

FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS

INTRODUCTION

The sacred assemblies of the Jews in the Old Testament are prophetic: they point to events in days to come. In this paper we explain what the Feast of First Fruits symbolizes. Christians can apply that knowledge to their life and to their interpretation of the Scripture.

This study will incorporate the spiritual meaning of numbers to help identify the meanings of the feasts. By two or three witnesses every fact shall be established. When Scripture makes a clear identification there is no debate. When it does not we will look to other witnesses, such as spiritual numbers.¹

SUMMARY

The Feast of First Fruits is prophetic of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE JEWISH HOLY DAYS?

Christians are strongly recommended not to observe the Jewish rituals and holy days.

There was a group in New Testament times who wanted to bring believers under obedience to the rituals and ordinances of Moses and the patriarchal rite of circumcision. Even some apostles drifted towards this way of thinking. This approach was condemned in the strongest possible terms by Paul: anathema! (Galatians 1:9) Anathema means 'accursed', devoted to destruction, or eternally damned. Regarding observing feasts and holy days Scripture says:

“But now that you know God – or rather are known by God – how is it you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.” (Galatians 4:9-11)

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

The Bible contains types and shadows. A type is an allegory, a figure of meaning. In Galatians Paul identifies Hagar, the slave woman, as representing the Old Covenant, and Sarah, the free woman, as representing the New Covenant.² In the same passage he connects Isaac with believers in Jesus, since we are born of the free woman. A shadow is a type with a prophetic fulfillment, speaking of things to come:

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come: the reality is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:16)

¹ For a complete presentation of spiritual numbers please refer to www.biblenumbersforlife.com The spiritual meanings of Bible numbers and the validation of those meanings is presented there.

² Gal. 4:21-31 “these things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants...”

SIMULTANEOUS PROPHETIC FULFILLMENTS FOR CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

A single prophetic event can have implications for both Jews and Christians. For example: when Christ died “**at that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**” (Matt. 27:51) The New Testament began when Christ’s blood was shed on the cross. The Old Testament covenant ceased at the exact same time. Many prophetic fulfillments of the appointed feasts and sacred assemblies apply to Jews in one way and to Christians in another way. Some feasts have no prophetic fulfillment for Jews, but often, prophetic events for Christians and Jews are linked. This is not a contradiction, this is the divine plan.

FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS³

Passover happens in the spring when all things are renewed. The Feast of First Fruits happens later when the land produced its first grain, usually in the summer.

“**Speak unto the children of Israel, and say to them: when you come into the land which I will give you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest to 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” (Lev. 23:9-11)**

“**And you shall eat neither bread nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that you have brought an offering unto your God...” (Lev. 23:14)**

Once again, the Bible tells us the spiritual meaning of the feast:

“**But now is Christ risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of them that have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor. 15:20)**

The imagery of this feast could not more directly point to the resurrection of Christ. The priest waves the offering in the air signifying the harvest has left the ground, i.e. raised to life. The offering was made the day after the Sabbath, the first day of the week, which we know was the day Christ rose from the dead. No one was permitted to eat any of the harvest until the wave offering, signifying that no one would rise from the dead until Christ rose first.⁴

³ See Exodus 23:16a, Leviticus 23:9-14, Numbers 28:26-31.

⁴ People in the Old Testament rose from the dead, but they died again. Christ is the first to have risen from the dead in a glorified body.

Gematria Study:

This section looks at the gematria of verses in the Torah relating to regulations pertaining to the Feast of First Fruits. Verses that make general statements such as “The Lord said to Moses” are excluded. Only verses with information specific to observing the Feast are included.

There is only one passage of 5 verses in the Torah relating to the regulations for this Feast:

<u>Passage</u>	<u>Gematria</u>	<u>Factors</u>
(1) Leviticus 23:10-14	23,273	17 x 37 x37

The number 17 means “Victory” and the number 37 means “Chosen Servant”. Whenever a number is squared it means “ultimate” or “exalted”. So, the meaning of the gematria is: “Victory! The Chosen Servant is Exalted!” It bears noting that 37 does not just mean any Chosen Servant, it means The Chosen Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵

We note there are 5 verses in this passage and the number 5 means “Life”. Appropriate considering Jesus was raised to life from the dead.

There is significance in the fact there is only one passage in Scripture instructing the Israelites to observe the Feast of First Fruits. It occurs in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus, which is the 113th chapter of the Bible. The number 113 means “Rapture of the Saints”. In placing the instructions for the observance of the Feast of First Fruits in this chapter, the Lord is indicating through spiritual numbers that the resurrection of Christ will be the sign to believers that our resurrection will be soon coming.

Compare our interpretation of the spiritual meaning of the gematria to Scripture:

“And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.” (Phil. 2:8-9)

“God raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God...” (Acts 2:32-33)

Once again the message of the spiritual numbers in the gematria meets and matches the message of the Scripture. Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

⁵ To see the richness of the connection of 37 to the Lord Jesus, consider Genesis 37 and count all the ways Joseph was typical of Jesus. For example: he was sold for 20 pieces of silver, he was handed over to Gentiles, his brothers plotted to kill him, their blood lust was based on jealousy, his robe was soaked in blood, and many more parallels.