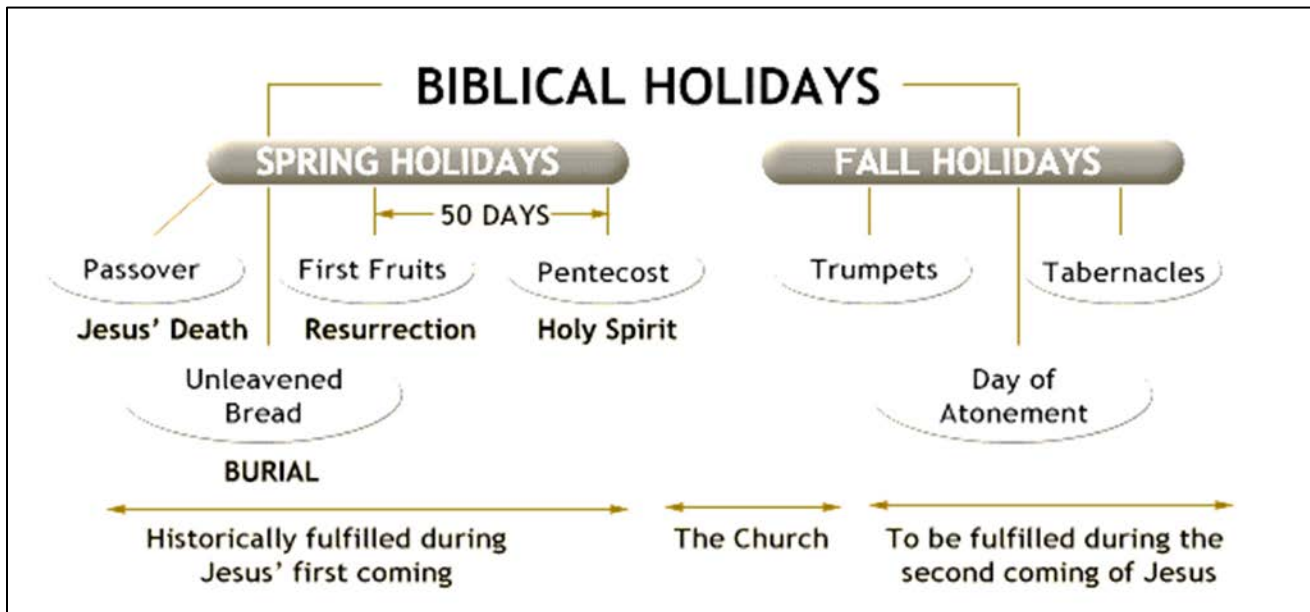


# Significant Lessons From The Seemingly Insignificant

## #22 - Jesus Christ: Fulfillment Of First Fruits

God has laid out His plan for the seven major events of human history in His 7 feasts. The Jewish nation was commanded by God to celebrate 7 feasts over a 7 month period of time, beginning in the spring of the year and continuing through the fall. As God revealed His plan for the salvation of man, He established His annual holy feast days around the harvest seasons in Israel. [Lev. 23:9-16; Ex. 23:14-16]



Just as his people harvested their crops around these 3 festival seasons, God's holy days reveal how He is harvesting people for eternal life in His Kingdom. God's holy days have meanings that build upon one another. Together, they progressively reveal God's plan for humanity.

Passover	Crucifixion	Justification	Shadow of Our Glorious Redemption
Unleavened Bread	Burial	Sanctification	Shadow of Our Becoming Like Him
First Fruits	Resurrection	Glorification	Shadow of Our Glorious Resurrection

### Spiritual Significance:

Passover	No atonement for our sin apart from the shedding of blood
Unleavened Bread	God's call on our lives to be a people set apart to holiness. Leaven was a symbol of sin. They were to be holy before the nations as a witness of God.
First Fruits	Consider your priorities. God must be first in your life. He is the source of all blessings in your life. The feast of firstfruits speaks of being separated UNTO the Lord (consecrated).

## Prophetic Significance:

Passover	Pointed to the Messiah as our Passover Lamb whose blood would be shed for our sins. Jesus was crucified on Passover, at the same time the lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal that evening.
Unleavened Bread	Pointed to the Messiah's sinless life, making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' body was in the grave during the first days of this feast, like a kernel of wheat planted and waiting to burst forth as the bread of life.
First Fruits	Pointed to the Messiah's resurrection as the first fruits of the righteous. Paul refers to him as the "first fruits from the dead."

First Fruits = A Promise To Come = 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, Sunday, after the weekly Sabbath, Saturday, during the week of Passover [Nisan 14]. Feast of Unleavened Bread = Nisan 15-21. This Feast dealt with the life of the first harvest - bursting forth from seed planted and nurtured. It was a workday to commence the barley harvest.

One specific Scripture deals with this feast day.

Lev. 23:9-14 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land [Canaan] which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then You Shall Bring A Sheaf Of The Firstfruits Of Your Harvest Unto The Priest: 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. <sup>12</sup> And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. <sup>13</sup> And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savor: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. <sup>14</sup> And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

1. The Israelites had to be IN THE LAND before they could observe this feast.
2. They could not observe it until the time of harvest.
3. During the wilderness, there is no harvest!
4. The 1<sup>st</sup> sheaf was cut and presented to the LORD in a carefully prescribed and meticulous ceremony.

This required a great deal of faith on the part of the Israelites, as they would be giving the offering of firstfruits at a time when not much was ready to be harvested. They had to trust God that He would indeed provide the fullness of grain that had yet to come forth.

5. The priest would wave it before the LORD in worship and praise for the harvest to come that would nourish and prosper the nation.
6. To be sure it was acceptable to the LORD, a year old lamb without blemish, burnt offering, was offered, along with a meal and a drink offering.
7. NO grain was to be harvested until the First Fruits offering was brought and accepted.
  - After it was accepted, the new growth of grain could be harvested and eaten.

- The Lord's acceptance of 1st Fruits is an "earnest" or pledge, on His part of a full harvest.

Consider: It wasn't until after Messiah's resurrection that believers could fully partake of the new growth, the new life in Him.

Key Point: It was only after He had been raised and ascended to the Father that we received "the *Firstfruits* of the Holy Spirit." [Ex: Disciples - Peter]

Rom. 8:23a And not only they, But Ourselves Also, Which Have The Firstfruits Of The Spirit,  
Lev. 23:11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted.

[Remember: It also required a burnt offering, a meal offering and a drink offering.]

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Firstfruits gave the ASSURANCE that the rest of the harvest would be accepted.

The Gospels Show The Fulfillment Of This Feast In The Resurrection Of Jesus Christ.

1. The day of the Sheaf of Firstfruits is a remarkable prophetic type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, His ascension to heaven to God the Father.
2. Firstfruits is a type of our Savior's resurrection which guarantees our eternal hope in Jesus Christ, our Blessed Hope.
3. Jesus prophesied numerous times He would be killed on Passover and be raised on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

Matt. 16:21b He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Luke 18:31-33 Then He took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. <sup>32</sup> For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

<sup>33</sup> And they shall scourge Him and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

4. Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead is PROOF that God accepted His sacrifice for our sins.
5. The rest of the harvest - all who accept Him - is accepted in Him as well.

Rom. 11:16 The waving of the sheaf sanctified the whole harvest.

6. The resurrection of Jesus anticipates the bodily resurrection of His people first promised under the old covenant.

Job 19:25-27 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth <sup>26</sup> And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: <sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. [how my heart yearns]

7. Our Lord's resurrection is proof positive that we who trust in Him will be raised in like manner at the last day and dwell with Him bodily in a new heaven and earth.

8. It is also symbolic of the coming resurrection of all saints of all ages: the resurrection of His Church when He returns to catch them away [rapture], resurrection of OT saints, and tribulation saints.

### *JESUS IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS*

1. Matt. 1:23-25 Jesus is the firstborn of Mary.
2. Heb. 1:6 Jesus is the first-begotten of God the Father.
3. Col. 1:15 Jesus is the firstborn of every creature.
4. Rev. 1:5 Jesus is the first-begotten from the dead.
5. Rom. 8:29 Jesus is the firstborn of many brethren.
6. I Cor. 15:20-23 Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrected ones.
7. Rev. 3:14 Jesus is the beginning of the creation of God.
8. Col. 1:18 Jesus is the preeminent One.

### Parallels With Jesus Christ: [Info. From Dr. Thomas Lancaster]

Consider: The order of events of Christ's trial and the timing of the selection and gathering of the barley for firstfruits as stated in the Mishnah [collection of oral laws recorded in the Talmud].

1. About the time Caiaphas, the high priest, was trying Jesus, the servants of the disciples of the Sanhedrin were in the barley field judging the crop to decide which would be harvested for firstfruits. **MARKING**
2. On the day the Romans were binding up Jesus for crucifixion, the disciples of the Sanhedrin were binding up the barley sheaf for firstfruits. **GATHERING**
3. After the sun had set on the Sabbath [Saturday night after 6:00 pm] the barley was reaped and **PRESENTED** to the priesthood in the Temple.

John 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Early = proi Greek = Technical word for period between 3:00 -6:00 AM = last of the 4 watches

MARK 16:9 NOW WHEN JESUS WAS RISEN EARLY THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK,

[Only Gospel that states this. Question: Was it added later? See other handout.]

4. This was the day after the weekly sabbath which was the day of the Feast of Firstfruits.

John 20:11-12 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, <sup>12</sup> And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Consider: Mary Was Seeing A Picture Of The Mercy Seat.

In Exodus 25, two carved angels took their places at either end of the mercy seat.

Consider Exodus 25:22 The context concerns the description of the tabernacle and specifically the key piece of furniture in the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant. On top of the ark is the mercy seat, flanked on either end by two cherubim. The cloud or visible symbol of God's presence rested on it. In a manner of speaking, the mercy seat concealed the people of God from the ever-condemning judgment of the Law. God was to dispense His mercy to man when

the blood of the atonement was sprinkled there. When God looked down on the Ark and saw the tablets containing the Law the people had broken, He would be looking through the blood of the sacrifice and His hand of judgment would be stayed.

Exodus 25:22 declares, "There I Will Meet With You."

The Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, uses the Greek word *hilasterion* to translate the Hebrew word for mercy seat.

- Hilasterion = propitiation in the NT = carries idea of removal of sin
- Romans 3:25 Referring to Christ and His work of redemption, Paul states that Jesus Christ is our "propitiation."
- Christ is the acceptable, wrath-satisfying sacrifice on our behalf.
- The covering of our sin is exemplified by the mercy-seat of God.

God desires to meet with His people. The blood of the spotless lamb is the only means by which that meeting is made possible. The mercy seat of the Old Testament, and the blood sprinkled upon it by the high priest, prefigured Christ to come. Christ did come, made the sacrifice and Christ was raised from the dead. The tabernacle was real. The ark of the covenant was real. The mercy seat was real. The cross was real. The empty tomb was real.

A real woman stooped to look at real angels, one at the head, one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Christ is our mercy seat; the covering for our sin. There, in and through Christ, God meets us. Jesus turns God's wrath away from us. He cleanses us of our sins. He cancels them out. He nullifies their power. He brings us into the presence of God blameless and acceptable.

The Jewish High Priest went into the Holy of Holies once each year to make atonement for his sins and the sins of the people. On that day the blood was sprinkled seven times on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. Then, going back outside the veil, he sprinkled the blood on the horns of the altar seven times [Leviticus 16:11-19]. This foreshadowed Jesus shedding His blood for us. The number 7 represents completion or perfection. Jesus' blood was shed 7 times, and in shedding His blood He made a full, perfect, and complete sacrifice for sin on the cross.

1. His blood was shed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22:44 "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" What a battle!
2. When Jesus acknowledged that He was the Son of God they spat in His face and beat and slapped Him with their fists [Matthew 26:67-68].

Micah 5:1 prophesied, "With a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek."

3. Isaiah 50:6 prophesied: "I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out my beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting"  
As the beard is pulled out, so flesh is torn off and blood oozes from His pores.
4. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him [John 19:1; Matthew 27:26]. The Roman scourge was a whip with multiple leather strips, each fitted with metal balls and sharp pieces of bone, designed to rip flesh from the body with every lash.

5. A crown of thorns on His head [Matthew 27:29]. These were not just the short thorns of a rose bush, but several inches long, and jammed down on Jesus' head.
6. They crucified Him. They drove nails through His hands and feet.
7. Pierced His side. "One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water" [John 19:34]. Once again His blood flowed.

Just as the blood was applied seven times in the Passover feast, so the blood of Jesus, our Passover Lamb, was shed seven times.

The Bible calls the blood of Jesus "precious" [I Peter 1:19]. It was shed for us.

Consider seven effects in our lives of the blood of Jesus. Through His blood we have

- |               |             |               |                                    |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Heb. 9:22  | Forgiveness | 4. Rom. 5:9   | Justified                          |
| 2. I John 1:9 | Cleansing   | 5. Heb. 13:12 | Made Holy                          |
| 3. Eph. 1:7   | Redemption  | 6. Col. 1:20  | Peace With God                     |
|               |             | 7. Heb. 10:19 | Confidence To Enter God's Presence |

Consider: John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Info from historian Flavius Josephus, a member of the Temple priesthood:

*The Antiquities of the Jews: Information regarding the barley*

1. Jews could not touch the barley before the Feast of Firstfruits.
2. Once the barley sheaf was presented to God by the priest, the barley crop could be harvested for use.
3. Since Jesus Christ was the Firstfruits, He had to go to the Father before anyone could touch Him.
4. After He returned from presenting Himself to the Father, Thomas could touch Him.
5. Until they harvested and offered the barley sheaf, or omer, in the temple, the rest of the crops were not deemed kosher [lawfully fit or acceptable].

I John 2:2 And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

6. We are now "kosher" because of what Christ has done on our behalf in fulfilling the Feast of Firstfruits to the very letter.
7. The field of barley became kosher through the presentation of the firstfruits by the priest to God at the temple. The barley in the field DID NOTHING to become kosher.
8. We have been made acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, our Firstfruits, when He presented Himself to the Father. We DO NOTHING to become kosher except believe in Him and accept Him.

Eph. 2:4-8 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

<sup>6</sup> And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

<sup>7</sup> That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For By Grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: It Is The Gift Of God: