

I. Feasts of God

- A. When God handed down His instructions (Torah) to His people through Moses, He specified specific days and times each year that they would stop normal life to remember Him. These days and times were called: “His appointed times,” and referred to often as feasts or festivals. We would call them holidays. He designed these days to be memorials or reminders that would have symbolic acts to point the people to the truths He wanted to highlight.
- B. For our study today, we will look quickly at the first two feasts of the year and spend most of our time examining the third. (Ex. 12:28, Lev. 23:4-14)
 - 1. Passover - The remembrance of deliverance from death and bondage in Egypt.
 - 2. Unleavened Bread – The remembrance of being a set apart, holy priesthood.
 - 3. First Fruits – The remembrance of God as the provider of life.
- C. What was unveiled over time is that all of the appointed times held prophetic glimpses into God’s redemptive plan to restore fallen humanity back to Himself through Jesus the promised deliverer. Peering into these significant holidays opens up a whole new realm of revelation of the heart and beauty of our God.
 - 1. The apostolic writers pulled heavily on the spiritual meaning of the feasts of God to bring greater significance to the work of Salvation that Jesus accomplished in His death and resurrection. Sadly, in our modern day Christian culture and context we are generally uniformed or unaware of the hidden beauty in the appointed times.

II. First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14)

- A. Today, orthodox Jews are celebrating this feast as they take individual sheaves of barley and tie them with colorful ribbons and joyously celebrate the provision of God. At the same time, believers in Jesus join in this joyful chorus thanking God for the ultimate provision of eternal life obtained through the resurrection.
 - 1. Jesus is often talked about accomplishing the ultimate meaning (fulfilling) of the appointed times of God. He died as the ultimate Passover lamb and rose from the grave as the ultimate First Fruits. The resurrection of Jesus is the first of a harvest of millions if not billions of people who will brought to the perfection of His glory, image, and nature through the resurrection.

III. Jesus our First Fruit

- A. We celebrate the appointed time of First Fruits today reminding ourselves first that God is the source of life both physical and spiritual. He is the source of all blessings. We are to give thanks in all things and carry unwavering grateful hearts towards Him.
- B. For those that know who Jesus is and what He has done the Feast of First Fruits carries with it vast beauty as we understand and participate in it. Jesus is the First Fruits of the great plan of God in restoring humanity from cursed in the line of Adam to blessed in the line of Jesus.
 - 1. Passover took place on the 14th day of the 1st month and started the 7 day feast of Unleavened Bread. The 1st day of the week after the Sabbath (Saturday) was the Feast of First Fruits. Most people believe that the particular year that Passover started was on a Wednesday evening. Jesus died on Passover as our Passover Lamb on a Thursday afternoon (Biblical holidays were considered to be sundown to sundown). (Matt. 26:17-27:61)
 - 2. He remained dead for 3 nights and on the 3rd day (Sunday) He broke the power of death by rising from the dead. The Sunday that He rose from the grave was the appointed time of God called: First Fruits.
 - 3. As the disciples began to hear of their resurrected Lord, Jews all across the land of Israel brought the first portion of their crops to the temple of God to be lifted up (heaved) and presented (waved) by a priest to the Lord as a thankful praise offering. Their crops were assessed by the quality of the sheaf presented and their entire crop was consecrated to the Lord.
 - 4. Our resurrected Lord, in the same moment, ascended to the Father and presented Himself as the First Fruits of the global harvest from the earth. He as the High Priest lifted himself up (heaved) and presented himself (waved) in the heavenly temple to the Father thus fulfilling the Feast of First Fruits. (Jhn 20:15-18)

IV. Implications of our First Fruits offering (1 Cor. 15:20-23)

- A. The First Firsts of those who Sleep – There are many believers who would much prefer to be alive during the rapture to avoid the sting of death. Those who are translated into the air will never know the fellowship of passing through the valley of death with Him unto eternal life. (Ps. 23:4, 1 Thes. 4:14-16)

- B. The First Firsts of the Resurrection from the Dead – Jesus was the first man to rise from the dead to never die again. Everyone who had ever been raised from the dead in the biblical record were only temporary resurrections. In Christ, our First Fruits, we have the statement of complete victory over death. (Col. 1:18, Rev. 1:18)
- C. First Pledge of First Fruits – The sheaf of barley was inspected by the Priest as a pledge of the harvest, in representative quality, the witness of the First Fruit. Through this we know that doctrine of the harvest of resurrected believers is sure. Jesus stood in the temple in all perfection as the pledge (type) of all the rest. (1 Cor. 15:35-50, 1 Pet. 1:3)
1. In general, the ideas and thoughts about our eternal existence rarely encompasses the idea of having a resurrected physical body. The even greater wonder than the truth of having a physical body for eternity is why we would need one? In this we must consider our First Fruits. (Lk. 24:36-43)
- D. First Fruits in Positional Inheritance – When the sheaf was presented to God by the priest it was considered that all the harvest had been brought into the sanctuary. It was all dedicated and consecrated that very hour. All the coming faithful in Christ were virtually risen already from the dead through the First Fruits. That's why we are referred to as even now "seated with Christ in Heaven". We know that He has risen and that he has and will raise us up together with Him. (Eph. 2:4-7, Rom. 6:5-11)

"From where, O husbandman, from where have you brought yonder sheaf?" "I gathered it," he says, "from the fields that are waving with plenty." "Verily," says the priest, "the harvest is plenteous this year, and full and many are the ears, for this sheaf bears good witness." From where, O divine power, did You bring this glorious sheaf, this body of our Lord, so bright and glorious? From where did You bring it, O Spirit of the Lord? Is there a harvest of many shocks of corn such as this? "Yes, verily," says the teacher; "This is but one among many, the first born among many brethren." We know right well that there must be a glorious harvest of resurrection forms and immortal bodies, since Jesus Christ, clothed in immortality and light, walks among the sons of men, the Pledge of all the rest! – (C.H. Spurgeon – April 20th 1862)