



*Serve, Support, Strengthen*

## Festival of First Fruits – encouragement for the future

- Welcome everyone – 1 minute
- Open with prayer - 1 minute
- Suggest feedback on answered prayer – 5 - 10min
- Closing prayer – 1 minute
- Time of Bible study – 40 minutes
- Questions – 10 minutes

### Introduction

Are the festivals in Leviticus 23 still significant? God outlines the appointed feasts of Israel, each with profound spiritual meaning. This study will look into the **Feast of First Fruits**, and how this points to the resurrection of Christ. This also then points to the future resurrection of believers., making this important for followers of Christ.

### 1. The Feast of First Fruits: An Overview Read - Leviticus 23:9-11

This feast could not be celebrated until **after** Israel entered the Promised Land. Once they had sown their grain seeds, they were to watch for the first stalks of barley to ripen. Once they spotted the first barley heads, they were to gather them into a sheaf and present it before the Lord at the Tabernacle. This act symbolized the beginning of the harvest and was performed on the first day of the week.

#### Significance for Israel:

What do you think the first fruits represent? And why is this important to offer to God? (The first fruits represented the first of the harvest. By offering it to God, Israel acknowledged that their harvest was a gift from Him.)

Only after this offering could they begin to enjoy the harvest themselves (Exodus 23:19).

This was a token of gratitude for God's provision of rain and the harvest (Leviticus 23:14).

New Testament fulfilment:

How is this festival representative of Christ? 1 Corinthians 15:20

Jesus is the First Fruits of those who have died<sup>3</sup>

. His resurrection on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1) points back to this feast. Just as the offering of the first fruits indicated that more harvest would follow, Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of believers at His coming (1 Corinthians 15:23, John 12:24).



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## **2. The Resurrection: Christ, Our First Fruits**

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

Paul draws a clear connection between Christ's resurrection and the Feast of First Fruits. Jesus is the first to rise from the dead in a glorified body, and His resurrection is the promise of the greater harvest—the resurrection of believers.

Christ's resurrection: Just as the priest offered the first sheaf of barley, Christ was offered up as the first to be raised to eternal life. His resurrection assures us that we, too, will be raised.

Our first and future resurrection: Death's sting has been removed from those who are believers, even if we die before the second coming, we have hope, and those who have Christ will be raised to life after death (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). His resurrection is the first fruit conquering; our resurrection will follow at His second coming.

How does this influence how we see death?

This does not mean we don't feel pain or mourn, but we have HOPE. Discuss what this means in your groups.

*Reflection:*

John 14:19: How does the resurrection give us hope? (The resurrection of Christ is a guarantee of our future resurrection. We have hope because He lives)

Just as Israel could not partake of their harvest until the first fruits were offered, we enter into new life only through Christ's death and resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## **3. The Offerings of First Fruits**

Scripture: Leviticus 23:12-14

Along with the presentation of the first sheaf, various offerings were made, including a burnt offering and a drink offering (Numbers 15:5; 28:7). Notably, no sin offering was included, as Christ's sacrifice fully settled the issue of sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

*Burnt Offering & Drink Offering:* These offerings were a sweet-smelling aroma to the Lord, symbolizing complete dedication and thanksgiving for God's provision. The drink offering was poured out at the altar, symbolizing the pouring out of life in worship to God.

Sin settled: Christ's sacrifice was once for all. Our sins were dealt with at the cross, and now we live in the righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

*Reflection:*

**2 Corinthians 5:17** -The absence of a sin offering reminds us that Christ's sacrifice was sufficient to cover our sins. We now live in newness of life.



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Our lives are like the drink offering, poured out in service and dedication to God.

### **4. Practical Application: New Life in Christ**

Scripture: John 15:5, Galatians 5:22-23

Just as the Feast of First Fruits celebrated the beginning of the harvest, the resurrection of Christ marks the beginning of our new life in Him. When we are grafted into Christ (John 15:5), we bear the fruit of the Spirit—a transformed life marked by love, joy, peace, and other godly attributes (Galatians 5:22-23).

*New relationships and blessings:* 2 Corinthians 5:17

Christ's resurrection brings us into *new relationships with God*. We are no longer in Adam; we are in Christ. This new identity gives us new purpose, joy, and life

*Bearing fruit:*

As those grafted into Christ, our lives should reflect the fruit of the Spirit. The Feast of First Fruits reminds us that we are part of a great harvest, and we must live in a way that honours the One who made us new.

### **5. Caring for others**

Scripture: Leviticus 23:22

Although this verse refers to Pentecost, it fits with the heart of this study. The Israelites were commanded to leave portions of their harvest for the poor and the stranger, showing care for the less fortunate. Similarly, we are called to share the Gospel and meet the needs of those around us (James 1:18).

How does this work in practice in your situation?

*Spiritual and physical care:* Just as a hungry man won't listen to the Gospel if his physical needs aren't met, we are called to care for both the spiritual and physical needs of others.

*A great harvest:* As we share the Word and live out the love of Christ, we become part of the great harvest of souls at the end of the age (Matthew 9:37-38).

### **Conclusion**

The Feast of First Fruits, as outlined in Leviticus 23, points to the resurrection of Christ, the beginning of a new harvest. Christ is our first fruit, and because He was raised, we have the assurance of eternal life. Our lives are now marked by new relationships, purpose, and the fruit of the Spirit. Just as the Israelites offered the first and best to God, we are called to live lives dedicated to Him, bearing fruit for His glory and caring for others in love.