

Sermon #57 — *Discovering Christ in Leviticus*

Title: **THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS**

Text: Leviticus 23:9-14

Subject: *Christ Our Resurrection*

Date: Tuesday Evening — June 16, 2019

Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and Jimmy Bowman*

Introduction:

My subject is **THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS**.

My text will be Leviticus 23:9-14.

(Leviticus 23:9-14) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (10) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: (11) And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (12) And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. (13) And the meat offering thereof *shall be* two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire

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unto the LORD *for* a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth *part* of an hin. (14) And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

Did you ever notice in reading the Scriptures that our God wisely and graciously revealed the gospel progressively?

- First, he spoke to Adam and Eve of the bruising of the serpent’s head by One who would be the Seed of woman, promising a Man to be our Savior.
- Then he killed an innocent victim, portraying the sacrifice of our all-glorious Christ as our Substitute, dying in our room and stead that we might live by his blood.

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- Then he clothed our first parents with the skins of that slain victim, typifying Christ's righteousness, that righteousness in which every redeemed sinner, being made the righteousness of God in him, by him, and with him, stands accepted before God in Christ, forever justified.

Throughout the Book of God, we see the unfolding drama of redemption, act by act, scene by scene, until at last the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father, saying, "*Lo, I and the children which thou hast given me,*" and presents all the myriads of his elect holy, unblameable, and unreprieveable before the presence of his glory.

SEVEN FEASTS

In this progressive revelation of his purpose of grace, the Lord God established seven annual feasts to be observed by the children of Israel, each one building upon the other, and each revealing a specific aspect

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of our God's operations of grace and mercy for the everlasting salvation of his people.

- The first feast established by God was the feast of the passover, which typified Christ our Passover who is sacrificed for us, by whom we are redeemed.
- Then, the feast of unleavened bread was established to portray our life of faith in this world. There could be no life and no faith without redemption by the blood of Christ. All the redeemed, all for whom the paschal lamb was slain, kept the feast of unleavened bread because all who were redeemed by the blood of Christ are born of God and given faith in him at the appointed time of love.
- Now, in verses 9-14, we come to the feast of firstfruits, which speaks of Christ our Resurrection and our future, bodily resurrection, which will follow this life of faith in Christ.

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We know that this is what the feast of firstfruits referred to and typified because God the Holy Spirit specifically tells us that in 1st Corinthians 15:19-28.

(1 Corinthians 15:19-28) “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (20) **But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.** (21) For **since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.** (22) For **as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.** (23) But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.** (24) Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. (25) For **he must reign,** till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (26) **The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.** (27) For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all

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things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. (28) And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

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The feast of firstfruits was a celebration of God’s provision in the Land of Canaan. The feast was established by divine law while Israel was in the wilderness. But it was not observed until they came into possession of the Land of Canaan.

For forty years they ate manna, the food of their wilderness journey. Then, when they arrived in Canaan it was time to celebrate the promise of God’s abundant harvest in the land of provision. So they observed this feast, as they did the feast of passover and unleavened bread just as soon as Joshua brought them into Canaan (Joshua 5:9-12).

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(Joshua 5:9-12) “And the LORD said unto Joshua, **This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.** Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal¹ unto this day. (10) And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. (11) And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the selfsame day. (12) And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna anymore; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.”

Proposition: For the believing Israelite, the harvest represented all God’s elect, all who shall be saved in time. The firstfruits of the harvest represented the

¹ “*Gilgal*” means “liberty.”

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Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead as the pledge of the full harvest.

THE CEREMONY

1st — **Let's look at the ancient ceremony itself** (vv. 9-14).

(Leviticus 23:9-14) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (10) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: (11) And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (12) And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. (13) And the meat offering thereof *shall be* two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire

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unto the LORD *for* a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth *part* of an hin. (14) And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”

When they planted their crops the Israelites marked off a specific section in their barley fields. When the harvest was ripe the men carried their sickles into the field and gathered one sheaf of barley each, the firstfruits of the field. They carried that sheaf to the tabernacle and gave it to God’s priest. The priest then waved the sheaf along with the burnt offering and the meal offering.

- **The priest**, of course, speaks of Christ our Priest and Mediator, by whom we come to God.

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- **The sheaf of firstfruits**, as we have seen, speaks of Christ. This was waved before the Lord for the acceptance of the people and of their sacrifices.
- **The burnt offering** of the he lamb typified Christ, the Lamb of God, by whom we have atonement.
- **The meal offering mingled with oil**, which was double the usual amount, represented the very life of the people. They brought that upon which they depended for sustenance to God as an expression of faith, trusting him to provide everything for them.
- This was to be offered with **a drink offering of wine**, which demonstrated that the offering was made willingly, joyously, without reluctance (Psalm 104:15).

(Psalms 104:15) “And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man’s heart.”

All this was done before they were allowed to gather anything from the fields for themselves.

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This firstfruits offering represented the whole harvest yet in the field. They gave thanks to God for the harvest while it still stood in the field, before they had so much as one bite of corn from the cob in their mouths.

How forcibly this taught and demonstrated their utter dependence upon the Lord God for everything. Yet, it also displayed, ceremonially, a willing, joyful consecration of all things to their God. They dipped every temporal blessing in the fountain of life before ever tasting it. And that made it sweet to their taste.

The Lord God accepted both the people and their sacrifice as a sweet savor with which he was well-pleased (Ecclesiastes 9:7).

(Ecclesiastes 9:7-10) “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. (8) Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack

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no ointment. (9) Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. (10) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

GOD’S CLAIM

2nd — **I want us to see and acknowledge God’s rightful claim upon the firstfruits because he is God.** — God still claims firstfruits of everything. The firstfruits belong to him, even before they are harvested. **God claims the firstfruits of everything. He has first claim on our lives.** Everything on the earth, both man and beast, was to be presented before the Lord as firstfruits to him

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The firstborn of both man and beast were sanctified (made holy) and presented to the Lord
(Exodus 13:2; 22:29).

(Exodus 13:2) “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: *it is mine.*”

(Exodus 22:29) “Thou shalt not delay *to offer* the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.”

The firstfruits of all the earth were presented to the Lord at his altar with praise and thanksgiving
(Deuteronomy 26:1-11).

(Deuteronomy 26:1-11) “And it shall be, when thou *art* come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; (2) That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth,

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which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put *it* in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there. (3) And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD swore unto our fathers for to give us. (4) And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God. (5) And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish *was* my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: (6) And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: (7) And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: (8) And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt

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with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: (9) And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and honey. (10) And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God: (11) And thou shalt rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that *is* among you.”

THE MESSAGE

3rd — **Now, *third*, I want you to see that the message of the feast of firstfruits is resurrection and salvation by Christ.**

Without question, all who know and worship God, all who have been washed in the blood of Christ, all

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who are born of God, all who are saved by God's free grace in Christ ought to bring the firstfruits of all things to God. **The giving of the firstfruits is a picture of faith in Christ, trusting God our Savior for all things** (Deuteronomy 26:2; Proverbs 3:5-10).

(Deuteronomy 26:2) "That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put *it* in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there."

(Proverbs 3:5-10) "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (6) In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (7) Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. (8) It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. (9) Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: (10) So shall thy

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barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”

But there is much more represented here than our faith in Christ or our devotion to him. **The feast of firstfruits points us to Christ and his devotion to God and to us as our Savior.**

There many very important and significant things recorded in the Scriptures which took place on the very day the Lord God set as the day his people would keep the feast of firstfruits. — Here are a five with which you are familiar.

- 1.Noah’s ark rested on Mount Ararat (Genesis 8:4). — **Redemption Finished!**
- 2.Israel came out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea (Exodus 13:3-4). — **Deliverance by God’s Outstretched Arm and Omnipotent Hand!**
- 3.Israel ate the firstfruits of the Promised Land (Joshua 5:10-12). — **Glory Obtained!**

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The manna that God gave from Heaven during the days in the wilderness ceased the 16th day of Nisan after the people ate of the old corn of the land. The day following was the 17th of Nisan, the day when the children of Israel ate the firstfruits of the Promised Land. — **Nisan means “new beginning”** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

4. Haman was defeated and slain (Esther 3:1-8:2).
— **Foes Vanquished!** — **Antichrist Overthrown!**

In the Book of Esther, Haman plotted to kill all the Jews in Persia and Media. Haman had ten sons. He was a picture of the false Messiah (antichrist). A decree was sent out on the 13th of Nisan that all the Jews would be killed. Upon hearing this news, Esther proclaimed a three-day fast, which would be Nisan 14-16.

On the 16th of Nisan, Esther risked her life when she came to King Ahasuerus. The king asked her, in

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effect, “Tell me, what you want?” Esther replied, “*If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him*” (Esther 5:4). This was the 16th day of Nisan. At the banquet, the king again asked Esther what she wanted, and she asked the king to come to another banquet to be held the next day, the 17th of Nisan. On this day, Haman (the picture of antichrist and of Satan) was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordechai.

5. **The resurrection of Christ took place on this very day** (John 12:24, 1 Corinthians 15:16-20).

The Lord Jesus celebrated the festival of firstfruits by presenting himself as the Firstfruits of his elect. According to the Jews’ own calculation, our Savior’s resurrection from the dead was accomplished on the very day the firstfruits were appointed to be offered (John 12:23-24; Matthew 27:52-53; 28:1-6; Romans 4:25).

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(John 12:23-24) “And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

On the next day after the sabbath, the Son of God arose from the dead. Standing upon the earth, the risen Christ waved himself before God as the true Wave Offering of Firstfruits by whom, with whom, and in whom we are accepted as a sweet savor to God.

(Matthew 27:52-53) “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, (53) And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

(Matthew 28:1-6) “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week

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[A New Sabbath! A New Beginning!], came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (2) And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (3) His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: (4) And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. (5) And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. (6) He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

(Romans 4:25) “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

- The Lamb of Sacrifice
- The Wave Sheaf of Harvest
- The Sweet Savor of Acceptance

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The Lord Jesus Christ is the firstfruits, the one who has preeminence in all things and over all things (Colossians 1:18).

- He is the firstborn of Mary (Matthew 1:23-25).
- He is the first-begotten of God the Father (Hebrews 1:6).
- He is the firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15).
- He is the first-begotten from the dead (Revelation 1:5).
- He is the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29).
- He is the firstfruits of the resurrected ones (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).
- He is the beginning of the creation of God (Revelation 3:14).
- He is the preeminent One — Jehovah's Firstborn (Colossians 1:18).

The Lord Jesus Christ, our all-glorious Savior, is indeed the Holy One of God, sanctified by the

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Father as his Firstborn. He is the first, the choicest, the preeminent One. **Behold the crucified, risen, exalted Christ, our Savior, Jehovah's Firstborn** (Revelation 1: 10-18; Son of Solomon 5:9-16).

(Revelation 1:10-18) “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, (11) Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. (12) And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; (13) And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. (14) His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; (15) And his feet like unto fine

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brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. (16) And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength. (17) And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: (18) I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

(Song of Songs 5:9-16) “What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, O thou fairest among women? what *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou dost so charge us? (10) My beloved *is* white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. (11) His head *is as* the most fine gold, his locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven. (12) His eyes *are as the eyes* of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, *and* fitly set. (13) His cheeks *are as* a bed of spices, *as*

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sweet flowers: his lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. (14) His hands *are as* gold rings set with the beryl: his belly *is as* bright ivory overlaid *with* sapphires. (15) His legs *are as* pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance *is as* Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. (16) His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus, is both the Firstborn of God and the Firstfruits unto God. He is the sheaf of the firstfruits, the pledge and promise of the full harvest. **The firstfruits represent the whole** (1 Corinthians 15:20-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

(1 Corinthians 15:20-25) “But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. (21) For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (23) But every

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man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (24) Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. (25) For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.”

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) 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: (17) Then we which are alive *and* remain

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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. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

As if that great expectation were not enough, Paul tells us another great “firstfruits” that we have already experienced (The First Resurrection — The New Birth — Revelation 20:6). He wrote to the Roman believers...

(Romans 8:23) “And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.”

We have received the pledge, the promise, the down payment, the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit. That means there is more to follow! Can you imagine what it is going to be like in heaven in the presence of the Christ, our God and Savior, for all

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eternity? No, we can't even begin to imagine it! We have only tasted what it is going to be like when Christ comes for us. The presence of the Holy Spirit guarantees the promise.

The apostle John was permitted to see what is taking place in heaven, around the throne of God.

He heard the new song they are singing about the throne. He saw the Lamb and those who follow him wherever he goes. — *“These were redeemed from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb”* (Revelation 14:4). He goes forth with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

(Matthew 24:29-31) “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (30) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man

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coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (31) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

(Joshua 5:9) “And the LORD said unto Joshua, **This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.** Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal (**LIBERTY**) unto this day.”

Even so, come Lord Jesus, even today!

Amen.