



May 10, 2024

Those Who have Fallen Asleep and the Wavesheaf

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

In roughly 5 weeks we'll be observing our celebration of the Feast of Pentecost or Feast of Firstfruits. Over the last couple weeks we have examined the Biblical instructions concerning how to properly count and determine when this festival is to be celebrated.

The key is to first determine *when* the wavesheaf offering was to take place. We examined Joshua 5 and the unfolding events that led to the initial "reaping" of the harvest of the land of Canaan. "*And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day.*" (Joshua 5:11) They could not do this until they had offered "*a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest.*" (Leviticus 23:10) This offering was to be waved and presented to the LORD "*on the day after the Sabbath*" or on the day we today label Sunday.

When they entered Canaan and ate the produce of the land they then did so on the first day of Unleavened Bread, "*the day after the Passover.*" They were allowed to expend labor in order to prepare food for this festival "*which everyone must eat-that only may be prepared by you.*" (Exodus 12:16) The Israelites did not engage in full scale harvesting, but rather enough cutting of the grain that they all might have food from the produce of the land to enjoy eating on this festival day.

The sheaf that they cut and offered was the very first of the harvest, generally the barley harvest. We understand that God's festivals outline His plan of salvation that is exemplified by the harvests in the land of Canaan or later Israel. There is a

sequence of events that unfold from the sacrifice of the true Lamb of God to the resurrection of those now dead and not called in the past. They will be given a chance to accept the sacrifice and rule of the Lamb and King of kings.

The apostle Paul refers to the first of the firstfruits. "*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*" (1 Corinthians 15:20) Surely there has to be a connection to this mention of "*the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*" and the wavesheaf and the feast of firstfruits.

When the sheaf of barley was selected, it was cut off and was no longer alive. The following harvests were reaped by cutting the grain and collecting it. Christ was cut off from the living. This was predicted by Isaiah. ". . . *For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.*" (Isaiah 53:8) Most of those who will be part of the firstfruits are cut off from the living or are dead waiting in the grave for the resurrection. (Some will still be alive when the angels are sent to gather the saints at the last trumpet blast) Paul goes on to comment about those to be made alive like Christ was.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." (1 Corinthians 15:22-23) Jesus rose from the dead late on the weekly Sabbath (not Sunday) and was visibly seen several times on the first day of the week. John 20 records that after coming before sunrise early on the first day of the week to the tomb that held Jesus, Mary Magdalene ran to tell Peter and John that the stone was rolled away from blocking the entrance to the tomb. (John 20:1-2) After Peter and John ran to and examined the tomb, Mary continued to stand outside the tomb. She saw two angels in the tomb near where Jesus had been laid but He was not there. Very shortly Jesus appeared to her and stated, "*Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'*" (John 20:17) Jesus is explaining that He does not have the time right then to have extended contact with Mary because

He will soon be ascending to His Father. This took place on the fourth day of the feast of Unleavened Bread that year. Later in the morning and during the day Jesus then spent time with the women and other disciples (Matthew 28:9; Mark 16:9-14)

How closely this aligns with the cutting and waving the first sheaf of grain toward the heavens as the harvest began! It is logical that this ceremony took place early in the day so there would be time to then continue the harvest operation (on non-holy day celebrations). This also confirms that the wavesheaf ceremony was to take place during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Christ fulfilled many prophecies including those embedded in the feast of the LORD and associated ceremonies. How blessed we are that we have been blessed with understanding of God's Word and His harvest plan. We are described by James, the brother of Jesus. *"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."* (James 1:18).

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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