

Deuteronomy 26.1-11 Possible title: "What's in the basket?" "The Turkey's a Turkey, Not a Centerpiece"

The "creed" (von Rad) that Israel recited when they brought the first fruits of the harvest.

The issue: what would they have eaten?

Note: "you" eat, but so do Levites, orphans, aliens, widows (v. 12)

Dietary variation is geographical, temporal, social.

Well, it's Thanksgiving time. Every culture in the world has celebrated some form of thanksgiving festival at the appropriate time of year for their harvest since ancient times. Nigeria celebrates the New Yam Festival, Jews, Sukkoth (suhkus), Chinese, Harvest Moon Festival, Festival of Lammas in medieval England, Obzinky for the Czechs and Slovaks, and Pongol in India, Oktoberfest in Germany. In Swaziland, it's Incwala (tdlickh-wah-lah) that includes the people of the Old Testament. Here's what they did:

Student read Deuteronomy 26.1-11

This is what the ancient Israelites did. They recited their history, who got them to where they are and how. They recited where there are now – "a land flowing with milk and honey." But according to this book, the land wasn't necessarily flowing with milk and honey. What they had a lot of was wine, bread, and oil.

It's fairly standard in to give thanks. And the giving thanks in this way is fairly standard in most cultures. You bring stuff, usually the first and best stuff, for thanksgiving. You put it in a basket and bring it to the altar.

1. Then you give thanks to God, or in some cultures, to spirits or ancestors, to the sun, the rain, the cattle, right then and there with the stuff right in front of you to see while you give thanks. You recite your story of what God did for you, verse 5 "a wandering Aramean..." Just like the Pilgrims recited their history and felt compelled to give thanks to God for bringing them through hardships. If you are an immigrant, you may recite the story of it was that you came here. You may recite the story of how you came to Augsburg. More on this here or later? Basically, you recite the reasons why you are giving thanks.

This is

We'll eat turkey on Thursday or some other day this weekend, a lot of it Jennie-O turkeys raised just 2 ½ hours south of here. Others will eat

Mooncakes stamped on top with a picture of a rabbit

Rice

Yams, cocoyam

Wild foods

Corn, maize, wheat, rye, barley, apples grapes, nuts, sugar cane, hops.

Vegetables, fruits, grains

Simple foods. Staple foods. Basic foods.

The ancient Israelites in our reading for today ate mostly bread, wine, and oil. But at harvest....That's what would have been in their basket. But what they were giving thanks for were those simple things, the bread, the wine, the oil, the basic things they needed to survive. That "land flowing with milk and honey" is always a future expectation for them. Mostly in ancient Israel, there was famine, food shortage, chronic malnutrition. People had those basic, things, which means they lacked vitamin A, C, and iron, not a satisfactory nutritional balance.

Because, you see, you can't grow all the good stuff right in your own backyard. What we eat depends on where we are and what can be grown there. Whatever harvest you end up with depends on your geography, the length of time it takes to grow a certain thing. You can't have it all, all the time.

The same thing that's interesting about our Pilgrim story. They brought food, all of them, to share with each other and to eat together as they gave thanks. Check the myths here.

1. No matter what culture, what economic status, it's appropriate to give thanks. To give appropriate thanks. No matter how simple or complicated, how little there is, give thanks.
2. As you give thanks, invite, share with the widow, the stranger. Zimbabwe cup of water story. Share it in your thanksgiving. The sharing is part of your Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving Day in America is

Turkey's not the main thing – basic necessities of life are