

LEVITICUS 23:9-14 (THE FEASTS OF THE LORD: FIRSTFRUITS)

Today we turn to the Feast of Firstfruits. It is a small number of verses, but it points to the second half of the greatest event in all of human history. As it is a part of the Law of Moses, we know that it is fulfilled, and all sound Christian scholars will admit this. It is one of the spring feasts of the Lord, and the agreement is that all of the spring feasts are fulfilled, completely and entirely, in Christ's first advent.

The disagreement on the feasts of the Lord in relation to fulfillment doesn't arrive until we come to the fall feasts – known to most as Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles. It is best to not get too ahead of oneself in analyzing the Bible for others, because whatever I say would then fill the hearer's mind with presuppositions about what is being said when we finally arrive at whatever passage I previously referred to.

However, in the case of the feasts of the Lord, there should be no problem with coming to the fall feasts with a presupposition that they are already fulfilled. And so, as I have done several times already, especially when we looked at the Day of Atonement passage of Leviticus 16, I would like to *again* remind you that the Law of Moses is fulfilled in Christ. This is made explicit time and time again in the New Testament.

As the feasts of the Lord, both spring and fall, are a part of the Law of Moses, then they – by default – must be fulfilled. If they are not, then Christ... didn't fulfill the law. If so, then it is not fulfilled. And if this is so, then Christ is not the end of the law for all who believe. And if this is so, what are we doing in church? If the law is not fulfilled in Christ, then we of all men are the most pitiable.

But such is not the case. We are not to be pitied, but emulated! We have a hope which is grounded in the truth of God as is revealed in the Person and work of Jesus Christ! We have the hope of glory, and we have the assurance of salvation. Praise God for what He has done in Jesus!

Text Verse: “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” Colossians 2:16, 17

Paul tells us there that the feasts of the Lord are mere shadows of the true Substance which is found in the Person and work of Christ. Isaiah wrote of what was coming in Christ, including a hint at what would be fulfilled concerning the Feast of Firstfruits. The shadow would find its substance. Here is what he says –

“After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by the knowledge of himself; and he will bear their iniquities.” Isaiah 53:11 (World English Bible)

For this verse, I switched from the usual preaching Bible that I use, the NKJV, to the World English Bible. The NKJV, like the older KJV, is based upon a source text which dropped out some rather important information. The oldest copy of that text, the Masoretic Text, comes more than 1000 years after the work of Christ, and it was a text maintained by the Jews.

There are several places where it is rather apparent these Masoretes purposefully manipulated the text to hide something wonderful; to hide Christ. Isaiah 53:11 is one of those passages. Mark that down and go compare the incorrect reading of the KJV to what is corrected by modern Bibles. And how do we know the correction is correct? Because in 1947, a group of documents was found in Qumran, Israel which predate the coming of Christ. Included in these documents, now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, was the Great Isaiah scroll. In Isaiah 53:11, lo and behold, the words which match the Septuagint, another copy of the Old Testament, written in Greek, and also which predates the coming of Christ, says the same thing – “After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied.”

The direct object in both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint is the word “light.” Something magnificent, symbolized by the word “light,” would happen to the Servant after the suffering of His soul. It is in this, and not the suffering, in which satisfaction would come. The suffering would lead to the light. What was Isaiah saying? He was saying the same thing that the Bible

has said from the very beginning. It is something which is said again, in a different way, in today's verses.

What are we to see in these six verses of Leviticus 23? Something wonderful. Something filled with hope for fallen man. Something directly from the mind of God which points to the future work of Christ Jesus. This is what we are to see. These things are all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. That Which Is First (verses 9-14)

⁹ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

The words given here are here are identical to verse 1, and they have not been spoken since verse 1. In other words, there was the mandated weekly Sabbath which was considered its own feast. Then there was the introduction of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But both of these fell under the original introduction of verse 1. Now a new introduction is given. Why would this be?

The answer is found in what the following verses proclaim. As we saw, the Sabbath, the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread had already been proclaimed to the people of Israel. They were simply re-explained to the people here in Chapter 23, and defined as feasts of the Lord.

What will now be proclaimed is not only a new feast of the Lord, not specifically mandated before, but it is also a feast which could not be observed during their time in the wilderness. The Sabbath, Passover, and Unleavened Bread were feasts to be held anywhere at any time. Such was not the case for Firstfruits. Israel was on the way to Canaan. Their expected arrival was yet ahead. That their time in the wilderness would last 40 years was merely a result of coming disobedience.

Had that not occurred, they would have gone into Canaan in a very short amount of time, and the very next year at approximately this same time, they would be observing their first year of these feasts. This was the intent,

but it would not actually happen for a full 40 years. Despite this, it is a feast for those dwelling in the land, when the ground was set to produce its spring harvest.

¹⁰ “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land

ki tabo-u el ha’arets – There is assurance in these words. “When come you into the land” signifies arrival – sure and guaranteed. For Israel, this was their immediate expectation. For them, there was expected to be a short time of preparation, and then they would boldly march in and receive their inheritance.

That the amount of time until their arrival would extend beyond the lives of almost every adult in the camp is of no matter to the Lord. He has said it would come to pass, and so it shall. If a time of refinement, chastisement, and learning was necessary for these people before they entered, so be it. But enter they would.

^{10 (con’t)} which I give to you,

asher ani noten lakem – The implication here is that this is the Lord’s land. One cannot bestow what he does not possess. Further, as the owner, giving it to Israel signifies that it is Israel’s inheritance. Conditions for dwelling in the land accompany the grant, and if those conditions are not met, the negative results are also stated. But the land is for Israel. When they are obedient, the land is theirs, and they may dwell in it. When they are disobedient, the land is theirs, and they may not dwell in it. But it is the Lord’s land, set apart for Israel. When Israel is in the land, they were to observe this feast to the Lord.

As a point of note, this is the third of only four times in the book of Leviticus that a command is given in a prospective manner. It is something expected only in the future, when the people have arrived in their promised inheritance.

The four times this type of command are given are found in Leviticus 14:34 when speaking of the Lord putting a leprous plague in a house. Again in Leviticus 19:23 when the people enter the land and plant fruit trees, they were to be considered as uncircumcised for three years. Then this note in Leviticus 23 concerning this Feast of Firstfruits. Finally, in Leviticus 25:2 will come the mandate of the seventh-year Sabbath of the land.

¹⁰ (con't) **and reap its harvest,**

u-qetsartem eth qetsiyrah – “And shall reap the harvest.” As Israel was to be an agrarian society, their lives would be centered on the annual cycle of planting and harvesting. The Lord is anticipating this and directing them according to such a schedule. At the time of reaping, the feast of the Lord would be celebrated.

The word “reap” here is *qatsar*. It means to cut down. It can be used figuratively in the sense of being discouraged, mourning, being troubled and so on. At a harvest, one may mourn the labor, but it is a mourning which leads to joy. That which results from the labors is what one actually anticipates.

The word harvest, *qatsiyrah*, is derived from *qatsar*. It is that which grows, and which is to be reaped. Even more, what is later stated about this reaping, is that it is the very beginning of the harvest. In Deuteronomy 16, while explaining terms of the Feast of Weeks, the next feast to be celebrated after Firstfruits, we will read this –

“You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin to put the sickle to the grain.” Deuteronomy 16:9

This then is the very commencement of the harvest; the first of that which is reaped.

¹⁰ (con't) **then you shall bring a sheaf**

Here, the word translated as “sheaf” is *omer*. It is a word which carries two distinct meanings. The first is a specific dry measure of something. In this

case, it would be grain. If this is the intent, then it is the same measure as the amount of Manna which was stored up in the golden pot which was recorded in Exodus 16. An *omer* is one-tenth of the standard measure known as an *ephah*.

The second meaning of *omer* is simply a sheaf. This is the meaning which is found in Deuteronomy 24:19, and also in Ruth 2:7. There are good scholarly commentaries which favor either meaning of the word. Jewish commentaries state that this is a set measure. Flavius Josephus agrees, saying it is a measure which has been dried, beaten, and had the barley purged from the bran.

Because of the symbolism being pictured, I would personally agree with the translation which says "sheaf." It is a single sheaf, cut down – the first of the harvest. But more, this is barley, not wheat. Barley is the first crop to ripen each year.

Barley is the crop of the poor people, being a lesser grain than wheat. It is known as the crop of hairy ears because of its hairy appearance. The word "barley" in Hebrew is *seorah* which is closely related to the word *se-ar* or hair.

Hair in the Bible indicates an awareness of things, especially that of sin. The goat for example, which is used in Leviticus for the sin offering, is known as *sair*. We have an awareness of sin in the hairy goat sin offering. In Numbers there is a type of person known as a Nazirite. This is someone who made a vow or was consecrated to the Lord.

During the time of that vow, they were never to cut their hair. Samson was a Nazirite from birth as were Samuel and John the Baptist. Paul took a Nazirite vow in Acts. The hair on their head was a reminder of their state, just as the hairy goat is a reminder of sin. It is man's place to be aware.

¹⁰ (con't) **of the firstfruits of your harvest**

The word translated as "firstfruits" is *reshith*. It means, "the beginning," "the first," "the chief," "the finest," etc. It is the first word used in Scripture,

b'reshith, or “In the beginning.” It comes from the same root as *rosh*, which is the first in time, place, order, or rank. It is the principle thing. In this verse, the term *reshith*, or “firstfruits” is singular.

10 (con't) to the priest

el ha'kohen – “unto the priest.” It is to the priest ministering before the Lord that this beginning offering was to be brought.

11 He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord,

Without being argumentative, whether set dry measure, or whether sheaf (but we shall go with sheaf), the priest was to take the *omer* and wave it before the Lord. The Lord was to personally see the waving of this sheaf; it was to be waved there in His presence.

The word translated as “wave,” *nuph*, gives the sense of “to quiver.” Thus it means to vibrate up and down or to rock to and fro. To get the idea of what the priest does, the word means elsewhere “to wave,” “to beckon,” “to sprinkle,” “to rub,” “to saw,” and so on. Each of these implies motion and vibrancy.

11 (con't) to be accepted on your behalf;

The words here are more appropriately translated as, “so that you may be accepted.” The offering was made not for the offering to be accepted, but for the acceptance of those offering. The word “your” is plural, speaking of all of the people of the land.

11 (con't) on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

One of the greatest divisions of interpretation of this entire feast is answering the question, “What Sabbath is being referred to here?” The answer was a dividing line between the Sadducees and the Pharisees of the Second Temple times. The vast majority of commentators agree with the Pharisees and say it is referring not to the weekly Sabbath, but to the first day of the holy convocation which follows immediately after Passover.

In other words, the Passover began, as verse 5 states, “On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight.” The next day, the first day of Unleavened Bread, or the fifteenth day of the month, was a holy convocation where no regular work was to be done. Thus, the day after this supposed “Sabbath” would be the 16th, and it would be on this day that the offering was to be presented.

This is incorrect for several reasons:

1) The feast now being looked at began with its introductory words, “And the Lord spoke to Moses saying.” There is thus no scriptural reason for tying the two feasts together in this way. Any such alignment would be incidental, not purposeful.

2) The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is *not a Sabbath* (oops), nor is ever termed as such. It is a “holy convocation.” No work of any kind was to be conducted on a Sabbath. However, the preparation of food, something not allowed on a Sabbath, was allowed on this day according to Exodus 12:16 (oops). Further,

3) all yeast was to be removed from the house on this same day, another work which would not be authorized on a Sabbath (oops).

4) If the day now in question was a weekly Sabbath, following the holy convocation, which would occur every seventh year or so, then the people – if not priests – bringing this sheaf to the temple on that weekly Sabbath day, would be a violation of that Sabbath which was now being observed. But Leviticus 23:3 was specifically placed first in order of the feasts to show that no feast celebration was to interfere with the *regular weekly Sabbath*. But this would have to be the case if the Sabbath referred to in this verse was the holy convocation referred to in the previous feast (one more oops).

I’m sad, you see
For the Pharisee
Because he failed to exegete carefully
He did contemplate his Scripture improperly

The correct answer is that this is a weekly Sabbath which would fall into the time of the harvest season when the first grain became ripe, whenever that occurred. As the Passover is during this season, it would more often than not occur on the day after whatever weekly Sabbath occurred *during* the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Why is this so important to understand? It is because when this is taken incorrectly, as has been done continuously by modern scholars, it causes the timeline of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection to be improperly manipulated. It introduces a false reading of Scripture, and thus a false rendering of the Passion week timeline. It may seem like hair-splitting to worry about this, but the timeline of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is so carefully detailed by the Lord, that He really wants us to not botch it up when we look at it. This is certain.

12 And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year,

On the same day as the waving of the sheaf, a *kebes*, or male lamb of the first year was to be offered. The first time the *kebes* was mentioned was in the initial instructions for the Passover found in Exodus 12:5. The word comes from an unused root meaning, "to dominate." It is a ram just old enough to butt. Being in its first year implies innocence. But there is more...

12 (con't) without blemish,

There was to be no defect. It was to be perfect in all ways.

12 (con't) as a burnt offering to the Lord.

A burnt offering is one which signifies a life dedicated wholly to the Lord. The entire animal is burnt up as a sweet smelling aroma to Yehovah.

13 Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour

Along with the lamb was to be a grain offering of *solet*, or fine flour. This is from an unused root meaning to strip; flour, as chipped off; and thus fine. It

is generally considered, even when not specifically stated, that wheat was the flour used in such an offering. It would be the best of things offered to the greatest of Beings, meaning the Creator.

Normally, a grain offering along with an animal would be one-tenth of an ephah of flour, but this one requires two. The reason is probably because it being a harvest feast, it implies greater liberality in the anticipation of a great harvest ahead. One tenth would be the regular offering, the second would be in anticipation of the plenty which lay ahead. Along with any grain offering, frankincense was also offered, though not stated here.

13 (con't) mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma;

The grain offering was to be *balal*, or mixed, with oil. When it was properly prepared, it was to be made an offering by fire to the Lord, as it says, for a sweet aroma.

13 (con't) and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin.

The only three times that *nesek*, or drink offerings, are mentioned in Leviticus are here in this chapter. This is the first of them. The word means "cover." The idea is that when the drink offering is poured out, it will cover that onto which it is poured. The fourth part of wine was the standard amount of the drink offering (Exodus 29:40). As this is not the time of the vintage harvest, the same amount as normal was offered.

14 You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God;

The prohibition against partaking of any of the produce of the field is given. Not until the firstfruits is offered were any of these things to be eaten by the people, implying from the new harvest. *Qali*, or parched grain, is introduced here. It is rather rare, being seen only six times in the Bible. It is roasted grain. Along with bread, no parched grain, or fresh grain was to be eaten until the rite was accomplished.

14 (fin) *it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The words here are all-encompassing, but they must be taken in context of the greater biblical themes. *Khuqat olam*, or statute forever, does not mean “forever to eternity.” *Olam* simply signifies, “to the vanishing point.” This was to be a statute forever, until the symbolism was fulfilled in Christ. “Throughout all your generations” means that it was to be continuous and without interruption. “All your dwellings” means that it applies to all Israel without exception. This is, after all, a Feast of the Lord. It was an annual anticipatory look to the time when Christ would come and fulfill it. At that time, the shadow would become substance.

*A Sheaf of grain brought to the Lord
It was the first cut down in the field
Our duty in presenting it, we have not ignored
Now it is hoped that our land will greatly yield*

*When presented, the Sheaf is waved, vibrant and alive
The Lord has accepted it, as the best of the field
The harvest will be abundant; we shall surely thrive
Yes it is hoped that our land will greatly yield*

*This Sheaf surely represents all that will follow it
There will be the most magnificent harvest from the field
All will be like the First, not a stalk unfit
Surely because of the Firstfruits our land will greatly yield*

II. Fulfilled in Christ

As was noted, this was a feast only intended to be observed by Israel in the land which the Lord gave to His people. So much for people observing it today. It doesn't apply, nor can this precept be met by the people of the church. It is absurd to even consider mandating the observance of this feast during the Gentile-led church age.

The *omer*, or sheaf, was to be the first ripe grain of the harvest. However, the term *reshith*, indicates more than simply the first, but the best, the preeminent, the head. The word is singular. One sheaf is presented. Each of these concepts speaks of Christ. He is the one, preeminent, first, and best.

As we saw, though not specifically stated, this sheaf is of the barley crop. It is the crop of the poor. Paul points us to the significance of this in 2 Corinthians 8 –

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9

Further, it is the crop of hairy ears, signifying a likeness to sinful man. This is reflected in Paul’s words of Romans 8 –

“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8:3, 4

This grain is cut down, or harvested, and then presented to the Lord. As I noted, it was to be waved by the priest before the Lord. The grain which had been cut down is caused to move, vibrancy is seen, and the semblance of life is found in it. It is the priest who conducts this. Thus, we have a picture of Christ our true High Priest causing this preeminent sheaf to be vibrant before the Lord. It is the resurrection, where life reanimates that which was cut down. To see the fulfilled symbolism of this, we need go no further than 1 Corinthians 15 –

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” 1 Corinthians 15:20

Christ was dead, He was cut down, but he was brought back from the dead, having arisen, filled with vibrancy before the Lord. As there is but one sheaf, it signifies that Christ is the one and only Representative of, or means of,

future resurrection. He is the one and only Mediator; the one and only example for emulation.

And yet, a sheaf is composed of many stalks, and so this indicates the fullness of the work which He accomplished. Every aspect of Christ the Man was cut down and buried, but in His resurrection, all of who He is was resurrected.

But in this verse, Paul shows us that this is not the end of the story. He uses the term *aparché*, or firstfruits, which is also a singular noun. He is the first, but Paul continues by saying, “of those who have fallen asleep.”

This is why the Hebrew of verse 11 says, “so that you may be accepted.” It is in the plural, speaking of those who are accepted because of the Firstfruits, Christ. It is Christ’s resurrection that then justifies us, and thus guarantees our resurrection as well. This is seen first in Paul’s words of Romans 4 –

“It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.” Romans 4:24, 25

Christ died for our sins, seen in His atoning death, and He was raised for our justification. Once justified, Paul continues to explain what will occur because of this. Again to 1 Corinthians 15 –

“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 firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ’s at His coming.” 1 Corinthians 15:21-23

After noting what was to be done, the words then tell when it was to be done. It was to be on the day after the Sabbath. I went into painful detail explaining why the term “the Sabbath” means a weekly Sabbath and nothing else. It does not in any way point to the holy convocation of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The reason this is important, as I said, is because of the timeline of Christ’s Passion. In Luke 23 we read the following –

“Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was hewn out of the rock*, where no one had ever lain before. ⁵⁴ That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.” Luke 23:53, 54

No doubt that this is speaking of a Sabbath, not a convocation. The term Sabbath is specific. However, John says the following –

“Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.” John 19:31

The reason why this was a “high day” was because the holy convocation and the regular Sabbath occurred on the same day, not because the holy convocation *is* a Sabbath day. As I said, any such alignment would be incidental, not purposeful. And this was correct for about 1500 years. Anytime the two lined up, it was an incidental occurrence. However, for it to be lined up when Christ would suffer and die was purposeful. It was God’s intent that Christ would die on a Friday and raise on a Sunday. The types and pictures found in the Old Testament which He fulfills are many. In the end, God’s divine selection caused that particular Sabbath to be a high day in order to accomplish this.

Next we were instructed on the burnt offering, a *kebes*, or lamb. The word signifies “to dominate.” It is Christ who dominates all, verified by the resurrection. He has gained the victory over death, as Paul says again from 1 Corinthians 15 –

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O Death, where *is* your sting?

O Hades, where *is* your victory?” 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55

There, Paul is writing of our victory over death, but it is a victory only made possible because of Christ’s victory first. As the firstfruits; so with the entire harvest. This lamb was to be of the first year, signifying innocence. It is the innocence of Christ who is without sin. And it was to be without blemish. Peter explains the fulfillment in Christ –

“...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18, 19

This lamb was to be a burnt offering to the Lord. As we have seen, the burnt offering is as a life dedicated wholly to God. Such is the life of Christ. It is a perfect representation of what He has done. Following the mandate for the lamb came that of the grain offering. The *solet*, or fine flour is a picture of Christ, the first and finest grain of wheat, as He alluded to Himself in John 12:24 –

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

It is a fitting emblem of Christ who is the Bread of life, and the One who thus provides everlasting life to those who partake of Him. Thus the offering is an acknowledgment of this to God. That there were two tenths instead of one speaks of the abundance of the harvest to come. It would not be just a single portion, but it is a double portion which is anticipated.

This grain offering was to be *balal*, or mixed, with oil. Oil is typical of the Spirit. It is a picture of Christ, the Bread of life, completely infused with the Spirit of God. And as is the Firstfruits, so shall be the whole of the abundant harvest to come. This entire offering was to be an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma. This is explained by Paul in Ephesians 5 –

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ²And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” Ephesians 5:1, 2

As it can be inferred, the double portion of the grain offering points to the fullness of the grain harvest, which includes us. It should be noted that the grain which is offered came from God, but it has been modified by man in the grinding process. Thus a type of work is involved in the picture. It is a confession that the works we do are to be performed in Christ, and are due only to Him.

And finally came the drink offering. The drink offering is of *yayin*, or wine. In the Bible, wine symbolizes the merging together of cultural expressions into a result. The thing that ought to happen can happen, symbolized by wine. In the case of a drink offering, it signifies rest and celebration.

A drink offering is one only offered in the Land of Promise, a land of defeated enemies. Thus it is a land of rest. Only when rest is provided, would the Lord accept the wine libations. All during the time of the wilderness wanderings, they were not offered.

Further, a drink offering is poured out in its entirety to the Lord, even in the land of Israel. No part of it was drunk by the priests or people. This signifies that the people were partially excluded from the full blessings of the Lord while still under the Law of Moses. This is what Jesus was referring to in Matthew –

“Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” Matthew 9:17

Jesus was speaking of the law and grace. The new wine is the new dispensation of grace to come. The old wine was the dispensation of the law. If one were to introduce the new concept into the old, it would not work because the two were incompatible. Only if one put the new wine in the new wineskins, and received the new wine, would the mind be changed. Only in Christ does man truly enter into the God’s victory and rest. This is why Paul could say in Philippians 2 –

“Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.” Philippians 2:17, 18

Paul’s labors in the vineyard anticipated his victory and rest in Christ. This is made all the more evident in his words to Timothy –

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” ²
Timothy 4:6-8

These things that we can claim now are because of what Christ has done. We have the victory and we rest because He first obtained it for us. This is the lesson of the Feast of Firstfruits. He, our Lord Jesus, is holy, and therefore we who are in Him are deemed as such as well. Again, to Paul in Romans 11 –

“For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches.” Romans 11:16

In summary, the Feast of Firstfruits is a picture of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is explicit in the New Testament, but it will be seen more fully when we next look at the Feast of Weeks. That feast is based on the dating of the Feast of Firstfruits that we looked at today. On a given day, but not on a set day according to the Hebrew calendar, Christ rose from the dead. From that momentous event, however, a specific event would occur fifty days later. Stay tuned for those exciting details.

Until then, let’s close with the thought that Paul says “Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” He didn’t rise on the fourth day, He rose on the third day. Scripture testified to this occurrence coming, and Scripture is fulfilled exactly as it said this would occur. This is the most reliable, and testified to occurrence in antiquity. No other event has such a vast and overwhelming body of evidence to support it. And more, no event has such a vast and overwhelming body of evidence to say, “It is coming.”

Both before and after the event, Scripture and history testify to the resurrection of Christ. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is the most singular event in all human history, and it makes possible the absolute surety that those who receive Him will likewise be resurrected. It is the hope of the redeemed, and it is founded on the solid ground of God’s

infallible word. Concerning the Feast of Firstfruits, in Christ we proclaim, "Feast fulfilled." If you haven't yet called on Christ, it is high time that you do. Eternity awaits, we will all spend it somewhere, and for those who know Christ, it will be in a land of wonder and delight. For the rest, not so much. Settle your eternity today!

Closing Verse: He is risen! Mark 16:6

Next Week: Leviticus 23:15-22 *Great stuff in these verses when for Christ one seeks...* (The Feasts of the Lord, Weeks) (39th Leviticus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if you have a lifetime of sin heaped up behind you, He can wash it away and purify you completely and wholly. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Christ, the Firstfruits

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying
These are the words He was then relaying

Speak to the children of Israel, and to them say:
All the things I relay to you today

'When you come into the land which I give to you
And reap its harvest; that which the land has increased
Then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits
Of your harvest to the priest

He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord
To be accepted on your behalf; so to you I submit
On the day after the Sabbath
The priest shall wave it

And you shall offer on that day
When you wave the sheaf, so hear My word
A male lamb of the first year, without blemish

As a burnt offering to the Lord
Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah
Of fine flour mixed with oil, so I say
An offering made by fire to the Lord
For a sweet aroma; so it shall be this way

And its drink offering of wine shall be
One-fourth of a hin to offer it correctly

You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain
Nor fresh grain until the same day
That you have brought an offering to your God
To these instructions careful heed you shall pay

It shall be a statute forever, as instructed by Me
Throughout your generations in all your dwellings it shall be

Firstfruits to the Lord, is Christ Jesus
He was crucified and buried for our sins
But He was raised for the justification of us
Yes, through the Lord, the victory He wins

And so, O God, we sing out great praises to You
Because of Christ Jesus and the work He wrought
Through Him, marvelous things You did do
And through His work we stand perfect, without spot

Hallelujah to You, yes, again we say it from the heart!
Hallelujah to You, for Christ who to us eternal life does impart!

Hallelujah and Amen...