

# FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS

**Text:** Lev. 23:9-14

**Additional texts:** Deut. 26:5-10

**Historical and Thematic focus of the Feast:** This is a celebration of the first fruits of their labour (fields - Barley harvest) which was a '*grace-gift*' from Adonai (\*Deut. 8:17-18; \*Genesis 26:12-13; Genesis 13:2). Adonai is the source of all material and spiritual wealth, and the acknowledgement that they are no longer living as slaves in bondage, but free citizens in God's kingdom.

The Feast of First fruits would be celebrated on the day following the Sabbath after Passover, the seventeenth of Nisan. The people of Israel were required to bring to the Temple the first sheave of the barley harvest as an offering to Adonai. This offering would consecrate the complete harvest to Adonai. As the sheave was waved before Adonai the offerer would recite Deut. 26:5-10. This celebration was to remind Israel that all they had was from Adonai's hand, even the harvests of their fields. They were only entrusted with Adonai's stuff; they were placed as stewards over what was actually Adonai's.

The lesson taught by this feast is clear in that it demonstrates the faithfulness of God, just as Adonai brought in the first phase of the harvest (early harvest) the people could be *assured* that the later harvest would be provided for also.

## JEWISH TRADITION TEACHES:

Jewish Tradition teaches that the following four events occurred on this feast day. What do they have in common with the fifth and final event of the list? How do they relate to the theme of the Feast of First fruits? (Theme is resurrection and salvation)

- i) Noah and his family within the Ark came to rest on the Mount Ararat. (Civil calendar beginning with Tishri) Genesis 8:4.
- ii) Israel crosses the Red Sea escaping from Pharaoh and his armies. Exodus 14.
- iii) Israel eats the first fruits of the Promised Land. Joshua 5:10-12.
- iv) Haman is defeated and hanged. Esther 3:12
- v) The resurrection of Jesus. Matthew 28:1-10.

## THE MESSIANIC CONNECTION:

The harvest represents all those who would put their faith, trust, and confidence in Messiah. Yeshua was the '*first fruits*' released from the power of death (Rom. 6:23) or should we say '*sin*'. In His death and resurrection He conquered death itself and provided eternal life. Everyone who comes to Him will receive this awesome '*gift of grace*' - that is unmerited favour and the endowment of power (Romans 8:11; Phil. 3:10).

Yeshua's resurrection equates with Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden (I Cor. 15:16-27).

Why was it so important for Yeshua to appear before the Father, before Mary, as recorded in John 20:17, could touch Him?

*Remember the symbolic nature of this feast. Jesus ascended to the Father for the purpose of presenting Himself as the 'first fruits' from the dead (Job 19:25, 26; John 11:21-26; Hebrews 9:23, 24)*

### **MUSING MOMENT:**

When we consider the 'Feast of First Fruits' we could realistically sum up the ideals that it teaches with the single word; Consecration?

### **WHAT DOES THE WORD 'CONSECRATION' MEAN?**

The word '*consecrate*' means to be dedicated to a sacred purpose<sup>1</sup> or to set apart as sacred; dedicated to sacred uses.<sup>2</sup>

Read Colossians 3 out loud and flesh out the essentials of the human element of Consecration verse by verse:

- "Set" (vs. 1, 2); "Put" (vs. 5); "Rid" (vs.8); "taken" (vs. 9); "Putting on" (vs.10);
- "Clothe yourselves" (vs.12); "Let" (vs.15, 16)
- \*Colossians 2:8-15; John 12:23, 24, 32; James 1:18.

It is the putting on of the new man by allowing the Holy Spirit to live the resurrected life of Yeshua our Messiah through us. (Eph. 4:24; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Romans 6:11-14).

When we chose to live in the character of Yeshua, through His resurrection power (Romans 8:11; Phil. 3:10), we not only have the peace with Adonai, but we will enjoy the peace of Adonai (Gal. 5:22-23).

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Mish, ed. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary: Tenth Edition*. (Markham, ON: Thomas Allen & Son Limited, 1993) 247.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney I. Landau, ed. *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary: 1983 Edition*. (Lippincott & Crowell Publishers, 1980) 135.