

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."*

So the implication for us is that we need to concentrate in life on growing, developing and harvesting spiritual fruits whilst acknowledging that these come from the Lord alone.

For the Israelites, the offerings of 'first fruits', were a thanksgiving for all the fruits of the earth and an acknowledgment that these came from God alone. And it was an affirmation that this was the most important thing or 'first' thing they should do with the fruits of harvest. And it can be the same, spiritually, for us.

The most important thing or 'first' thing we can do when reflecting on the good and true feelings and thoughts that come to fruition in our lives is to offer them in service to the Lord and acknowledge that they come from him alone and not from ourselves.

*All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above,  
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love.*

# Harvest First Fruits



---

Visit

[www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk](http://www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk)  
[www.spiritualquestions.org.uk](http://www.spiritualquestions.org.uk)



## Harvest - First Fruits

*“When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted.”*

**Leviticus 23:10-11**

The book of Leviticus is full of all sorts of laws, many of which seem harsh or even absurd to modern ears but this one just seems delightful. Just picture the scene - there you are standing before the priest with a sheaf of corn that has come from the first field you have harvested and you hand it to the priest. The priest then waves the sheaf before the Lord, presumably at the altar, and you become accepted in his sight.

The book of Deuteronomy adds further detail by making it clear that the *“first of all the fruits of the ground”* should be put in a basket and taken to the priest who will set it down before the altar of the Lord your God.

The tradition of Harvest Festival in this country grew out of the fact that most people worked on the land and had an intimate experience of the annual cycles of sowing and harvesting. Putting this together with the description of the laws concerning harvest in the Old Testament led to the tradition of celebrating harvest in church at the time when everything was *“safely gathered in”* and this included bringing baskets of fruit and vegetables to the altar.

But in our day and age we are increasingly disconnected from the reality of harvest and the seasonal cycles. Indeed, because of global food production and supply the harvest of the world comes all round the year.

So in the absence of the sights and smells of a church filled with sheaves of corn, freshly baked bread and baskets of fruit and vegetables we can simply go back to the Bible and look again at this idea of bringing ‘first fruits’ to the Lord. The list of the first fruits included the following:

- The first fruits
- The first grain
- The first wine
- The first shearing
- The first oil

But also the firstborn were offered, whether asses, mules, horses or humans – not as a sacrifice but simply in thankfulness.

The first fruits offered were supposed to be the choicest and were meant to be fresh but for Israelites living far from Jerusalem dried figs and grapes were also acceptable. And it wasn’t just one or two bunches of grapes or the odd fig that was involved. As the custom developed the ‘first fruit’ amounted to about one-fiftieth of the entire crop.

Now this may be all very interesting historical information but what does it mean for us? In what way can the offering of first fruits to the Lord apply to us?

Firstly we need to reflect on what is said in the New Testament.

In Luke 6 we read the words of Jesus:

*“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”*

And in John 15:

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*

And in Galatians 5 the apostle Paul comments:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;*

From these words we can clearly see that our ‘fruits’ are the good and true things in our lives such as love and faithfulness that can grow and develop year after year. But these are not really our own as Jesus says: