mean a firstborn male child was also to be sacrificed like the animal? The pagan world often sacrificed their babies or very young children. When God delivered Israel from Egypt (Passover), the firstborn male of Egyptian families was sacrificed; they all died that very night, and their firstborn animals died also.

God did require the firstborn to be given from every household. However, they were not to be sacrificed like an animal. God provided a manner of redemption for them. We find this plan of redemption in Numbers 8:13 and 18. Verse 13 says, ***“thou shalt set the (tribe of) Levites before Aaron and his sons (God’s Priesthood) and offer them (as) an offering unto the LORD.”*** Verse 14 continues ***“Thus shalt thou separate (sanctify) the Levites from among...”*** the people.

In Verse 18 God states, ***“I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children...”*** The Levites were taken and separated (sanctified) for God as a redemption for the firstborn child of the twelve tribes of Israel. None would have to die; the Levites paid for their redemption. God took and sanctified them for His service in the Tabernacle so that the children of the other tribes could live. The Levites were the “first fruits” of redemption for God’s people of Israel.

Just as the Levites were the “first fruits” of redemption under the Old Covenant, so also is Jesus the “first fruits” of the New Covenant for all of God’s people, both the living and the deceased. I Corinthians 15:20-23 tell us that.

I Corinthians 15:20 says, ***“...now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept...”*** vs. 22 says ***“even so in Christ shall all be made alive...”*** vs. 23 says, ***“...every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, (and) afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.”***

Jesus, at His resurrection, became our first fruits of redemption so that we do not have to enter “eternal death.” He became our Redeemer.