

Feast of the First Fruits

First Fruits is held on the Sunday following Unleavened Bread. 21st of Nisan. (Lev. 23:10-11) Passover begins in 14th, Feast of the Unleavened Bread on 15th, and the Feast of the First Fruits on 21st. They are referred to as one feast. There are remaining the feasts are Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, Lights and Purim for a total of seven feasts.

First Fruits is celebrated in spring to acknowledge the early crops. It was a wave offering. "This rite, together with that of "heaving" or "raising" the offering was an inseparable accompaniment of peace offerings. In such the right shoulder, considered the choicest part of the victim, was to be ("heaved," and viewed as holy to the Lord, only eaten therefore by the priest: the breast was to be "waved," and eaten by the worshiper. The scriptural notices of these rites are to be found in Ex 29:24,28; Le 7:30,34; 8:27; 9:21; 10:14,15; 23:10,15,20; Nu 6:20; 18:11,18,26-29 etc. In conjecturing the meaning of this rite, regard must be had that it was the accompaniment of peace offerings, which were witnesses to a ratified covenant --an established communion between God and man."

Since the feast of the Unleavened bread was seven days long, it would have one Sunday and that Sunday would be First Fruits each year.

The Feast was a thanksgiving offering to God for His goodness in providing food from the land for the Israelites. There was a national offering (Lev. 23:10-17) and individual offerings (Exod. 23:19, Deut. 26:1-11). The First Fruit offerings went to support the priests.

Wave Offering

It was initiated at the consecration of Aaron and the beginning of the Aaronic priesthood (Exod. 29:24-28). It was associated with the peace offering that symbolized a right spiritual relationship with God. In the peace offering a worshiper would bring a bullock, a lamb or a goat, male or female and the this offering followed the Sin Offering.

The wave and heave offering were a part of the peace offering. This offering came from the animal offered as the peace offering. When Aaron was consecrated, Moses placed the animal on Aaron's hands and waved the offering before the Lord. Jewish interpreters say the offering was placed on the hands of the worshiper and then the priest would place his hands under it and move it back and forth and up and down. If this was true it was a sign of the cross.

The portions offered in the wave offering were holy and only the priests ate this portion (Lev. 10:14f). The heave offering was the choicest part of the animal the right thigh.

Lev. 23:10-15, records that a wave offering was part of the Feast of First Fruits.

Today the First Fruits is celebrated by Christians and called Easter. Easter is named after the Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, a pagan goddess of fertility, and even today these symbols of fertility are used in celebrating Easter with rabbits, eggs, new costumes, etc. which symbolize Spring in the beginning of the growing season.

Note Christians do not celebrate or worship the pagan goddess of Ishtar. Both celebrations fell at the same time and became referred to as Easter. Christians are celebrating the resurrection of Yeshua Christ and not some pagan deity.

Instead of Easter, it should be called First Fruits. Yeshua arose on Feast of the First Fruits. Many believe that Christians too will be resurrected as the First Fruits and possibly on the Feast of the First Fruits. We should not be dogmatic about this because Yeshua said only God the Father knew the day of the Rapture. (Matt. 24:23)

"But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Cor. 15:23.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

This was the last feast the Lord fulfilled.

In 1 Cor. 15:23, Paul refers to Christ as the First Fruits. The real point of the feast was looking to the resurrection of the Messiah. Yeshua, the Messiah was our provision for spiritual welfare. Yeshua was raised on the first day of the Feast of the First Fruits. Yeshua said he was the Bread of Life. This was the last feast the Lord took part in while on earth.

The Feast of the First Fruits began the harvest. The offering to the Lord was the first of the grain that was harvested, and afterwards the harvest would continue. This is the symbolism of the First Fruit. Christ was the First at 1 Corinthians 15:20,23 states. Those who have and will believe in Yeshua Christ for salvation since that time are the harvest.

Note how Yeshua illustrated this in John 12:23-26 Amplified Bible (AMP)

23 And Yeshua answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified and exalted. 24 I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone [just one grain, never more]. But if it dies, it produces much grain and yields a harvest. 25 The one who loves his life [eventually] loses it [through death], but the one who hates his life in this world [and is concerned with pleasing God] will keep it for life eternal. 26 If anyone serves Me, he must [continue to faithfully] follow Me [without hesitation, holding steadfastly to Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me]; and wherever I am [in heaven's glory], there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Note what Yeshua said the reapers (Christians) would experience:

1. A repudiation of a self-orientated life. (John 12:25)
2. The establishment of a commitment to Yeshua Christ as a disciple. (John 12:26a)
3. The promise of fellowship. (John 12:26b)
4. The promise of being honor. (John 12:26c)

Fifty days later began the Feast of Pentecost

THE SPRING FEASTS ARE FULFILLED IN THE NEW COVENANT

In the three spring feasts we see the redemption story of our Savior as it emerged into history nearly two millennia ago. Our Lord Yeshua personally fulfilled all three of those spring feasts. They were accurately fulfilled down to the minutest detail. Epic world-changing events erupted into holy history on the very day of the Hebrew solar-lunar calendar in which they were due. Christ was crucified on Passover, Nisan 14 and in the grave at sunset as the 15th day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread began.

In the case of the Feast of First Fruits on the day after the weekly Sabbath of Passover in the year of the passion something wonderful and unexpected happened. Our Savior fulfilled the third feast, the Feast of First Fruits. He rose from the dead as stipulated in Leviticus, on the morrow after the 7th day Sabbath following Passover on the first day of the week. He was the First Fruits from the dead. Thus in His resurrection from the dead He fulfilled the Feast of First Fruits. Resurrection Sunday came right on the Feast of First Fruits. Tis "moed" or "appointed time" had been celebrated, (and foreshadowed), in the Old Covenant. The celebration had been given by YHVH/God through Moses to the covenant people of God as they gathered at Sinai.

THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS IS FULFILLED IN THE NEW COVENANT.

CHRIST IS RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD RIGHT ON FIRSTFRUITS.

The Feast of First Fruits was fulfilled by Yeshua in His overcoming of death seen at His resurrection. He was indeed the "First Fruits from the dead".

1 Corinthians 15: 20-23

20. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the First Fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

23. But each one in his own order: Christ the First Fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

Yeshua is called "the First Fruits of those that rise from the dead". (I Corinthians 15:20) Three days and nights after His crucifixion and early in the morning Yeshua rose again from the grave. The Resurrection of Yeshua came on the first day of the week. That day happened to be the 17th of Nisan, right on the Feast of First Fruits. Note that the Sabbath or "high day" of the first day of the seven days of Unleavened Bread is then followed by a regular weekly seventh day Sabbath, (or Saturday). There were two Sabbaths back to back that year, which was 32 A.D.

First Fruits was the first day after the Sabbath following Passover. The risen Yeshua Christ was seen that morning by Mary near the garden tomb. -John 20:10-18 Later He walked through the wall to visit with the disciples in a closed room. Thomas felt the wound in His side and confirmed that He was not a ghost. He was real. He had a spiritual body. His spiritual body was solidly manifest in this world. He could be touched and felt as a material body. -John 20:24-29 After His resurrection from the dead Yeshua met up with James and John by the Sea of Galilee. They were out in their boat fishing. He had bread and was frying some fish for them there by the seashore. -John 21:3-14 Later He joined up with some disciples as they walked down from Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus. (See the wonderful painting above by Robert Zund). This was the manner in which our risen Lord operated in this cosmos during those weeks before He ascended to the Father. He would appear among His people, join in fellowship with them, minister to them, and then disappear. Will this be the pattern of His ministry in the Millennium?

The meaning of First Fruits to Christians today

The literal meaning

While there is no New Testament admonition binding Christians to give of "first fruits" we do know that God loves a cheerful giver. Christians are expected to give of our substance to support the work of the church and missions. We, like the Israelites, need to give.

The spiritual meaning

All Christians are especially dedicated to God in the manner of first fruits. As it is written in James 1:18, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of First Fruits of His creatures." We need to be mindful, just as God wanted Israel to be mindful, that we and all we have belong to God.

The Passover connection

Christ in His resurrection is "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Corinthians. 15:20-23). Yeshua gave His life as our Passover lamb on the 14th day of the first Hebrew month, Nisan. We believe that He rose from the dead on the 16th of Nisan, the Feast of First Fruits. Since Jewish reckoning views part of a day as a full day, the 14th through the 16th was considered three days.

I Corinthians may even have been written shortly after Passover, to judge by references such as I Corinthians 5:7-8 and 16:8. Christ rose as the first to be resurrected, but all who trust in Him will also rise from the dead in the final "harvest."

The prophetic meaning

In addition to the the fact that God has promised that we, too, will be raised from the dead, in Romans 8:23 Paul says that as redeemed people we possess the "first fruits of the Spirit." "Paul is saying here either that the measure of the Holy Spirit that we now have is but a foretaste of the greater measure there will be in the age to come, or that the gift of the Spirit now is a foretaste of the many other blessings we will have in due course."

The meaning of First Fruits to Israel in Bible times

The literal meaning

"First Fruits" refers to the first portion of the harvest which is given to God. Most notably the first fruits are: the first to come in time; a pledge or hope of the greater harvest to follow; and specially dedicated to God.

(A first fruits ceremony is described in detail in Deuteronomy 26:1-11.)

Note that the "first born," whether human or beast, was also considered as God's special possession and can be considered a type of first fruit. (Exodus 22:29, Exodus 34:19)

The spiritual meaning

By giving God the first fruits, Israel acknowledged that all good things come from God and that everything belongs to God. Giving the first fruits was also a way of expressing trust in God's provision; just as He provided the first fruits, so He would provide the rest of the crops that were needed.

Note that the Feast of First Fruits was instituted when the nation of Israel was still wandering, without land or crops. It was observed in faith that God would lead the people to the land He had promised.

The Passover connection

Three holidays are associated with the giving of first fruits in the Old Testament. First Fruits are mentioned in connection with the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) in Numbers 28:26; Tabernacles (Sukkot) in Exodus 23:16; and Passover in Leviticus 23:10. Since Passover (Pesach) was the first of the three holidays, the "first first fruits" were offered in connection with that holiday. The Passover lambs were sacrificed on the 14th day of the month of Nisan, the first day of Passover was the 15th, and the Feast of First Fruits fell on the 16th of Nisan. (Bear in mind that on a Jewish calendar, a new day begins when the sun sets, not when it rises.) The portion of first fruits at Passover was called the "omer." It was forbidden to eat from the crop until this portion had been offered (Leviticus 23:14).

The prophetic meaning

Israel was described as the "first fruits of God's harvest" (Jeremiah 2:3). Israel was to be a pledge of a greater harvest inasmuch as she would experience God's re-demotion and witness of this redemption to the nations that they too might come to know the God of Israel.