

**PERTH BIBLE CLASS
OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2003**

STUDIES IN THE FEASTS OF JEHOVAH

NO 3 FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

Quote - W Graham Scroggie

Exodus begins with sinners - Leviticus with saints and their standing before God

Exodus brought in union with God - Leviticus brought in communion with God

Exodus offered pardon to Israel - Leviticus calls for purity in Israel

Exodus brought Israel nigh to God - Leviticus keeps Israel nigh to God.

READING - LEV. 23 V 9 - 14

Meanings - "Feast" - Strong indicates in the Hebrew - Festival, Victim, Sacrifice, Solemn
in Greek - Holyday, Feast or Festival.

"Firstfruits" - Strong indicates in the Hebrew - Beginning, Chief or Principal
in Greek - A beginning of sacrifice. Vine indicates the earliest ripe of the crop.

In New Testament the idea of firstfruits does appear in a number of settings. In Romans 8 v 23 we find "firstfruits of the Spirit". A family in the first letter to the Corinthians are described as "firstfruits of Achaia" ch 16 v 15 and also in this book the Lord Jesus in ch 15 v 20 & 23 is described as "firstfruits". As in the old testament all seem to be the first of some greater gathering that will take place.

WHEN IT WAS CELEBRATED.

1. "When ye be come into the land" v 10 - God's purpose must be completed. This was not celebrated in the wilderness but clearly indicated a work of God completed.

2. "shall reap the harvest" v 10 - God's promise is fulfilled. He had indicated to His people that the land to which they were journeying would have food for them " a land flowing with milk and honey" Exo 3 v 8.

3. "on the morrow after the sabbath" v 11. God's time is specific. It must be the first day of the week. The sabbath for Israel was the Saturday so here we have a feast specifically for the Sunday. The great significance of this is revealed in the New Testament. In Matt 28 v 1 we read "in the end of the sabbath" - a study bible will normally indicate that the first "the" is not in the original text and the "sabbath" is a plural word. It would better read "in end of sabbaths". When we move to Acts 20 v 7 we read "upon the first day of the week" - again a study bible will indicate first "the" not in original and "week" is plural so better read "upon first of the weeks". A clear indication to us that the day of resurrection or Sunday was to be the day that God's new testament people would remember the Lord Jesus and that the keeping of the sabbath was not appropriate for our day.

WHAT WAS TO BE DONE AND BY WHOM

1. "Reap the harvest" v 10. Nothing came without effort. What am I prepared to devote of my time and energy to the things of God.

2. "Bring a sheaf of firstfruits" v 10 "Until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto God" v 14. God will have the priority in the life's of His people irrespective of what age they are in. In Matt 6 v 33 we read "seek ye first the kingdom of God".

3. "He (the High Priest) shall wave the sheaf" v 11. The priest came between God and His people. The book of the Hebrews makes it clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest for the

saved of our day.

4. "Ye shall offer" v 12 & 13. Associated with the firstfruits was a burnt offering, meat offering and drink offering. This would not be without cost to the people of God. Do we remember the lesson from David in 11 Sam 24 v 24 "of that which cost me nothing".

Instruction on the burnt offering is found in Lev ch 1 and for the meat offering in Lev ch 2. With regard to the drink offering we find examples in scripture e.g. Jacob in Gen 35 and David in 11 Sam 23 when David speaks of three of his mighty men who hazarded their lives to bring him water from the well at Bethlehem. David felt that their sacrifice was so great that the value of the water was far greater than he could ever justify for himself so he pours it out as an offering to God. In the new testament when Paul writes to Timothy 11 Tim 4 v 6 "I am now ready to be offered" the idea is that he is being poured out as a drink offering.

WHAT IS IT A PICTURE OF?

We have already noted that reference is made to the Lord Jesus being the "firstfruits" in 1 Cor 15. We have noted that the offering was presented on the day of resurrection i.e the first of the week or the Sunday. When Paul writes of the Lord Jesus as the "firstfruits" he has very much in mind a further large harvest. That first sheaf that Israel presented was evidence to them that harvest was to come. So we read I Cor 15 v 20 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept". All Christians who have died from the day of Pentecost until the coming again of the Lord Jesus to the air will be raised from the dead and included in this great harvest. In v 23 we read "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming". Not only will dead saints be raised but with living believers all raptured home to be with Christ. What a gathering that will be.