

Abounding Grace Christian Church

Seeing Christ in the Old Testament: A Study of the Types of Christ – Part 15

I. Seeing Christ in the Book of Leviticus (continued).

A. The Four Spring Feasts (continued).

1. Feast of Firstfruits – Leviticus 23:9-14.

a. The Feast of Firstfruits was also called The Feast of Harvest in **Exodus 23:16**. It was to be observed after Israel came into the land of Canaan and had produced crops (**Leviticus 23:10**). The fact that God gave them the command for the feast was also a promise that they would come into the land and possess it. God said, “...when you come into the land...” not “*if you come into the land.*”

b. This was a celebration of the coming harvest, and a giving of thanks for the harvest.

The idea was to dedicate the first ripened stalks of grain to God, in anticipation of a

greater harvest to come. A “**sheaf**” is a bundle of grain stalks, tied together.

c. The following is a concise description of what took place with this feast:

“On Reishit (Re-SHEET) people offered the first ripe sheaf (firstfruits) of barley to the Lord as an act of dedicating the harvest to him. On Passover, a marked sheaf of grain was bundled and left standing in the field. On the next day, the first day of Unleavened Bread, the sheaf was cut and prepared for the offering on the third day. On this third day, Reishit, the priest waved the sheaf before the Lord. Counting the days (omer) then begins and continues until the day after the seventh Sabbath, the 50th day, which is called Shavuot or Pentecost (the next feast on the calendar).”¹

d. Kevin J. Conner writes:

“The New Testament clearly interprets this simple but beautiful Feast Day in I Corinthians 15:20-23, while the Gospels show the fulfilment of the same in the resurrection of Christ. Again Paul in a summary statement in Corinthians interprets this ordinance by referring to ‘Christ the Firstfruits.’ The day of the Sheaf of Firstfruits is a remarkable prophetic type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, His ascension to heaven to the Father and also symbolic of the coming resurrection of all saints of all ages.”²

e. For the believer, there is a present spiritual resurrection and a future physical resurrection.

1) The moment we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we experience a spiritual resurrection in that we have received eternal life (**Romans 6:1-4; Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 2:12-13**). Richard Booker explains:

“The Feast of Firstfruits teaches us about our resurrection with Jesus in our spirit as well as our future bodily resurrection. We are saved from our old life to live in the resurrected life of Messiah Jesus today.

Putting off the old man is not enough. We must also put on the new man. After Paul told the Ephesian believers to put off the old man, he then said, ‘And...put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness’ (Eph. 4:24). This new nature about which Paul is speaking is the very nature of God coming within us through the person of the Holy Spirit. We put on this new man by allowing the Holy Spirit to live the resurrected life of Jesus through us”³

2) The Scripture promises a future physical resurrection for every believer (**I Corinthians 15:50-55; I Thessalonians 4:13-18**) Unbelievers will also be resurrected to everlasting condemnation (**John 5:28-29; Daniel 12:2**).

2. Feast of Pentecost – Exodus 34:22-23; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31.

a. In the Old Testament, this was called the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Harvest.

While the Feast of Firstfruits celebrated the first harvest of barley, this feast celebrated

¹ Feasts of the Bible (Rose Publishing, 2021).

² Kevin J. Conner, *The Feasts of Israel*, (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing, 1980), 29.

³ Richard Booker, *Celebrating Jesus in the Biblical Feasts: Discovering Their Significance to You as a Christian* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2011).

the wheat harvest.

- b. This feast was celebrated on the fiftieth day from the Feast of Firstfruits. This is why in the New Testament it is called “**Pentecost**” which means “**fiftieth**” (**Acts 2:1; 20:16; I Corinthians 16:8**).
- c. According to Kevin L. Howard, in A.D. 140, the Sanhedrin convened and decided that instead of this feast being a celebration of harvest, they would associate it with the giving of the Torah (Mosaic Law) at Mount Sinai.⁴ This was not what the Scriptures meant for it to represent but it was understood that the law was given in the third month so the time period corresponded (**Exodus 19:1**).

- d. Richard Booker makes some very interesting statements concerning this, he writes:

“Jewish scholars believe that the people actually ‘saw the voice of God’ coming out of the mountain in tongues of fire. The mixed multitude that came out of Egypt saw the tongues of fire and heard the one voice of God speak in their different languages so they could understand His words. Since it seems strange to ‘see voices,’ this phrase was translated as thunderings and lightnings. The voices sounded like thundering and appeared as fire.”⁵

- e. So God came down upon Mount Sinai to meet with His people. There is no doubt they experienced the presence of God in a powerful way. Unfortunately, they were afraid and told Moses they couldn’t bear it and that they wanted him to hear from God and speak to them (**Exodus 20:18-20**).
- f. In fulfillment, at the first Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the disciples gathered together in one accord and experienced the presence of God in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:1-4**). As the narrative goes, there was a sound from heaven as a rushing, mighty wind, and there appeared upon their heads flames of fire and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with other tongues (languages) as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. Jesus called this experience the “**Promise of the Father**” (**Acts 1:4**) and referred to it as being “**baptized with the Holy Spirit**” (**Acts 1:5**). He also said that they would receive power to be witnesses when the Holy Spirit came upon them (**Acts 1:8**). After the disciples received this experience, Peter stood up and preached with a boldness and three thousand people received Christ as their Savior (**Acts 2:41**). So, at this Feast of Pentecost, instead of a harvest of wheat, there was the beginning of a harvest of souls into the Kingdom of God!
- g. Just as we experience the substance of the shadow of the other feasts, we need to also experience the substance of the Feast of Pentecost. In other words, we’ve received our Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ and been born again. We are to continue on into the Feast of Unleavened Bread and grow in God’s Word and allow it to renew our minds and progressively get the “leaven” out of our lives. Then, we are to experience the Feast of Firstfruits by living according to the “**newness of life**” that we have received. And now, we see that we’re to also receive our own “**Feast of Pentecost**” and be filled with the Holy Spirit so we can be more effective witnesses of the Gospel.

⁴ Kevin Howard and Marin Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord*, (Orlando, FL: Zion’s Hope, Inc, 1997), 94-95.

⁵ Richard Booker, *Celebrating Jesus in the Biblical Feasts: Discovering Their Significance to You as a Christian* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2011).