

THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

Text: Leviticus 23:9-14

Introduction:

1. The feasts commanded by God were physical observances that had mental and emotional benefits.
2. Of course, they also taught important spiritual lessons.
3. The Passover was instituted to remind the Israelites of the price paid for their deliverance from Egyptian slavery – and the bondage of sin.
4. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to remind Israel of God's deliverance and the danger of corruption.
5. The next feast ordained by God was the Feast of Firstfruits.

I. The Details of the Feast

- A. This feast was to be kept when the children of Israel came into the land of Canaan.
- B. It celebrated the beginning of the harvest of barley.
 1. Barley was a crop that was planted in the fall.
 2. Through the long winter months, it appeared that the harvest would never arrive (only wheat had a longer growing season).
 3. Yet, in the spring, the fields would yield their fruits – thanks to the blessing of God.
- C. A “sheaf of the firstfruits” was to be brought to the priest and offered to God.
 1. The word for “sheaf” is ‘omer’ (cf. Exodus 16 – manna).
 2. It could refer to a measure (amount) or to a sheaf of grain (cf. Deuteronomy 24:19; Ruth 2:7).
- D. The date given for this feast is “the morrow after the Sabbath.”
 1. This seems to refer to the day after the Sabbath of Passover.
 2. This would be the 16th day of the month Abib (Nisan).
 3. Tradition states that on Passover a sheaf was bundled together and left standing in the field.
 4. It was cut on the next day (the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) and prepared for offering on the following day.
- E. Along with the sheaf, a male lamb was to be offered.
- F. A meat (meal) offering was made of flour with oil. {*Note that this was twice as much as usually offered (cf. Exodus 29:40; Numbers 15:4; etc.).*}
- G. There was also to be a drink offering of wine.
- H. They were not to eat of any form of the grain until they had first made an offering to the Lord.

Bible Feasts

II. The Lessons from the Feast

- A. It was to remind them of God and His provision (Deuteronomy 6:10-12; Joshua 5:11-12).
- B. It was to remind them to be thankful.
 - 1. Passover was the promise of Canaan.
 - 2. Firstfruits was the fulfillment of Canaan.
 - 3. Gratitude was appropriate and essential (Proverbs 3:9-10).
- C. It was to remind them of God's position and proper priorities.
 - 1. The firstfruits represented the entire harvest (cf. Romans 11:16).
 - 2. By giving the first to God, the remainder could be used by them while still honoring the Father.
 - 3. Christians must remember this principle:
 - a. In worship (Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10)
 - b. In giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8)
 - c. In gratitude (1 Timothy 4:4-5)
 - d. In service (Matthew 25:14ff)
 - e. In priority (Matthew 6:33)
- D. It foreshadowed the resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).
- E. It motivates evangelism (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 16:15; Revelation 14:4).

Conclusion: *May we strive to keep God first in our lives!*