

GOD'S PROGRAM FOR HIS PEOPLE PREDICTED IN ISRAEL'S FEASTS

III. The Feast Of Firstfruits: Christ The Firstfruits From The Dead

(Leviticus 23:9-14)

I. Introduction

- A. The Leviticus 23:1-44 feasts for Israel typologically predict God's program for His people in history (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 208), what is valuable for us to study today in view of unsettling current events.
- B. The third feast is the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-14), what typifies Christ as the firstfruits from the dead that will be followed by the resurrection of His people at His coming, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.
- C. We thus view Scripture to understand the truths of this feast in God's program for His people (as follows):

II. The Feast Of Firstfruits: Christ The Firstfruits From The Dead, Leviticus 23:9-14.

- A. The Feast of Firstfruits typifies the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Leviticus 23:9-11:
 1. This feast was to be observed the day after the first Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Leviticus 23:11b; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 206. Since that Sabbath occurred the morning after the Passover lamb had been slain and eaten (Leviticus 23:5-6; *Ibid.*), the Feast of Firstfruits occurred on the **third day** after Passover, the third day after Jesus Christ rose from the dead! (cf. Mark 15:33-16:6; Luke 24:45-46)
 2. The Apostle Paul claimed that Christ is the firstfruits from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20), the first to rise from the dead in a glorified body [as opposed to the first to be raised from the dead in a mortal body that would only die once again as in the case of Lazarus (John 11:1-44) and others in Scripture].
 3. Indeed, the theme of likening the resurrection to a kernel of grain that is sown in the ground, which kernel dies as a kernel only to have a plant in its place spring up into life is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:35-38 and by Jesus in John 12:23-24. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftns. to John 12:23 and 1 Cor. 15:35-50)
- B. Accordingly, this feast highlights not only the joy of Christ's resurrection, but its divine promise of the joyful resurrection of the believer from the dead at His coming (as follows), Leviticus 23:12-14:
 1. The harvest of this firstfruits on the third day after Passover celebrated the barley harvest that occurs at that time, for the wheat harvest occurred later during the summer, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 206.
 2. Since the grain offered was a firstfruits, it signified God's promise of the rest of the harvest, the promise of the resurrection of all believers into the likeness of Christ's glorious resurrection, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:23.
 3. With this offering of firstfruits, a lamb without blemish of the first year was to be offered as a burnt offering, typifying Christ's death and signifying that believers will be raised only because the issue of their sin has been fully addressed by Christ's substitutionary death on the cross, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.
 4. A meal offering was also to be offered, but unlike regular meal offerings where one tenth of an ephah of flour was prescribed, there was to be two tenths of an ephah, emphasizing the abundance of the grain harvest to come, signifying the hope of the future resurrection of **all** believers, Lev. 23:13a versus 6:20.
 5. A drink offering was also to be offered, one involving wine to signify joy and celebration (Lev. 23:13b), the joy of Christ's resurrection as it both validated the Christian faith (Romans 1:4) and gave joyful assurance of the believer's own future resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; *Ibid.*, Ryrie)
 6. The people of God were prohibited from eating any form of food made from the newly harvested barley until the Feast of Firstfruits was waved before the Lord, signifying God's acceptance of Christ in behalf of believers (Lev. 23:11, 14). Thus the believer's participation in the resurrection is based solely on Christ's substitutionary atonement for him, for Christ is the believer's very life, Colossians 3:1-4.
- C. Christ's resurrection as the Firstfruits occurred during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6b-7, 11), so the believer who is positioned in Christ should live righteously in newness of life, Rom. 6:4-6; 1 Cor. 5:7b-8.

Lesson: *The Feast of Firstfruits came the third day after Passover in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, signifying the resurrection of Christ from the dead on the third day after His death as our Passover Lamb. This feast thus signifies God's promise of the future resurrection of every believer in Christ, it typifies the believer's joy and hope that due to his victory over sin in Christ, he too will be raised, and it teaches him to live rightly in newness of life.*

Application: *(1) May we rejoice that our Savior Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Feast of Firstfruits by rising from the dead the third day after His death on Passover in that it signifies the validity of our Christian faith and provides us great joy in the hope of our own future victory over death. (2) Since Christ's resurrection occurred during the Feast of Unleavened Bread that signifies a holy walk following one's salvation in Christ, may we also walk in newness of life in the Christian life, departing from sin and living in righteousness, Romans 6:4-6.*