

Significant Lessons From The Seemingly Insignificant

#21 Feast Of Firstfruits: Background

The feasts of the LORD were a shadow of things to come and were appointed by God alone.
Col. 2:16-17 Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
Feast of Firstfruits = 3rd Feast = #3 is associated with New Life, Resurrection & Creation
Day 3: God brought forth life from the earth; earth yielded grass, herbs & trees
Jonah was 3 days/nights in belly of large fish. He came out to walk the earth again.
Jesus was 3 days/nights in the heart of the earth. He was resurrected to Life.
Jesus raised 3 people from the dead during His ministry.
God's 2 witnesses will rise from the dead after 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ days of lying in the streets of Jerusalem.
[Rev. 11:11 And after 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ days the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.]

Question: When is the Feast of First Fruits to be observed?

Passover = Nisan 14

Feast of Unleavened Bread = Nisan 15

Feast of First Fruits is held on the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath that occurs during the week of Nisan 14 [Passover] and Nisan 15 [Unleavened Bread which is a high, holy day].

Feast of Firstfruits always comes before Unleavened Bread ends. [Nisan 15-21]

Consider: There is NO date given in Scripture for Feast of First Fruits because:

The date would change from year to year, but it is ALWAYS on a Sunday.

Recall: Tradition says Christ was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday. Since this feast pictures Christ's resurrection, this doesn't allow Christ to be in the grave for 3 days and nights? Is that important? YES!!!

First Fruits Is Prophetic Of The Resurrection Of Christ

I Cor 15:3-4 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that He Rose Again The Third Day According To The Scriptures:

This was foreshadowed in the Old Testament by type and shadow.

Genesis 22:2-6 And God said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

³ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.

⁵ And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the donkey; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

Consider: How long was Isaac "dead" to Abraham? 3 days

When did he get him back "as from the dead"? 3rd Day!

Jesus prophesied that He would rise 3 days and 3 nights after His crucifixion and burial.

Jesus was asked for a sign to show that He was the promised Messiah. The religious officials had just accused Him of using the power of Satan to perform His miracles, and so He described the only sign they would see.

Matt. 12:38-40 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a Sign from thee. ³⁹ But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a Sign; and there Shall No Sign Be Given to it, but the Sign Of The Prophet Jonas: ⁴⁰ For As Jonah Was Three Days And Three Nights In The Whale's Belly; So Shall The Son Of Man Be Three Days And Three Nights In The Heart Of The Earth.

1. 3 days & 3 nights: The traditional idea that Christ was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday morning could not be correct.

2. Passover = Nisan 14 = Jesus was tried early morning and declared faultless by Pilate.

He hung on the cross from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm on Nisan 14. He died at 3:00 pm as the Passover lamb was being slaughtered in the Temple. He was prepared for burial and placed in the tomb.

Interesting: The year Christ was crucified, there MUST be 3 DAYS between the 14th and the first day of the week - Sunday. It just happens there was!

NISAN	DAY OF WEEK	6:00 PM-6:00 AM	6:00 AM -6:00 PM
14 - Passover	Thursday	6 Trials	Day 1
15 - Unleavened Bread <i>High Holy Sabbath</i>	Friday	Night 1	Day 2
16 - <i>Weekly Sabbath</i>	Saturday	Night 2	Day 3
17 - Feast Of First Fruits: Resurrection	Sunday	Night 3	

6:00 pm Wednesday - 6:00 pm Thursday = Passover

Night 1 & Day 1

6:00 pm Thursday - 6:00 pm Friday = Unleavened Bread; Holy Day

Night 2 & Day 2

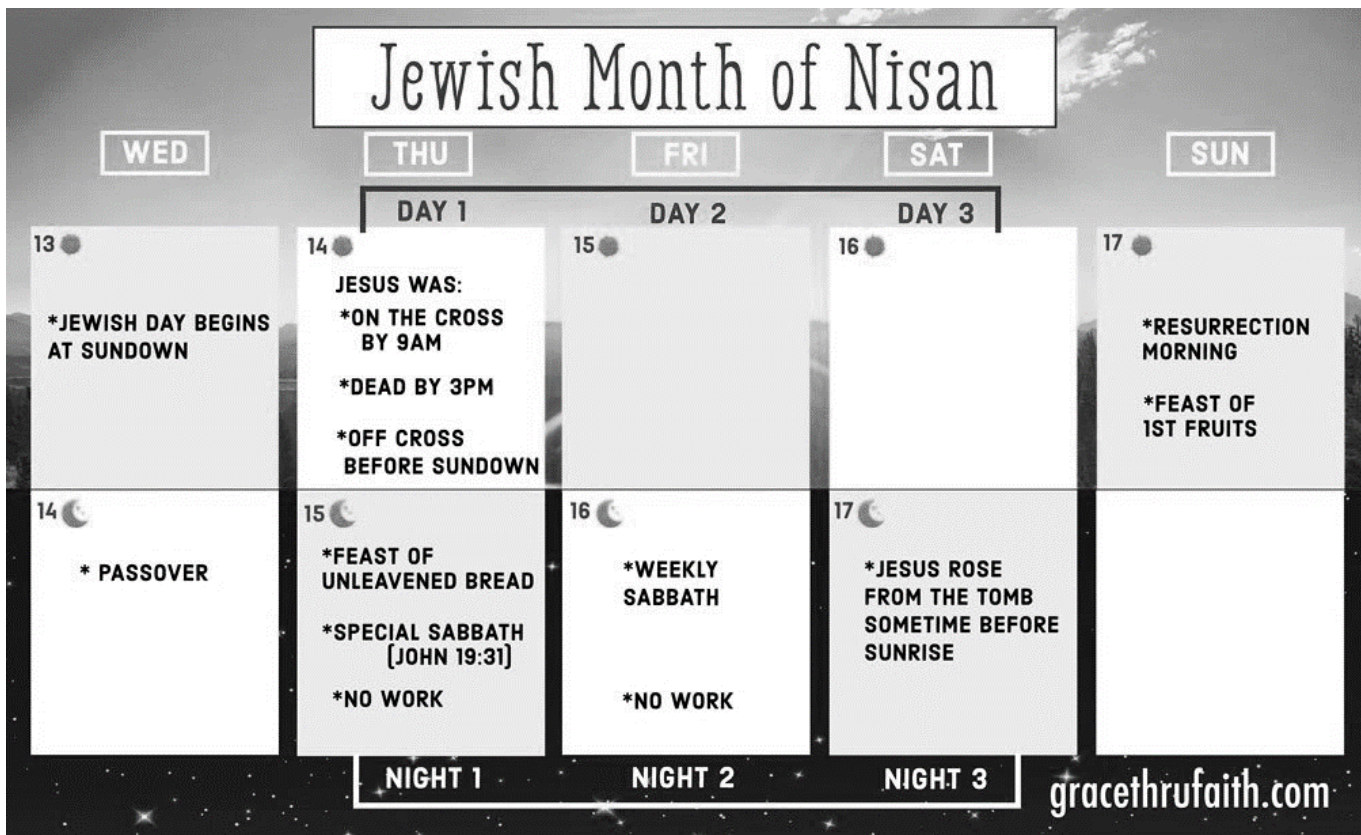
6:00 pm Friday - 6:00 pm Saturday = Weekly Sabbath; Saturday

Night 3 & Day 3

He arose after 6:00 pm on Saturday which would be the beginning of Sunday, Nisan 17

Sunday, 17th of Nisan, starts at 6:00 pm on Saturday.

Jesus Christ rose from the dead sometime after 6:00 pm, Nisan 17, which would be the 1st day of the week [Sunday]. This is the day of First Fruits. The Tomb Was Empty.



Grains were planted in the fall in Israel. They germinated in the ground through the winter, shot up as soon as the weather got warm, and ripened in the spring, barley first and then wheat.

Significance of the Moon For The Crops

The 4 stages of the moon are important to raising crops.

New moon, 2nd quarter, full moon and 4th quarter.

Each stage lasts about 7 days. In the first two quarters, the 'new' dark moon gets bigger and more visible. This is the 'waxing' phase. You see an increase in light until the full moon is visible. The 3rd and 4th quarters are after the full moon. The light begins to 'wane' or decrease. Then the cycle starts again.

The new moon gravitationally pulls water up through the soil and causes seeds to swell and burst. This is the best time to plant grain crops and others that are grown for above-ground produce. The increasing moonlight causes a good balance between root development and leaf growth.

2nd Quarter: less gravitational pull but provides vibrant moonlight. This is beneficial to leaf growth.

After the full moon, the moonlight is waning, but the gravitational pull is strong again. This is best for planting root crops.

4th Quarter: Less gravitational pull and moonlight;

A resting period which makes the best time for cultivating and harvesting.

Harvest Phase: Most harvest times in Israel occur during the 4th quarter moon. Since the feasts of God synchronize with the harvests, they synchronize with the stages of the moon.

Barley harvest = 1st major harvest by the Jews

Feast of First Fruits is tied to the barley harvest.

For every harvest in Israel there are 3 phases: firstfruits, general harvest & gleanings.

The phase of firstfruits has 3 phases of activity:

Marking

Gathering

Presenting

Marking & Gathering = Identify the first barley to mature and bind it in a sheaf - usually with a red cord to make it easier to spot.

Sheaf = omer - an amount of grain large enough to require bundling; the traditional offering of an *omer* of barley on the day after the Sabbath

Presenting:

This chosen barley was brought to the priest to be presented by waving it before the LORD at the altar. [Lev. 23:11] And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

The offering of the wave-sheaf sanctified the whole harvest.

The New Testament interprets this feast day: Jesus Christ is the subject.

Luke 24:1-3 We know that Jesus rose from the dead on the day of the Feast of Firstfruits.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

² And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

³ And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

Early Sunday morning when the priests in the Temple were offering up the *Firstfruits* of the barley harvest, Jesus, our High Priest was raised from the dead, offering up Himself as our atonement. He became the *Firstfruits* of the rest of the harvest of believers in Him.

Rom. 11:16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

Parallel of The Harvests & The Resurrections: The Order Of Harvests in Israel parallels the Order Of The Resurrections of believers and the taking away of unbelievers.

I Cor. 15:20-23 But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

James 1:18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

1. Barley Harvest: Early spring

Winnowing = The barley kernels are tossed into the wind to separate the kernels from the chaff. Head of the barley is very soft and easily winnowed.

Consider: Birth of the Church at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came like a mighty, rushing wind and indwells the believers.

[Acts 2:1-2] There came a noise like a mighty rushing wind that filled the room.

In the order of resurrections, the Church is the 1st to be resurrected, just as the barley is the 1st to be harvested. It is like the Church is "winnowed" from the world.

Ps. 1:4-5a; 6b The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the Ungodly Shall Not Stand In The Judgment,

⁶but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Watch = State of Spiritual Readiness

Born again believers in the Church age will be taken before the Tribulation Period to stand before the Son of Man - Jesus Christ - while chaos and terror are unleashed on the "earth dwellers" of Revelation.

Ps. 1 tells us the ungodly will not stand in the judgment and will perish.

2. Wheat Harvest: Late spring

Head of wheat is hard = must be threshed or crushed to separate the wheat from the chaff.

A man threshing wheat stands on a large board with bits of glass or stones underneath it.

The board, a tribulum in Latin, is pulled by a horse over the wheat to do the crushing.

Consider: Many people, including Jews, will come to Christ in the Tribulation. Rev. 7:9-14.

The church, barley, will be resurrected 1st, while those who become believers [wheat] in the Tribulation will be resurrected at the end of the tribulation if they die in that period.

In a sense they were harvested under the crushing of the tribulum.

3. Fall = Fruit Harvest

Grapes are picked and placed in the winepresses. This is parallel to the judgment in:

Rev. 14:18-20 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire;

and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

¹⁹ And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. [~200 miles]

4. Gleanings Are Left In The Field

Lev. 19:9-10 instructs the Jews not to harvest the corners of their field and vineyards in order to leave grain and fruit for the poor.

This is similar to Matt. 24:31 when the believers from the 4 winds of the earth will be gathered at the end of the Tribulation to enter the Kingdom.

Since these DO NOT DIE, they are not resurrected.

They will move into the Millennial Kingdom to populate it for the next 1000 years.

Summary Of Harvest Picture:

1. Barley in the spring pictures the Body of Christ and her rapture BEFORE the Tribulation.
2. Wheat at the end of spring and beginning of summer pictures those who are saved in the Tribulation period and die. They will be resurrected at the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ.

Note: The OT saints will be resurrected with this group at the end of the Tribulation.

[Dan. 12:1-2; Rev. 20:4]

3. Fruit in the fall that pictures the unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation in the Battle of Armageddon who are taken away to wait for impending judgment at the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the 1000 Millennial Kingdom.
4. The rest of the unbelievers who are still alive at the end of the Tribulation will face judgment at the Sheep & Goat judgment at this time.

Matt. 25:41 Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Gleanings: The Tribulation saints who remained alive and enter the Millennial Kingdom with their non-resurrected mortal bodies. [Matt. 24:31]

Parallels of Phases of First fruits with Biblical Prophecy

Recall: Phases of first fruits = marking, gathering and presenting.

The Church, identified as firstfruits in James 1:18 was sealed by the Holy Spirit according to Eph. 1:13: "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of Promise."

Marking Stage

Gathering Stage = The Rapture of the Church

Presenting Stage = Marriage of the Lamb

Rev. 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

The 144,000 Jewish evangelists in the Tribulation period are also called the first fruits in Rev. 14:4 These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Identified as first fruits of wheat since they are saved in the Tribulation

Marking Stage = Their sealing

Rev. 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Gathering Stage = Rev. 7:4-8 = Gathered from each tribe

Presenting Stage = Rev. 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.