

# The Feasts of Israel

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The Command to Israel, The illustration of Christ, The Application for the Christian

Part 4b

Scripture reading 1 Peter 1:13-19

## III. Firstfruits

To start us off, I need to correct something from the previous message. In the last message I presented to you the slides showing the resurrections following the resurrection of Christ, part of this was incorrect. With your bulletin you should have a paper labeled side ‘a’ ‘previous chart’ this was the last slide I presented to you and Number 6 in the picture is in the wrong place. Hence the big x on the top chart.

In creating the slide I put number 6 in the wrong spot and without thinking about it or double checking the reference, it went into the sermon like that. It is a mistake on my part in not being careful enough in doing the work of a pastor. It just reminded me again of how important the diligent study of a pastor is.

This is only a small error, not one that would have taken a Christian off the path of their salvation but it is an error just the same, and it again made me think of the many pastors who teach known errors that actuality will take people away from or out of eternal salvation.

To correct this mistake all we need to do is move the number 6 over and next to number 5, as illustrated in the lower chart, to the end of the tribulation, this is where all those who have died in the tribulation will be raised up along with the Old Testament saints to enter the millennium together with Christ. As the reference verse says; “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years”. These are the saints who are resurrected with the saints of the Old Testament and will enter the millennium with Christ.

There is however another resurrection at the end of the millennium, this is now number 7 on the chart, this is the resurrection of all unbelievers of the entire age of the world, at the end of the millennium, all unbelievers are all resurrected for judgment; does anyone know which judgment this would be? The great white throne judgment.

The first 6 are called the first resurrection or the resurrection of the just, the last is called the last resurrection or the resurrection of the unjust So with that correction aside we can continue.

We have now come to the second half of the feast of Firstfruits. In the first message we covered the time of year in point A, the command to Israel in point B, and illustration of Christ in point C. If you remember the slides I presented last time, and I think they should be up next, I showed the timeline for Israel in the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread and their journeys until the exiting of the Red Sea and how it matches the timeline of Christ last days during the week of His Passover meal with the disciples, His crucifixion, burial and resurrection. The end point of both of these is new life from death.

Today we want to look at point D, a point that I think it is one of the most important points in this whole series for the believer which is the application for the Christian.

#### D. The Application for the Christian

And I will start off with this statement; I believe that it is a feast that is commemorated and celebrated by many Christians and around the world today, but sadly I think its application has been largely neglected and ignored by many Christians and many churches.

If you recall from the last message we looked at how on the 14th day of Nisan, Israel killed the Passover Lamb and from then on kept the feast of Passover on this day. Immediately after they were to keep the feast of Unleavened bread the following day on the 15th day of Nisan. Then at midnight they began their exodus out of the land of Egypt. By the third night the Lord came between the army of Pharaoh and the children of Israel, separating them and allowed Israel to pass through the sea on dry land and out on the other side. I illustrated how the last days of Christ corresponded to the days of Israel's exodus, with His crucifixion, burial, with the three days and nights in the tomb and then His resurrection.

In both of these illustrations there was the arrow labeled 'separation' at the end, the Jews were separated from Pharaohs' army during the night they crossed the sea, for Christ It was the separation from death, Hades and corruption at the time He was risen. As Peter says in his sermon in Acts chapter 2, quoting the psalms in verse 27 he says;

27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

And then in verse 31 speaking of Jesus he says;

31 "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

Then we looked at how He, Jesus is the firstfruits of this resurrection, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:20;

But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

And in verse 23

But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming.

It is this separation that I think is very key in Christianity and is to be the main application for the church. As I showed us last time the resurrections in scripture that are to take place before the end of this age, the one I corrected this morning, it shows us that we are waiting for that next great resurrection called the rapture, the rapture of the church of both those who have died in the church age and those believers who are alive today.

We believe this from the word of God with the passages like 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 14 through 18 where it says;

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

And in 1 Corinthians 15 verse 51 to 53:

51 ¶ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

For the church this rapture will be a victory over death, victory over Hades, victory over this world and all that is in it including Satan.

And I ask are you comforted with these words? Are you comforted with knowing that Christ could come at any moment and all this pain, all this suffering, all these burdens these trials, these temptations will all be over. As verse 17 of 1 Thessalonians 4 says we shall be caught up to in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Is that comforting news to you?

Because it is a great truth of God's word that one day and one day soon at the last trumpet in the twinkling of an eye we shall all be change and meet the Lord in the air, all those who sleep, that is those who have died in Christ during the church age and all those who are alive at His return will find themselves in the clouds with our risen savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is the firstfruits of this resurrection, this is the blessed truth of scripture that we believe, the blessed hope as Paul in his letter to Timothy in chapter 2 verse 13 saying;

looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

As I said the application of this feast is separation, and consecration not just from something but also to something, a living in newness of life as a new creation in Jesus Christ.

The feast is Firstfruits was a command to Israel, to bring in the firstfruits of the harvest first the barley at the time of Passover and Unleavened bread and again at the time of the wheat harvest during the feast of Weeks, they were to bring the first sheave of the first crop of these two grain harvests. And then they would eat of the rest. This was going to take place exactly 40 years after they came up out of the Red Sea, when they left Egypt.

Because initially the journey for Israel was to take only a few days, some say 11 some say 40. But the point is that they were to leave Egypt behind and focus on the promise land, God was going to redeem for Himself a people for Himself.

As Israel was spared the judgment at Passover and after they left Egypt in haste, they passed through the sea and they were raised up on the other side, free, free from oppression, free from bondage, free from Egypt. They had become separated from Egypt as salvation came to the Jews.



As Israel's journeyed from Egypt to the other side of the red sea it depicts Jesus' crucifixion, His burial and resurrection on the third day and through each of them we have the perfect picture of salvation for mankind.

To show us the salvation process we could illustrate it like this, using the same slide from the previous message which is on the top of side 'b' of the insert, we could continue like this for man.

If we first remove the dates and days and the days and nights as the middle chart shows. And beginning on the left of the bottom chart we begin with conviction, John 16 verse 7 and 8 Jesus says;

7 ¶ "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

And when we come to the revelation that I am a sinner in need of a savior I become as Paul says in Galatians 2:20a

“I have been crucified with Christ”

It means I put to death the old self, or as He says the ‘old Man’ in Romans 6:6 saying;

knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

And then I am buried with Christ as Romans 6:4 says we were buried with Him, through baptism into death and lastly, the resurrection unto newness of life as Paul says in Romans 6:4

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

See how everything fits together, it’s almost like someone planned it. Well God did plan it that way; His plan for mankind has always remained the same throughout all of scripture. In the exodus of Israel to the death of Christ, to the salvation of man it is all set up in the same pattern. The top portion, the bottom portion and the middle portion all have the same author and plan in mind and that is redemption of man and to be the firstfruits thereof.

And there is one key thing that plays a large part in this chart and that is separation.

You will see on the far right there are the two arrows labeled separation, for Israel it was the separation from Egypt, from Pharaoh's army and a separation from everything that was Egyptian.

For Jesus it was the separation from death and corruption and sin that He took upon Himself in my place.

When we come to the realization that we are a sinner and are in need of a savior it is then that we die, die to self, die to the world, die to sin, we repent of our sins and believe what Jesus did on the cross for us, in taking our sin in our place that we may have life,

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul says;

17 Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

When the Jews came up out of the sea they were a people that God had redeemed to Himself, they were taken out of wicked Egypt for His own purpose and pleasure, so too is the Christian, he is redeemed out of this world, out of the hands of Satan to become the bride of Christ, to be part of a people redeemed by Christ, for Christ, we come up out of the grips and pollution of this world and are set apart for the body of the Lord Jesus Christ of whom He is the firstfruits and the Head.

But this is still not the application; this is only the process, the action of becoming a Christian, becoming a part of the family of God.

The application as I said earlier is consecration and this is where most professing Christians fail or most church come short.

Because you see even though all of the Israelites came out of Egypt, and all of them passed through the sea most of them never even saw the promise land.

We have often heard the phrase ‘The Lord GOD took Israel out of Egypt, but he never got Egypt out of Israel’. How often did they not complain to God? How often did they not test God? How often did they not to reject the Lord their God and desire to go back to Egypt, to bondage, to slavery, to sin.

A journey that should have take 40 days took 40 years because of their stubbornness, stiffed neck rebellion towards God. The Jews failed in living holy for God because they never separate themselves from the past or from their sins. Why?

Because of stubbornness, because of idolatry, because of lusting after evil things, because of sexual immorality, because of complaining because of unbelief.

As I said last time only the children and teenagers from the exodus ever made it into the promise land, because all of the older generation failed to cleanse themselves of Egypt. They left in haste, but never left it behind; they came up out of the Red Sea redeemed but continually longed to return, even though God took them out of Egypt and separated them from the Egyptian army, they never separated themselves from its sin.

And this is the warning for the Christian, Christ took our sins upon Himself, He became the sacrifice in my place on the cross, as scripture says ‘Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many’ Hebrews 9:28a

And among the many is you and me and everyone who repents and names the name of Christ as their savior. Jesus died on the cross, Jesus was buried in the tomb, Jesus arose again in newness of life, separated from death, separated from Hades, separated from all sin and all that corrupts, and this is the application for the Christian.

I might ask ‘how is your life? Your Christian walk with the Lord?’ When you became a believer did you leave sin in haste? As a Christian are you leaving this world and its lusts and pleasures behind? Are you sanctifying yourself every day to become more and more like Christ in being holy and pure? As John says in 1 John 2:15 and 16 say;

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

<sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

Now someone may say I'm getting a little off track, firstfruits is about the resurrection of Christ, the person who is convicted of sin and finds themselves in need of a savior, and then in baptism is dead, buried and then raised up with Christ unto newness of life. This is true as I quoted Paul earlier in 2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

And Romans 6:4 says;

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

We should also walk in newness of life; this is the application that is missing in much of Christianity and churches today.

The Indian lawyer Mahatma Gandhi is quoted saying;

I like your Christ; I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike you Christ.

This is sad that so much of Christianity has become such portrait to the world, in our actions, in our dealings, in the things they do in everyday life. Now I don't want to tear down the body of Christ but rather bring a revelation to a body that it is in desperate need of revival.

How many of you have heard phrases like; 'I tried Christianity and it didn't work for me;' or 'Christianity is filled with hypocrisy' or something like 'why should I become a Christian, they do all of the same things I do only they go to church on Sunday morning?

Why is it that the world has this view or this picture of Christian's?

It is because much of them miss the application of this feast, of the resurrection, and what it means to be separated to God.

As I said at the start I believe that it is a feast that is commemorated and celebrated by many Christians and around the world today, but sadly I think its application has been largely ignored by many Christians and not practiced in many churches.

And that ignorance is the lack of separation from sin and from the world for the Christian.

When Israel came out of Egypt, they were redeemed by God through His saving grace and they enter a new life

But as they began to wander in the wilderness they became weary, tired, hungry, thirsty and complained. They tested God, and the lack of trusting and following Him, believing that He is not good, lead to other sins and acts that brought them to a point where God wanted to kill all of them and would have if it had not been for intervention and prayers of Moses.

They were taken out of the land but they never separated themselves from the land, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:5 saying:

But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

They were scattered and died in the wilderness because God was not well pleased with them. If you remember the series I did on temptations you will remember that all of the things that Israel did to displease God in the wilderness are the same things that still displease Him now and we will face the same consequences as he says in verse 6 of the same chapter saying that; these things became our examples,



In the series I did on longsuffering I wrote this in regards to Christians who live in willful sin. Looking at Hebrews chapter 10 I wrote;

And I think that this passage talks about Christians living continually in a know sin or have slipped back into some sin and this passage shows us the dangers of it, verse 26 to 31 read;

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

A few things we want to look at, verse 26 has the word 'for if we sin willfully' that means it is something we do deliberately, willfully choosing to do that sin. 'if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth that is the truth of the sin we are committing there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,'

The blood of Christ does not cover deliberate unrepeated continuation of sins. These are not my words but the words of God. It says there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 'but a certain fearful expectation of what? Judgment. Judgment is what is waiting for such a person.

I want to warn you here that there are people out there that will say something things like 'but it all under grace' or 'grace covers all' these people who say such things, in my opinion are 'wolves in sheep's clothing', these are 'false teachers of the word', yes there is grace that covers us when we commit a sin and repent of it, but not when we continue in it.

What did Paul say in Romans chapter 6 verses 1 and 2;

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

in verses 12 - 16 he says;

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

and verse 23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EOQ

If the professing Christian does not separate himself from sin or from certain aspects of the world, namely the lusts of the flesh, the lust of

the eyes and the pride of life and continues in them he is doomed to destruction and scripture is full of this kind of warning, Romans 8:5-8;

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Peter also says it in more blunt terms saying;

18 For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are

again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

## 2 Peter 2 verse 18-22

We could look up many other passages that tells us how the Christian is to be separated from sin, not only to resist and be cleansed from the world and sin, in order that we can be a light to others who do not know Christ. If a sinner or unbeliever see us and sees no change or difference between us and the world what light you are giving or what message are you sending? Why else is Gandhi quoted as saying;

I like your Christ; I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike you Christ.

Just as Israel was made to wander in the wilderness for 40 years because of sin and then die in that state, so too will the person die who professes Christianity and lives in all worldliness and sin.

Not necessarily a physical death right away, but a spiritual death and then eventually eternal death.

If we the church are the firstfruits to God, to Jesus Christ, then let us truly live as firstfruits, as a sheave take from the field and dedicated to God, holy, separated, and set aside for His glory, let us do as His word commands.

John says in 1 John 3:2 and 3

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Because if we are separated from the world, separated from sin, separated from doing the will of the devil to do the will of God, only then can we expect to receive the promises He gives us in scripture, anything less and we come under the judgment of God.

And this is the area where so many Christians and churches get it wrong. This is the application that they miss, they think and preach that we are all under such grace that all willful sins and lived in sins are atoned for continually by Christ.

It is such a disgrace to see what Christians think they can get away with and what churches allow their members and congregations to live in when Paul very clearly asks the question in Romans chapter 6 verse 1;

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Answer

2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

And then in verses 6 and 7;

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Are you part of the firstfruits to God? Or maybe should I ask, if you look at your own life are you in that sheave of the firstfruits in meeting Jesus in the air? How does your Christianity look to the world? Can they see a difference?

How are your actions in the work place or in the home? What is your speech like when you are with others either in the world or at work

or at home? Are your actions like Christ or are they as Gandhi might say ‘they are so unlike your Christ’

This is why Peter says we are to;

gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance;

15 but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,

16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

In the book ‘Live no by Lies’ author Rod Dreher writes about the Christians in the coming future of our nation like this and I quote;

A time of painful testing, even persecution, is coming. Lukewarm or shallow Christians will not come through with their faith intact. Christians today must dig deep into the bible and church traditions and teach themselves how and why today’s post-Christian world, with its self-centeredness, its quest for happiness and rejection of sacred order and transcend values, is a rival religion to authentic Christianity. We should also see how many of the world’s values have



been absorbed into Christian life and practice. Then we must judge how the ways of the world, and its demands, conflict with what Christ requires of His disciples.

And in regards to families and parents he also says;

Christians will have to regard family life in a much more focused, serious way. The traditional Christian family is not merely a good idea - it is also a survival strategy for the faith in a time of persecution. Christians should stop taking family life for granted, instead, approaching it in a more thoughtful, disciplined way. We cannot simply live as all other families live, except that we go to church on Sunday. Holding the correct theological beliefs and having the right intentions will not be enough. Christian parents must be intentionally countercultural in their approach to family dynamics. The days of living like everybody else and hoping our children turn out for the best are over.

EOQ

And even the apostle Paul writes in Romans 11 in regards to the illustration of the olive tree and how the branches, the Jews were removed and wild branches, the gentiles were grafted in. He says in verse 21

For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

Then he goes on to say in verse 22:

22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

And so in conclusion to the feast of Firstfruits, for Israel it was to be a feast of new beginnings, illustrated from the time of them coming out of the Red Sea, to being fulfilled when they entered their new land, a land in which they were to enjoy the blessings from God, and in return give the blessing of their firstfruits back to Him.

In Christ it is a feast that represents the empty tomb, the risen Lord, His separation from death and Hades and corruption in becoming the firstfruits of the resurrection, the resurrection of those who would follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. And the question is this; as a Christian are you living as firstfruits? I read a very interesting and applicable verse in 1 chronicles the other day... yes some of you may think ‘can anything good come out of the chronicles?’ but 1 chronicles 16 is David’s psalm when he brought the Ark of God into to the city and in verses 28 and 29 he says;

Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Give to the LORD glory and strength.

29 Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!

Worship the LORD in the Beauty of holiness, is that you? Are you separating yourself from the evil things of this world, from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? From sin and from every evil thing the devil tries to entangle you with? Do you worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness? Or do you worship Him while you are still willingly living with filth?

Live your life as a dedication to the Lord, Holy and pure and in righteousness. As James says in chapter 1 verse 18;

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Firstfruits of His creation, may this feast remind us that we are to be separated from pollutions of this world and sin, and live for Him and worship Him in the beauty of holiness.