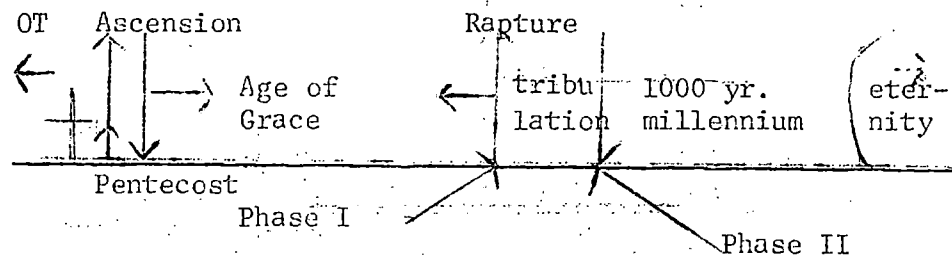


basic phases: 1) Phase I includes all born again saints from Pentecost to the Rapture. Hence, this is a unique group called the church of Jesus Christ. It is pretribulational and catches away from the grave and earth those of the Grace Age. 2) Phase II includes all of the saints who died during the Tribulation and all O.T. saints resurrected in that order (Dan. 12:1-3; Rev. 20:4). These are resurrected at the end of the Tribulation and enter into the Kingdom prepared for them by the Lord (Isa. 25:8; 26:19). The following diagram shows it pictorially:



3. DISPENSATIONAL

a. Past (Law).

The firstfruits was celebrated in the O.T. to testify to the completed deliverance from Egypt and the desert. The desert was sorrow and Egypt was a furnace of iron, but firstfruits showed God had fulfilled His pledge.

b. Present (Grace).

Christ is our firstfruit, so today we do not celebrate such a feast, save in remembrance of His resurrection we have His day (Matt. 28:1; Rev. 1:10). This is God's appointed remembrance.

c. Future (Millennium).

At least twice it is indicated that the feast will yet be celebrated (Ezek. 20:40; 44:30). It is God's way of keeping the memory of resurrection alive!

Conclusion You have nothing to shout about, if the true Firstfruits is not yours personally. Oh, claim the Lord Jesus now and forever. Amen.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

"The Feast of Firstfruits"

Leviticus 23:9-14

Introduction

1. The remembrance of God's set seasons for worship was decreed in the O.T. (vv. 2, 14). Would to God the saints of this Grace Age would acknowledge that the same God has expectations toward His revealed Word today (Psa. 122:1; Heb. 10:25).

2. It is those who love the Lord from the heart who have right thoughts towards His "holy convocations" (v. 4). Others take a mere hypocritical spirit and treat these as religious functions without spiritual content (John 5:1; 6:4). God help us to have reality in our worship (John 4:24).

3. The convocations listed in this chapter create a testimony to the purpose of God for Israel, the world, and the church (cf. 1 Cor. 10:32). The Passover feast speaks of God's infinite redemption. The Unleavened Bread feast points to the fellowship of the saints with the Lord. The feast of Firstfruits considered in this study directs attention to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Aspects of the study helpful to its understanding include the following:-

1. HISTORICAL.

Here is something which actually took place in the history of Israel. The Bible is totally inerrant in its testimony to the facts!

a. Time of it.

It is specifically stated as "on the morrow after the sabbath" (v. 11). This is not the weekly sabbath, but the day related to the Unleavened Bread feast, on which no work was allowed (v. 3). Since Passover was on the 14th day (v. 5) and Unleavened on the 15th day (v. 6), the suggestion

is that Firstfruits was on the third day (cf. 1, 15:3). What a remarkable connection between the Old and New Testaments!

b. Cause of it.

The ground for this feast is the firstfruit of the harvest. Until this feast was done, not one fruit belonged to the nation, not even a green ear (v. 14). This taught dependence upon the Lord, but more than that, it taught that the redemption from Egypt and the desert had been accomplished. They were now in the land! The first employment of Israel in Canaan was preparing the type of the Saviour's resurrection! Their first act of worship was holding up (waving) the type of a risen LORD. The paschal Lamb showed deliverance begun; this showed redemption finished!

c. Plan of it.

Details of the feast are provided. Here they are: 1) Bringing a sheaf of the firstfruits. 2) Waving the sheaf before the Lord. 3) Offering of a lamb for a burnt offering. 4) Presenting of a meal offering and drink offering to the Lord, the former requiring a double portion. Until these matters were accomplished, nothing of the harvest was touched. The feast was a pledge of resurrection and declared acceptance of resurrection.

2. TYPICAL.

The study of types is a rewarding method of Bible study. It focuses attention on certain O.T. truths which stand out as pictures of N.T. doctrine. The type is found in the O.T. and the antitype in the N. T. To ignore this sort of study is to gloss over a portion of the Word which points so fervently to the Person of our Lord. Take some thoughts provided for your blessing:-

a. It is stated.

Clearly the Word connects the firstfruits of the O. T. with the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:20). His triumphant resurrection from the dead accomplished the glorious work of redemption as a complete work! True, all Jews believed in the resurrection, if they believed the Bible (Heb. 6:1-3; Job 19:25-27). However, the N.T. teaches more than just a resurrection. It concludes that there is an "out resurrection" (Phil. 3:11 in the Greek). It is this sort of resurrection of which Paul writes at length (1 Cor. 15). It is this of which Christ is the firstfruits.

b. It is detailed.

Careful study of the Bible reveals the order of the resurrections (1 Cor. 15:20-28):-

1) "Christ the firstfruits." The word for "order" (v. 23) is the Greek for body of troops or corps. Hence, there is a definite arrangement in the resurrection from the dead. The first to come forth and be resurrected is our Lord. It is admitted that some came forth shortly after His resurrection, but He is the unique first (cf. Matt. 27:51-53). He is the Leader of the troops.

2) "They that are Christ's at His coming." The connective "afterward" shows the trooping is after the Leader is out of the grave! The identification of, "they that are Christ's" is not difficult. It means all those who are related to Him through His plenary redemption executed at Calvary. This means all the saved of every age.

3) "Then cometh the end." This is a reference to the final resurrection (Rev. 20:11-15). The term "end" points to its finality with reference to the purpose of God and resurrection.

NOTE: Since the end resurrection relates to all who are non-believers (Rev. 20:5, 11-15; 21:8), the first resurrection obviously concerns all who are saved (Rev. 20:4, 5). The first resurrection has two