

Numbers 13:24-25 (Michel Payette) 169911

The Christian Shepherd: 2003, Fruit (13:24-25)

Eshcol's grapes (Num. 13:24-25) were the fruit brought back from the land of promise, the land of Canaan, which the people of God were to possess and enjoy. We know unbelief kept them from it. Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies who believed that Jehovah would help them conquer the land. Forty years later they entered it with the people of God, while all the unbelievers had perished in the desert. The same kind of fruit they had brought back forty years earlier was still there.

Fruit Produced by the Believer

The land of Canaan is a picture of the heavenly places where the child of God is now seen seated in Christ (Eph. 2:6). It is also where he must stand fast, resisting the wicked spirits (Eph. 6:12).

We are called to bear fruit for God. The three fruits brought out of Canaan the cluster of grapes, the pomegranates and the figs bring before us three aspects of the fruit God produces in us and by us.

(1) The grapes represent the fruit of the Spirit as recorded in Galatians 5:22. They speak of the reproduction in us of the character of Christ Himself.

(2) The pomegranate, a fruit which lined the hem of the high priest's garment (Ex. 28:33), is appreciated for its juice that gives aroma to wine (Song of Sol. 8:2). It represents what is produced by the Spirit towards God in our lives such as the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name (Heb. 13:15). The cheeks (temples; KJV) of the Shulamite (Song of Sol. 4:3; 6:7), like pieces of pomegranates, give anticipation as to what will come out of the mouth exquisite juice! How the Father's ear must rejoice at what comes out of the true worshipper's mouth overflowing because of His love!

(3) The figs were missing when the Lord Jesus came to pick some (Matt. 21:19). The fig tree was to produce fruit just as Israel was to make known the true God. But they failed there was much profession but no fruit! Rather, the name of God was blasphemed among the nations because of them (Rom. 2:24).

Fruit Born by the Believer

(1) The fig represents the action of the Spirit of God by us towards others our brethren or lost souls around. The fig is a basic staple food, essential in Biblical lands. Does not the Lord say to every one of us, "Give ye them to eat" (Mark 6:37)? May our lives, our activity, our distribution of literature, or whatever means used cause souls around us to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(2) The fruits of Canaan were carried on a staff, a piece of wood, hanging between heaven and earth. This staff reminds us of the cross of Christ and the fruit hanging from it. We are crucified with Him. It is only in the measure that we apply this practically in our lives that we will bear the fruit of God, in us, toward Him and toward others.

(3) The wooden staff could not be carried alone two must carry it. The Lord Jesus tells us that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). In order for the fruit of God to be manifested in our lives, we must be in communion with the Lord Himself (John 15:4). Without communion it will be impossible for the true fruit of Canaan to be produced in our lives. So, then, "let us go up at once, and possess it" (Num. 13:30)!

M. Payette