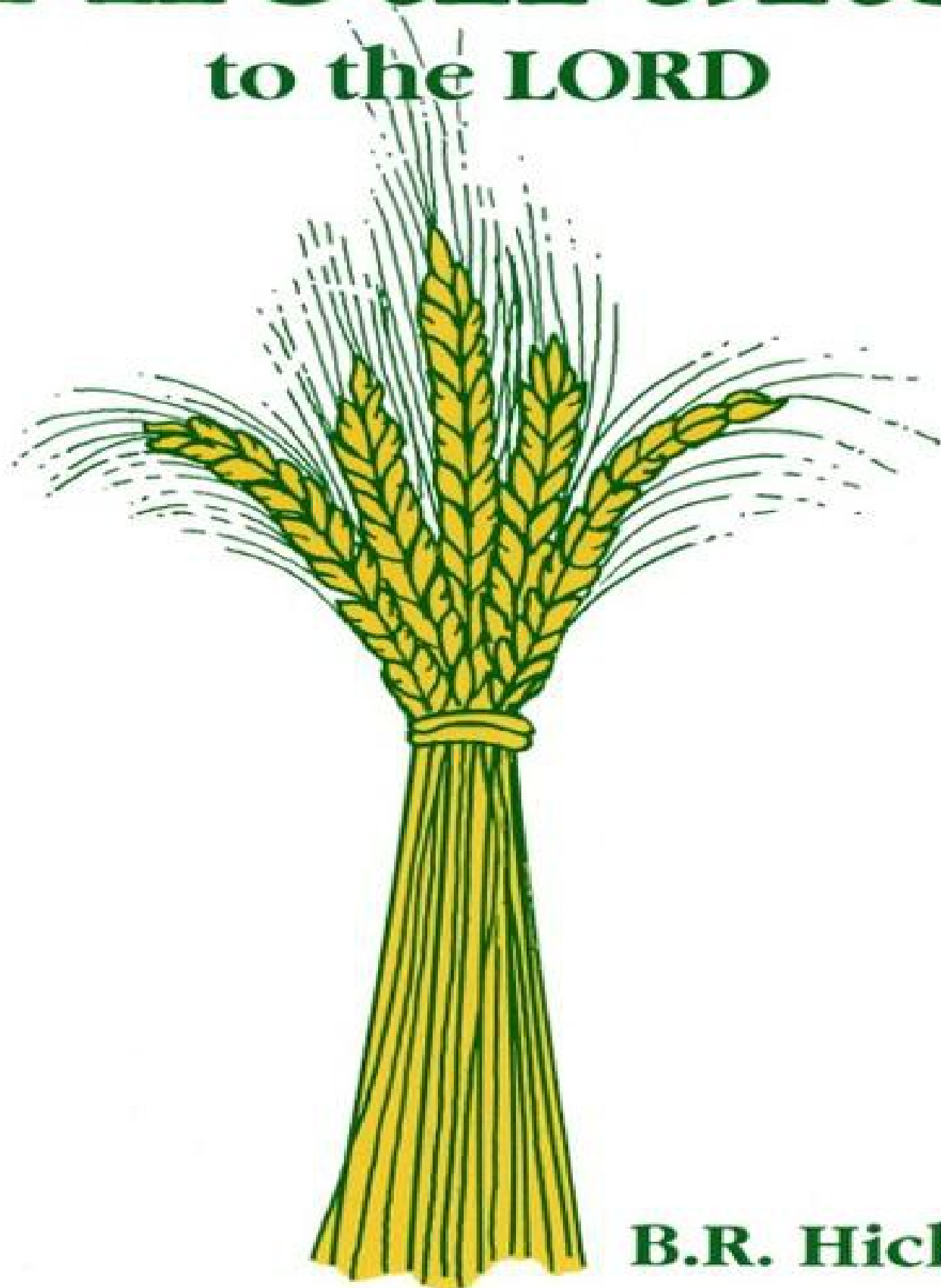


The Blessings of Giving
Firstfruits
to the LORD



B.R. Hicks

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Giving
Firstfruits
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Introduction

According to God's Command, once the Israelites had possessed Canaan and had begun to cultivate the land, they were to offer Him the firstfruits of their harvests. There was a reason for this Command, and God's Reason and Command are still in effect for His people, today, because God's Spiritual Principles never change.

The Spiritual Principle of offering the firstfruits of the harvest was practiced in the Old Testament Dispensation; it is practiced in the New Testament Dispensation; and it *will be* practiced during Christ's Millennial Reign on Earth. The offering of the firstfruits was God's *Command* to His people, making it an obligatory offering. God's very important Reason for requiring Israel to present to Him the very first of her ripened fruits was to insure that her entire harvest would be sanctified.

By Israel's consecrating of her firstfruits to the LORD, all the produce of the land became blessed and hallowed, just as the whole nation of people were blessed and hallowed by consecrating their firstborn sons to God.

This is why the practice of the Spiritual Principle of offering one's firstfruits is important to believers today; it assures the offerer that the LORD's Blessing will be on the rest of his produce, both naturally and spiritually. Believers in the New Testament Dispensation who want God's special Blessing on their labours, both natural and spiritual, must also offer their firstfruits unto the LORD.

The procedure for setting apart God's portion of the harvest consisted in a man going into his field to look for the *first* of the firstfruits to ripen. When he saw the very first stalk of barley fully ripened, he tied a piece of grass around it, marking it so as to distinguish its sacred character as a firstfruits offering to the LORD.

In times of Israel's apostasy, she neglected her duty of bringing her firstfruits to the LORD. During these times, the land suffered drought which, in turn, prevented the seeds from coming to fruition. However, in times of reformation, especially under Hezekiah and Nehemiah, Israel returned to the LORD, bringing her firstfruits unto Him.

God commanded that Israel offer the first of the ripened firstfruits in order to present her a continual, instructive reminder of His Power, His Goodness, His Faithfulness, His Mercy and Grace, and His Omnipotence. God wanted Israel to remember His Almighty, Powerful Government that He exercised over His whole creation in bringing their harvest to fruition. He wanted Israel always to recall His bountiful Goodness to His people in providing food for the maintenance of their lives.

In His Command was God's desire for Israel always to be aware of the Eternal Truth of His Faithfulness to His people, when they work and walk according to His Master Plan and Purposive Will.

When Israel diligently obeyed God's Commands to bring their firstfruits to His House in order to receive His Sanctifying Blessing on them, personally, and on the whole harvest, God wanted them to see the physical proof of His Manifold Mercies and Great Grace which He extended to them. He wanted all Israel to see that it was His Almighty Power that was both the Cause and the Effect of their fruitful harvest.

The offering of the first of the firstfruits to ripen of the harvest also was for the purpose of stirring and awakening Israel's deep feelings toward God.

God wanted to stir His people's feelings of deep humility toward their Almighty Creator, Who, through His Omnipotent Knowledge, exercises His Love and Power toward the tiniest seed by bringing it to fruition in the harvest season.

He wanted their feelings of profound, grateful, thankful appreciation stirred in behalf of the favours and benefits that the LORD gives His people through each bountiful harvest. The offering of the first of the firstfruits was to revive a warm, appreciative response to the LORD for His bountiful, fruitful harvest.

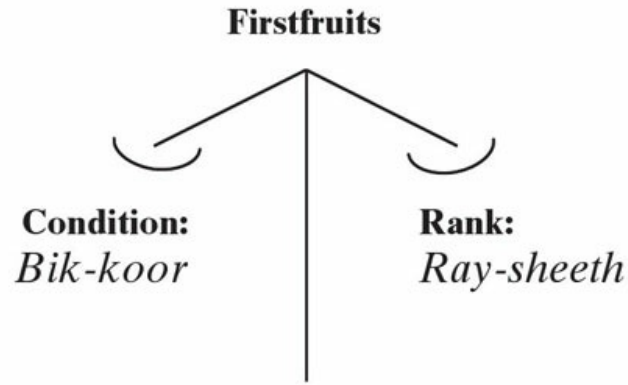
Israel's Governor and Guide wanted to stir their feelings of exclusive surrender to Him as well as their feelings of total dependence upon Him so that they would know that only His Almighty Power and Divine Governance and Guidance can bring a tiny seed to mature fruition.

God also wanted to stir, within Israel's heart, feelings of fresh, new desires to please Him in all their thoughts, feelings, and deeds.

Israel's firstfruits not only were memorials to God's Blessings in the natural realm, but were pictures of *Christ's*

Firstfruits — those believers who have part in the first resurrection and Christ's Bride.

The meanings of the Hebrew words for *firstfruits* reveal the condition and rank of the firstfruits. The two Hebrew words that give us this information are *bik-koor* and *ray-sheeth*.

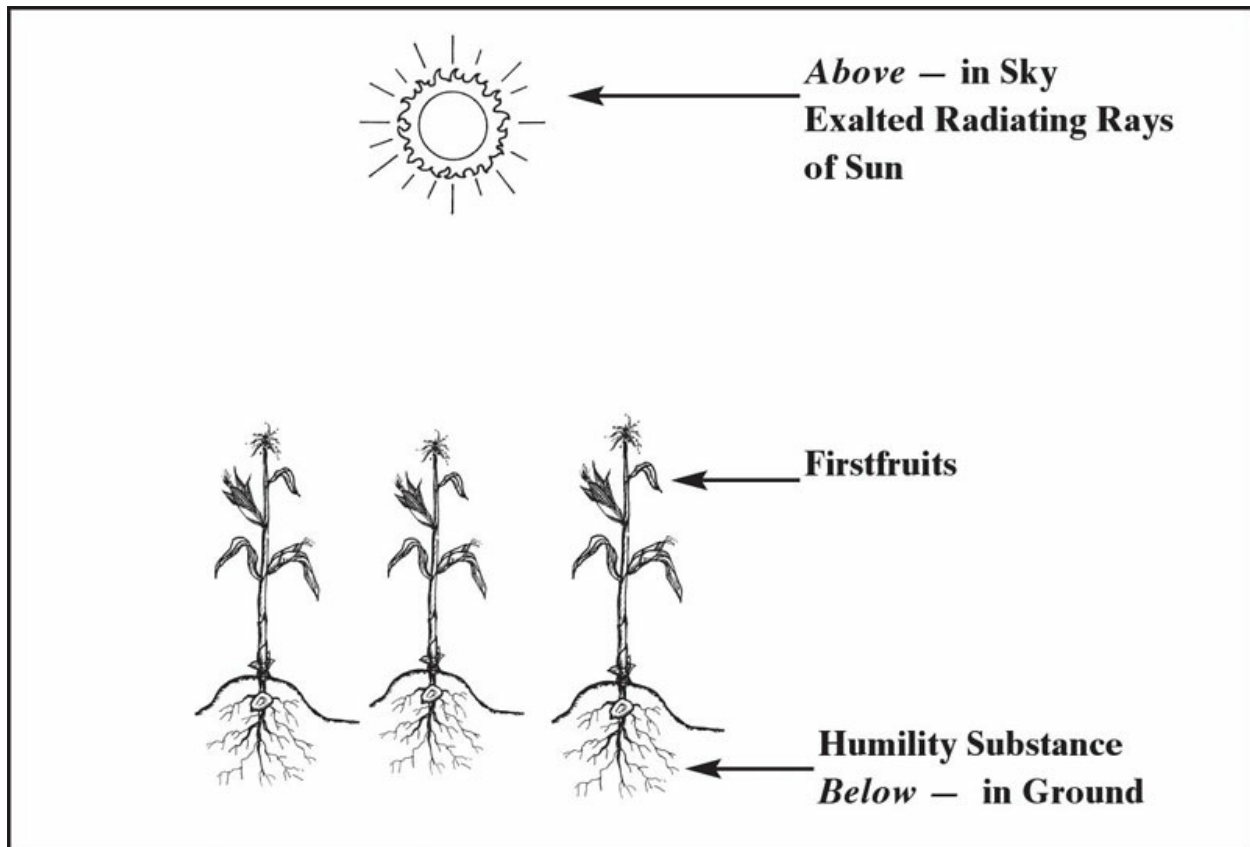


The Hebrew word *bik-koor* refers to the *condition* of the firstfruits. It means the *first ripe*, hasty *fruit*. The fruit that hastened to fulfill God's Holy Will was chosen to be brought near to the LORD because it had made itself ready to be harvested first. Being harvested first meant that it was ready to be offered in God's House; subsequently, it would be eaten by God's appointed Priests who taught the LORD's *Torah-Truth* to His people so that they could keep it in their hearts and obey it. Hence, the *condition* of the firstfruits consisted in its attaining full growth or development; and, by growing to maturity, first, it made itself ready to be harvested, eaten, and used according to God's Purposive Will.

The Hebrew word *ray-sheeth* refers to the *rank*, place, and order of the firstfruits. It means to be *first* in rank, place, time or order.

The firstfruits preceeded all other fruits in hastening to fulfill God's Master Plan and Purposive Will for them. They ripened before any other produce. They acted quicker than all other plants by laying hold of the humility substance from *below* — in the ground — and by laying hold of the exalted, radiating rays of the sun from *above* — in the sky.

Although all the other plants had the same opportunity to lay hold of God's provisions from *below* and from *above*, the first-fruits acted before all others. Therefore, they outranked all others and were chosen *before* all others to be brought *near* to the LORD in His House, to be consecrated to Him by His Sacred, Holy Will. Hence, the firstfruits were exalted to a rank, a place, a time, and an order of principal importance in the LORD's House.



There was no fixed quantity for the firstfruits. However, it was Israel's duty to lift out the *best* for the LORD's House and for His servants. The LORD's Blessing on a *single grain* of firstfruits assured the LORD's Blessing on the whole heap of grain. If Israel gave the *best* of their fruits to the LORD, then He gave the best of His Blessings to both the stalk of firstfruits and to the whole of the remaining fruits.

These firstfruits-offerings were brought to the Temple. By Israel's consecration of her firstfruits to the LORD, God consecrated her entire produce in the land. Therefore, all fruit in the LORD's Temple and in the individual homes became blessed for its intended use, as the nation was blessed by the consecration of their firstborn sons.

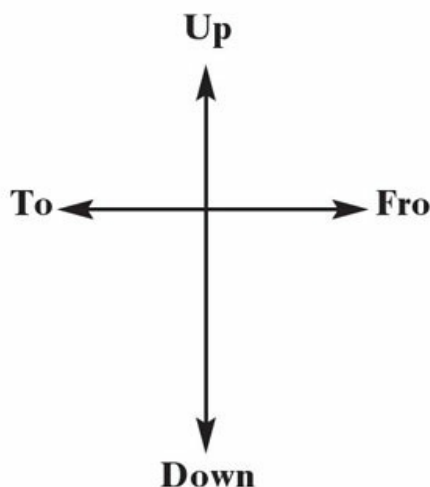
Although no particular quantity was designated, Jewish history says that a sixtieth part of the whole was the least measure that could be offered as firstfruits.

In the Book of Leviticus, the LORD clearly described the manner in which the firstfruits were to be offered.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, **When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto 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.** And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering unto the LORD. And the meat-offering thereof *shall be* two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD *for* a sweet savour: and the drink-offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth *part* of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings (Leviticus 23:9-14).

The firstfruits were to be offered or waved in the form of the Cross. The Hebrew word for *wave* is *noof*, meaning to quiver, to vibrate up and down and to rock to and fro.

Firstfruits Waved Up and Down and To and Fro



The firstfruits were brought in a basket to the LORD's House and presented to the Priest who, in turn, set the basket before the Brazen Altar. Then, according to some Hebrew scholars, the offerer recited the Biblical account of Jacob's going down into Egypt, the blessings of God's deliverance of his seed from their Egyptian taskmasters, and their subsequent exodus from Egypt (Deuteronomy 26:2-11).

When the offerers of firstfruits made their pilgrim journey to Jerusalem, they sang as they traveled in the way, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

As they approached Jerusalem, they sent a messenger to announce their arrival so that the Priest would be ready to receive their firstfruits. The officiating Priest, the Levites, and the Treasurers went out to meet them and accompanied them into the city, singing as they entered, "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:2).

The musicians, who led the music and singing, continued to play until the procession came to the Temple Mount. Here everyone, even the King, took his own basket upon his shoulders, striding forward as he sang, "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness." (Psalm 150:1,2).

Then, the Levites responded, "I will extol thee, O LORD;..." (Psalm 30:1).

As the offerers stood before the Brazen Altar with their first-fruits, they recited, in unison, the story of Jacob (Deuteronomy 26:3-5) until they came to this portion: "...A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous." Then, they presented their firstfruits to the Priest who took them and waved them in the form of the Cross before the LORD. As the Priest recited these words, "And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me..." (Deuteronomy 26:10), he set the firstfruits before the LORD, in front of the Brazen Altar.

At this time, the offerers prostrated themselves before the LORD, demonstrating that they were surrendering themselves and their possessions exclusively to the LORD; and, thus, they expressed their joyful confidence in the LORD for His Blessing upon the firstfruits and the whole harvest.

The great solemnity, the overwhelming joy, and the total trust that were exhibited by the Israelites in the keeping of the Firstfruits Festival show that the dutiful paying of firstfruits unto the LORD was of great importance. Moreover, the many verses in God's Word, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, reveal the Eternal importance of firstfruits in God's Master Plan and Purposive Will.

The Spiritual Principle of Offering Firstfruits unto the LORD is not confined to the Old Testament Dispensation, for God's Spirit and Word reveal that Israel will bring her firstfruits to the LORD during Christ's Millennial Reign.

And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate **the firstfruits of the land: for it is holy unto the LORD** (Ezekiel 48:14).

According to the Prophet Ezekiel's account of Christ's Reign on this Earth, the LORD will forbid the sale of the land of the Priests and the Levites and the exchanging and alienating of the firstfruits, for they will be Holy unto the LORD as His possessions, just as they always have been.

God's Holy Word reveals a Stature of Truth concerning Firstfruits. As we study the details of this Stature of Truth, we will gain a greater understanding of and a deeper appreciation for the Spiritual Principle of offering firstfruits unto the LORD.

Part Two: (cont'd)

- **Christ's Bride — The Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb (Rev. 14:4) (Chapter Three)**

**Part Two:
The Revelation of Firstfruits
in the New Testament
Dispensation**

- **The LORD Jesus Christ — The Firstfruits from the Dead (I Cor. 15:20-23) (Chapter One)**

Part Two: (cont'd)

- **Believers — The Firstfruits of Salvation (Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:15; James 1:18)**
- **Believers Who Were and Are Overcomers — The Firstfruits from the Dead and the Living at the Rapture (Rom. 8:23) (Chapter Two)**

Part One:

God's Eternal Principle of Giving Firstfruits, as Revealed in the *Torah*, Was Established in Abram's Time (Chapters One through Eight)

As this Stature shows, Part One of this study will deal with God's Principle of Giving Firstfruits as revealed in the *Torah* in the Old Testament Dispensation.

Part Two will cover the Revelation of Firstfruits in the New Testament Dispensation, which includes (1) the Resurrection of the LORD Jesus Christ, Who was the Firstfruits from the Dead; (2) believers, who are the firstfruits of Salvation, and resurrected believers who have died as overcomers during the New Testament Dispensation and who will be *the firstfruits from the dead* at the Rapture of living New Testament saints who are overcomers; and (3) Christ's Bride, the Firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

May the LORD Jesus Christ quicken the Truths in this study to your heart so that you may experience the blessings on your natural and spiritual life that come from giving your offerings of firstfruits to the LORD.

— The Author

Part One

**God's Eternal Principle of Giving Firstfruits, as Revealed in the *Torah*, Was
Established in Abram's Time**

Chapter One

The Revelation Of Firstfruits In The *Torah*

In the Old Testament Dispensation, the firstfruits included produce in the raw state, such as grain and fruit; produce prepared for use as food, such as wine, oil, flour, and dough; also, firstfruits included the wool produced by the flocks (Exodus 22:29; 23:19; 34:26; Deuteronomy 18:4).

At the Passover Feast, the first ripe sheaf was presented to the LORD by the congregation of Israel before the grain harvest began (Leviticus 23:10,11).

After the reaping of the grain harvest, the firstling loaves at Pentecost were waved before the LORD (Leviticus 23:15; Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26).

The *Torah*-Truth in the Old Testament taught that the first-fruits of the whole produce of husbandry belongs to the LORD, the Creator, Master, and Owner of the land. Consequently, Israel had to present them to God as an offering.


I. Firstfruits Were *from* God and *for* God as a Sacred, Holy Possession, Which He Reserved *for* His Servants — the Priests and the Levites.

Like the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast, the first-fruits of the fields' harvests were sacred to the LORD, the Creator, Master, and Owner of the soil (Exodus 23:19; Deuteronomy 18:4).

The eldest son in Israel was sanctified as sacred unto God as manifested by the fact that Israel's firstborn sons were exempted from the plague of death brought by the Death Angel when He destroyed all of Egypt's firstborn sons on the night of the very first Passover. God preserved His own.

Israel's firstborn sons represented all the nation of Israel. However, later on, so that they could minister to the LORD in His House, the tribe of Levi was set aside to stand in the place of Israel's firstborn sons (Numbers 3:12, 45, 50).

Because the tribe of Levi, with its Priests and Levites, served in God's House, the LORD assumed the responsibility for their support by commanding the people to give them their tithes, firstfruits, and offerings. The Levites, far from being wealthy in the natural realm, were restricted to being the objects of the people's liberality. Nevertheless, the Priests and Levites were *spiritually* rich in the Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge of the LORD's *Torah*-Truth. Hence, Israel and the sons of Levi shared their particular kinds of wealth with each other.



**Sons of Levi Shared:
Spiritual Riches of
Torah-Truth
with Israel**

**Israel Shared:
Natural Wealth of
Tithes, Firstfruits, and Offerings
with the Priests and Levites**

The LORD is and always has been faithful to support the faithful ones whom He has called, separated, and sanctified unto Himself and His service.

During Christ's Millennial Reign upon the Earth, the LORD will continue to support the sons of Levi by having His people set aside their firstfruits for them.

Ezekiel the Prophet foretold how Israel's present worship, which is defiled with idolatry, will be purified when scattered Israel is regathered at the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

For **in mine holy mountain**, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and **there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.** I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *for* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 20:40-44).

In Mount Zion, the site of the LORD's Holy Temple in the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ and His Bride, Israel again will offer her heave offerings or firstfruits unto the LORD, and they will be acceptable unto Him.

In the past, when Israel has sanctified the LORD's Holy Name by bringing her firstfruits unto Him, He has sanctified her firstfruits and all the produce in the land.

Israel and her firstfruits are the LORD's Eternal Possession.

In Ezekiel's prophecy of the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, he told how Israel shall enjoy her new relationship with the LORD, as again she takes her place as His peculiar possession and treasure; and, as His chosen people, she will pay her firstfruits to the LORD.

The LORD will not forsake Israel until He brings her into a perfect spiritual relationship with Himself, according to His Master Plan and Purposive Will. The LORD God's ultimate Goal is the sanctification of His Holy Name in Israel, on the Temple Mount. Then, all the nations of the Earth will desire to go to the LORD's Temple and learn of His *Torah-Truth* (Isaiah 2:3).

In that day, Israel faithfully and dutifully will bring her tithes and firstfruits to the LORD, feeding His Altar and His Priests as she did in the days of her youth.

And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate **the firstfruits of the land: for it is holy unto the LORD** (Ezekiel 48:14).

God forbade the sale of the territories given to the Priests and the Levites. Their possessions were Holy unto the LORD, just as the firstfruits were Holy. Therefore, the Priests and Levites had an inalienable right to their lands, which could not be taken away from them nor transferred to anyone else.

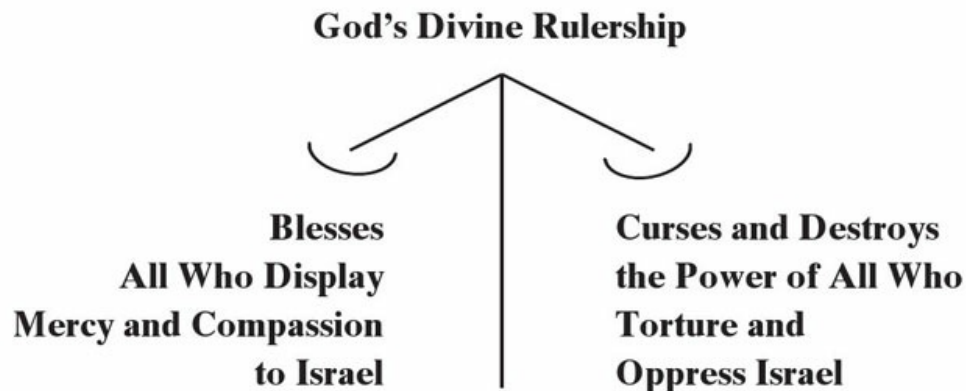
God revealed, through Jeremiah the Prophet, His remembrance of Israel's love for Him in the past, which had been expressed through her dutiful paying of her firstfruits to the LORD.

During Israel's early stages of national existence as God's Bridal Nation, she expressed her loyal love and

implicit trust in God through her faithful obedience in paying her firstfruits. Israel's past faithfulness to her Divine Husbandman was quite a contrast to her unfaithful state in Jeremiah's day, at which time she was backslidden.

Just as the firstfruits were hallowed unto the LORD and His appointed Priests, so was and so is Israel hallowed unto the LORD as the firstfruits of *all* nations. Although God has punished Israel for her backsliding and unfaithfulness, He also has punished all who have tried to destroy her; and He will continue to do so.

God's historic punishment of nations that have oppressed Israel is an instructive example of this fact. All nations who have displayed mercy and compassion to Israel have been blessed of God and have prospered, while all nations who have tortured and oppressed Israel have been cursed, and their power has been destroyed by God.



When He communed with Abram in the very beginning, before Israel had become a nation, God pronounced His Principle of Blessing and Cursing on those who would bless or curse Israel in the future.

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And **I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed** (Genesis 12:1-3).

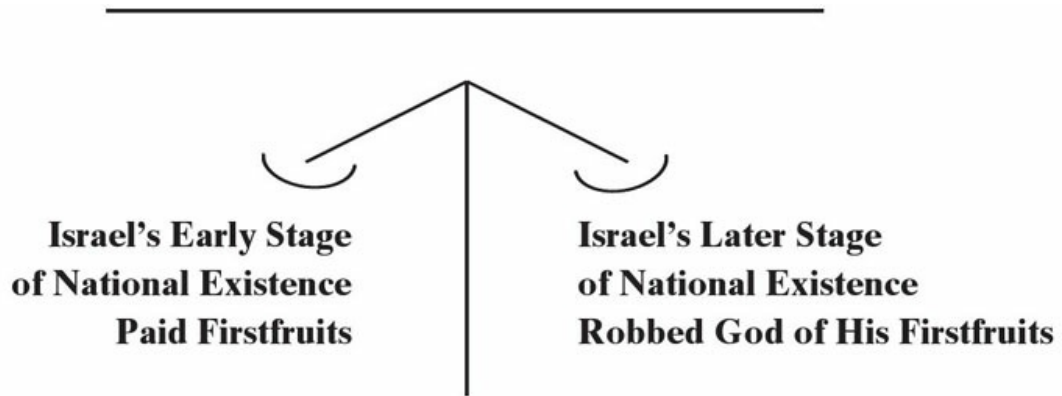
God's Promise of Blessing and Cursing concerning Israel is His Eternal, Almighty, Irrevocable Word! The nations who receive God's Moral, Spiritual Principles, which He has given to Israel through His Word for the spiritual education and moral development of all nations, *will be blessed!* Those nations who obstinately refuse to bend in submissiveness to God's Moral, Spiritual Principles of Truth *will be cursed.*

Israel and her firstfruits are Sacred, Holy Possessions of God.

Also, the Prophet Jeremiah established the Truth that the firstfruits are for the LORD.

Moreover the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD: I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown. **Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase:** all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 2:1-3).

During Israel's early stage of existence as a tiny nation, she lovingly, dutifully, and faithfully paid the LORD His firstfruits. However, when she grew large in the later stage of her national existence, she defected from God; therefore, she robbed God of His firstfruits.



In Israel's infancy, God displayed His Love for her, and Israel displayed her love, loyalty and trust in Him. By departing from Egypt, a land that was well-cultivated and fruitful, and by following the LORD into wilderness and desert lands, places that were neither plowed nor sown, lands that were filled either with a maze of unrestrained growth or lands that were empty, dry, barren, sandy desert, Israel displayed her loving trust in the LORD.



In both of these kinds of places, Israel had to trust the LORD, totally, for her food and water supply.

Israel was hallowed and consecrated to God as His peculiar treasure among the nations, just as her firstfruits were the LORD's peculiar possession among the whole harvest. Hence, as the firstfruits are Holy unto the LORD, so is Israel Holy unto the LORD; she is the firstfruits of all nations or all humanity.

In the Book of Leviticus, God established the Truth that the firstfruits are for the LORD and for His servants.

Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meatoffering unto the LORD.... Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. And **the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave-offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest** (Leviticus 23:16,19,20).

The firstfruits for the Priests were waved to the LORD. Then, they were consecrated to the LORD by being eaten by the Priests.

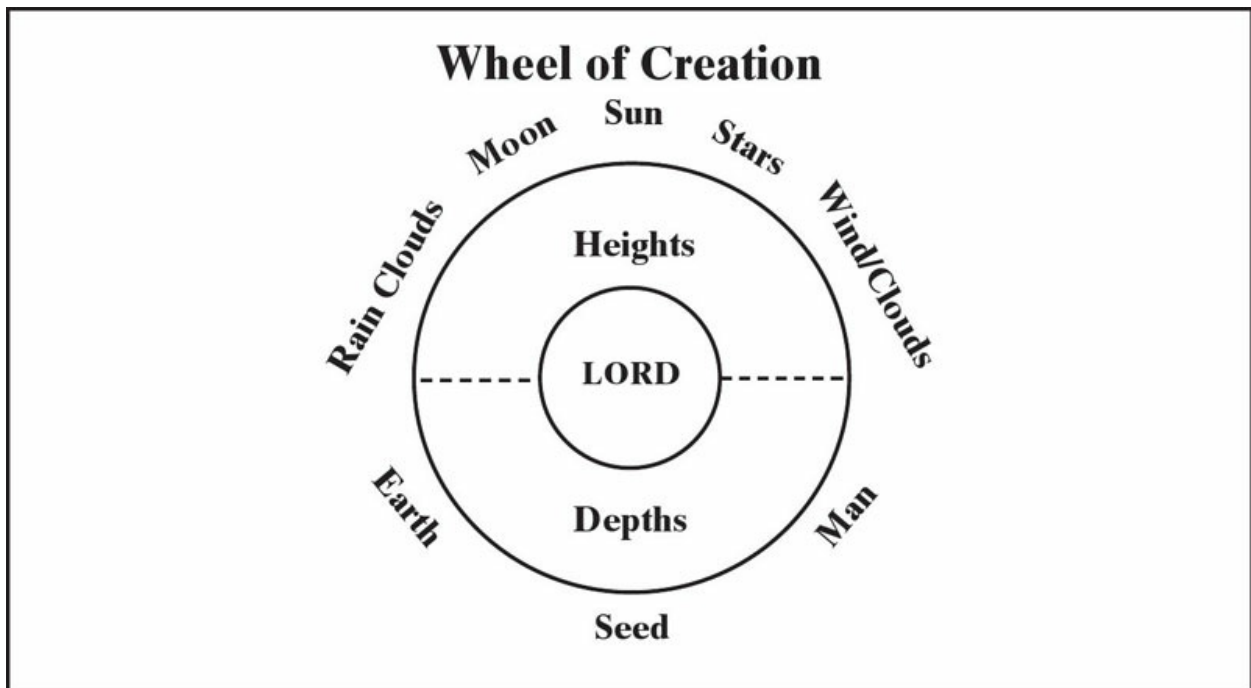
Firstfruits in the Old Testament consisted of the following produce:

- all firstfruits of the harvest;
- all firstfruits of the vintage;
- all firstfruits of the threshingfloor;
- all firstfruits of the wine press;
- all firstfruits of the oil press;
- all firstfruits of the first-baked bread of the new crop;
- all firstfruits of the fleeces of the flock.

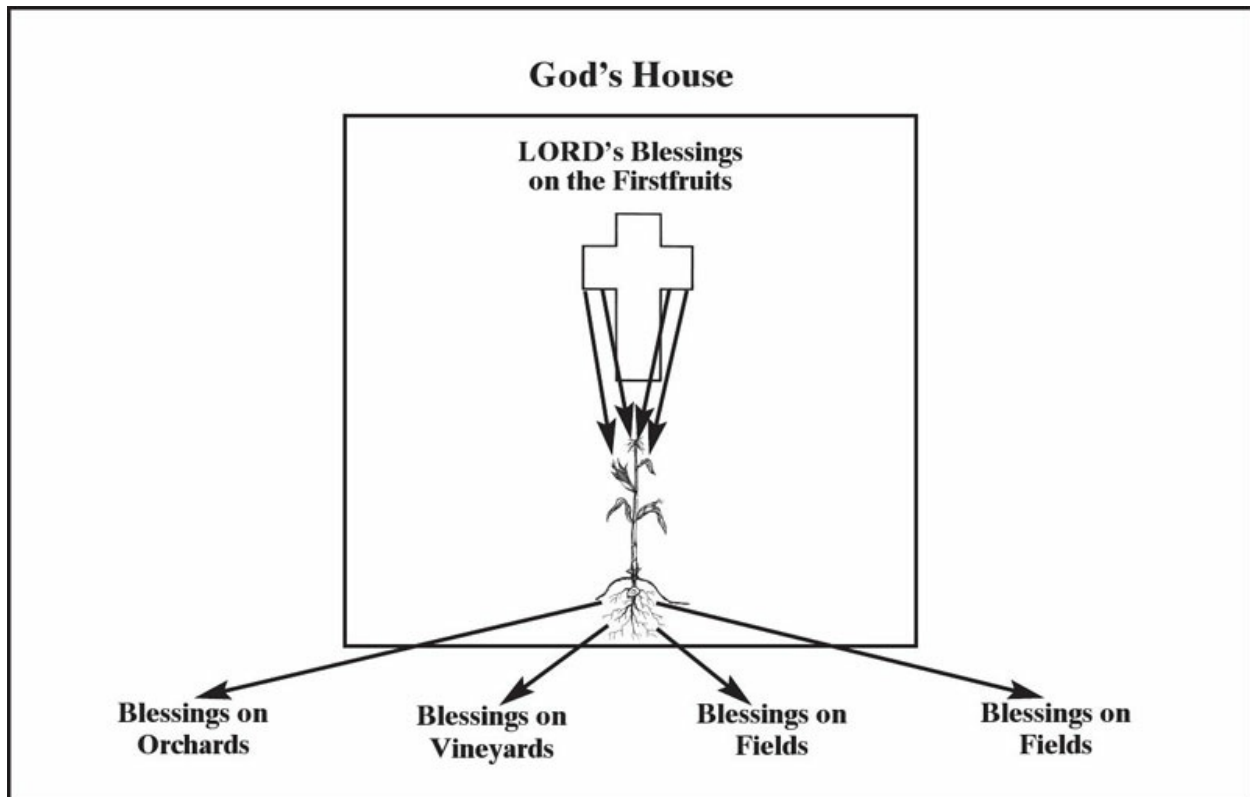
God required these firstfruits to be given for the use of His Priests and Ministers.

The firstfruits proclaimed the success of Israel’s work in her fields, with her flocks, her vines, and her trees. The people were commanded to bring the evidence of their success to the LORD’s House, the home of His *Torah*-Truth. It is for the Truth’s sake that every tiny seed grows and every fruit ripens. It is God’s Creative Work on His *Tiphereth* Wheel of Unity that brings every seed to its completion, which is fruition.

The LORD, in His Almighty Power, combines and unifies the depths and the heights of His Creation for the purpose of bringing each tiny seed to fruition.



In the depths are the seed, the earth, and man’s handiwork. From the heights come the light of the sun, moon, and stars; the breath of the wind; the moisture from the rain clouds; and the protective shelter of other clouds; then, with God’s Governance and Guidance working in the midst of the heights and the depths, every tiny, fertile seed is brought to harvest or to completion.



The bringing of the firstfruits to God's House is an expression of thanksgiving and gratitude to the LORD for His Creative Power and His Ruling Power which make all harvests possible.

Every tiny seed which grows to fruition, ripening to its maturity, acknowledges that it does so for the sake of the LORD's *Torah-Truth*.

Therefore, every person should take the firstfruits of what his successful handiwork has produced by means of the LORD's Blessing and bring them to the LORD's House as a mark of acknowledgement of God's Blessing and as an expression of the person's gratitude and homage to God. Then, as God blesses the firstfruits that have been brought to His House, His Infinite, Omnipresent Blessing extends to the rest of the unripe fruit in the fields, vineyards, and orchards, and to the fleeces of the flocks, blessing them also.

II. King Hezekiah Was An Example of One Who Obeyed God's Command to Give Firstfruits.

King Hezekiah's life is an instructive example of how people receive God's Blessing when they dutifully pay their firstfruits and tithes.

Hezekiah, the son and successor of apostate old Ahaz, was a distinguished King in Judah because he restored the *Torah-Truth* to honour, including its demands for paying firstfruits.

Moreover **he commanded the people** that dwelt in Jerusalem **to give the portion of the priests and the Levites**, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD. And as soon as the commandment came abroad, **the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe** of all *things* brought they in abundantly (II Chronicles 31:4,5).

While he ruled, Hezekiah accomplished the abolition of idol worship in his kingdom. He tore down the high places which had been dedicated to idolatry. He also broke in pieces Moses' brazen serpent which had become the object of idolatrous regard.

During Hezekiah's reign, the Temple was repaired, and the Feasts of the Passover and Firstfruits were celebrated with festivities that had not been equaled for magnificence and solemnity since the days of King David and King Solomon.

God always has raised up faithful ones to maintain the Spiritual Principles of Firstfruits as they are manifested in

His *Torah-Truth*.

After Hezekiah's destruction of idolatry during his reign, he reorganized the courses of the Priests and the Levites and made provision for their maintenance through Israel's dutiful paying of her firstfruits.

Hezekiah commanded the people to give the lawful portion of their firstfruits and tithes to the Priests and the Levites so that the Priests and Levites could give themselves to the study and the teaching of the LORD's *Torah-Truth*. When Israel paid their dues to the Priests and the Levites, in the form of firstfruits and tithes, and when the Priests and the Levites gave themselves to the study and teaching of the *Torah-Truth*, God blessed their lands, their harvest, and their homes.

III. Nehemiah Was Another Example of One Who Obeyed God's Command to Give Firstfruits.

Nehemiah, a powerful personality, lived so that his life is an instructive example of doing the right thing because he also honoured the LORD's *Torah-Truth*, which included the paying of firstfruits. During his time of leadership, Nehemiah worked diligently to set God's House and God's people in order, according to the LORD's *Torah-Truth*. He also carefully appointed some men whose work was to gather the firstfruits and tithes out of the fields of the cities that belonged to the Priests and the Levites and bring them into the LORD's treasuries.

And **at that time were some appointed over the chambers** for the treasures, for the offerings, **for the first-fruits**, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited (Nehemiah 12:44).

Nehemiah was zealous in seeing that God's appointed portion for the Priests and the Levites was not lost. Therefore, he appointed officers to collect Israel's dues of firstfruits and tithes.

When God's people give their just dues to support God's House and God's servants, they are accepted and sanctified by God. Hence, faithful obedience to God's Word causes God's Blessing not only to rest upon His House, but upon the house of the obedient individual. Judah was filled with rejoicing when the Priests and the Levites were restored to service in God's House to minister unto the LORD and unto His People.

Nehemiah was resolved that God's Temple would be restored and that its service and the maintenance of His Priests and Levites should be carried out according to God's Master Plan and Purposive Will. Therefore, he cast lots to find God's Mind and Will concerning the matter.

And **we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people**, for the wood-offering, to bring *it* into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as *it is* written in the law: And **to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD**: Also **the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle**, as *it is* written in the law, and **the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks**, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: (Nehemiah 10:34-36).

After Nehemiah had rebuilt the wall and the gates of the city, he instituted the LORD's Commands concerning firstfruits, which belonged to the LORD for His appointed Priests.

All things that God had appointed in His Divine Law for the maintenance of His Priests and Levites, Nehemiah demanded to be duly paid.

The firstfruits and tithes were the principal pillars of support for the maintenance of the Priests and Levites.

God promised His people that if they would bring in their tithes and offerings (firstfruits), He would open the Windows of Heaven and pour out such Blessings that they would not be able to contain them (Malachi 3:10).

Nehemiah also exercised great care to provide wood with which to keep the fire constantly burning for the offerings and to provide firstfruits and firstlings to meet the need of God's Priests and Levites.

Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; And for the wood-offering, at times appointed, and **for the firstfruits**. Remember me, O my God, for good (Nehemiah 13:30,31).

The Book of Nehemiah closes with Nehemiah's plea for the LORD to remember the defilers in Israel and to remember his noble efforts to cleanse them and the good he had done among them, which, among the other good things he did, was the restoration of the firstfruits offerings to the LORD.

Nehemiah forbade the Israelites to take foreign wives unto themselves, and he separated from them all those whom they had taken. Thus, he cleansed them from all strangers. Nehemiah set every true Priest and true Levite in

his rightful place in God's House, and he made provision for the Priests and the Levites by gathering in the firstfruits and the tithes.

The LORD made provision for Holy Gifts of firstfruits to be given directly to the Priests.

And this is thine; the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee. *And* whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat *of* it (Numbers 18:11-13).

These Holy heave offerings and wave offerings were to be eaten in the Priest's home by all clean members of the priestly families.

Chapter Two

The Description of the Firstfruits Offerings unto the LORD and the Ways They Were To Be Offered

The LORD's Divine Word gives a detailed account of what constituted the firstfruits offerings in the Old Testament and outlines God's demands about the way they were to be offered.

As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. And **every oblation** of thy meat-offering shalt thou season **with salt**; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: **with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.** And if thou offer a **meat-offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD**, thou shalt offer for the meat-offering **of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire**, *even* corn beaten out of full ears. And thou shalt **put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon**: *it is* a meat-offering. And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, **part of the beaten corn** thereof, and **part of the oil** thereof, **with all the frankincense** thereof: *it is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD (Leviticus 2:12-16).

The nation of Israel consisted of mutually dependent members that formed one congregation. The nation's Priests and Levites were dependent upon the common members for their firstfruits, tithes, and offerings so that their natural lives could be maintained, while the common members were dependent upon the Priests and Levites' teaching of God's *Torah*-Truth so that they, as God's chosen people, could stride forward in their spiritual education and moral development. Therefore, the LORD told the people what to bring for their firstfruits offerings, and He told the Priests how the firstfruits were to be offered.

I. The Firstfruits of Corn Could Not Be Green and Raw.

The people brought their firstfruits to the LORD, acknowledging God's Beneficent Goodness to them in giving them the first-ripe fruit and acknowledging their total dependence upon Him to bless the rest of their harvest.

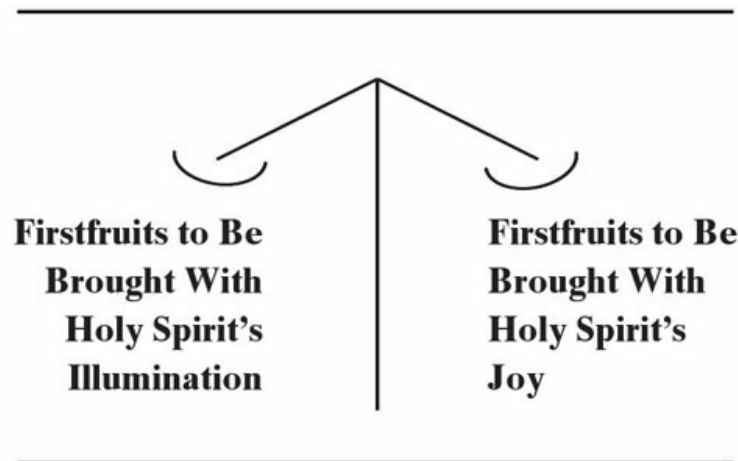
God forbade the firstfruits of corn in their green, raw state to be offered as a meat or meal offering unto the LORD. If the people's offering were to be a meat or meal offering and the corn was in a green, raw state, the ears had to be dried by the fire so that the grains could be beaten out, and they had to be the first and the best of the harvest.

II. Part of the Corn Was To Be Offered with Oil.

Oil was to be put upon the corn that was beaten out, which signified God's *Holy Spirit* that was to accompany the offering of firstfruits.

Oil is a picture of the Spirit's Illumination of God's Word, and it is a picture of the Spirit's exulting Joy over the Truth. Jesus, the Firstfruits of the Divine Corn from Heaven, was anointed above His fellows, with the Spirit's Oil of Joy or Gladness (Hebrews 1:9; Psalm 45:7).

God's requirements of how the firstfruits of the corn were to be offered is a lesson in how the believer should bring his first-fruits to the LORD — with the Spirit's Illumination of Truth about them and with the Spirit's Joy over them.



III. All of the Corn Was To Be Offered with Frankincense.

God's Command called for the beaten corn to be offered with Frankincense which, with its sweet perfume, symbolizes Christ's Faith.

Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, the Corn of Heaven, was clothed with the sweet perfume of unquestioning trust in His Father. He possessed the sweet fragrance of complete confidence in His Father's Divine Decisions.

Jesus, through the Holy Spirit's Illumination of Truth, also clothes the believer with the same sweet Perfume of the Frankincense of His Faith.

IV. Part of the Corn Was To Be Offered with Salt.

The meal offering of firstfruits also had to be offered with salt, which is a preservative and which typifies the abiding Love and Loyalty of Jesus Christ and His Word which is an Everlasting Covenant, “[A] covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee” (Numbers 18:19).

The Covenant of Salt also represents unchangeableness and unalterableness. Salt acts as a preservative, surrounding and penetrating food products, especially meats, preventing them from receiving exterior, changing influences.

Christ’s Salt of Love and Loyalty to His Heavenly Father separated Him and set Him apart, making Him independent and keeping Him from being affected by the exterior influences of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. The Salt of Christ’s Love and Loyalty to His Father’s Master Plan and Purposive Will causes Him to remain eternally the same in all circumstances and situations. Hence, salt is the symbol of the permanence and immutability of the Love and Loyalty of Christ, God’s Eternal Word.

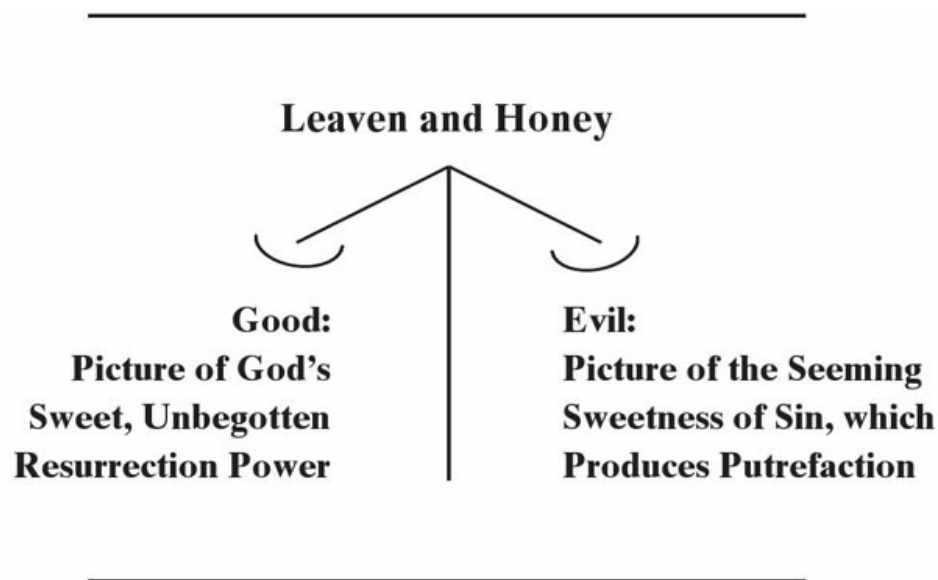
When Israel desired to draw near to God through expressing her grateful appreciation for her firstfruits, she also had to offer with them the salt of unswerving loyalty and undeviating allegiance. Thus, when the sweet savour of the dried ears of the corn of firstfruits ascended upward to God with the accompanying Fragrances of the Oil of Illumination and Gladness, with the sweet Perfume of the Frankincense of Faith, and with the Love and Loyalty of the Salt, the LORD was well-pleased.

V. Leaven and Honey Were Forbidden with Some Firstfruits Offerings; Leaven Was Required with Some Firstfruits Offerings.

God forbade the offering of leaven and honey with some of the offerings of firstfruits; while in others, He commanded that leaven be used. Leaven and honey give a dual picture because they represent both good and evil, just as, in the Scriptures, the lion presents a twofold picture because it is used to describe both Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:5) and the Devil (I Peter 5:8).

Jesus Christ, as the Prevailing Lion over sin, Death, Hell, and the grave, is the One Who will open the sealed book *in Heaven*. The Devil, as a prevailing lion who tries to gain the mastery over human souls, goes about seeking whom he may devour *on Earth*.

In the dual picture that leaven and honey presents, the leaven and honey represent the quick, *seeming* sweetness of sin, which, in actuality, produces only putrefaction in the heart and soul, while the Leaven and Honey of the Father’s Sweet, Unbegotten Resurrection Power in Christ Jesus produces a quick, *truthful* sweetness, and flourishing growth of God’s Word in the heart and soul.



Before Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on resurrection morning, He was yet without the sweetness and the Eternal, changing, spreading influence of the Leaven of the Father's Unbegotten, Resurrection Power.

But, when Jesus called unto His Father out of Death and Hell, the Father descended with His Sweet, Unbegotten Resurrection Power and lifted His Son out of Death, Hell, and the grave.

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness *was* under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly : yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail *stones* and coal of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail *stones* and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me (Psalm 18:4-17).

The LORD God, with His sweet, Unbegotten Resurrection Power, divinely intervened for His Son, breaking asunder the cords of Death and Hell that bound His Soul and cutting asunder the bands of Death that held His Body captive in the grave.

God descended from Heaven, riding upon His Cherubic Throne of Judgment to liberate His Son from Death, Hell, and the grave.

The manifestation of God's reproof and rebuke of the guilty was displayed by the sweet Leaven of His Unbegotten Resurrection Power that He imputed into His only Begotten Son. God drew His Son out of the Waters of Death.

Jesus Christ stood in Death and Hell without any way of escape, without any Honey and Leaven, waiting until His Father came with His Unbegotten Resurrection Power.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as **Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father**, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

The Father, in all the Sweet Leaven of His Unbegotten Resurrection Glory, refused to allow His Sheaf of Firstfruits to see corruption in the grave.

Since the firstfruits of the green, dried, and beaten corn that were offered with the oil, frankincense, and salt were pictures of the *Crucified* Christ, they were offered *without* leaven and honey.

Chapter Three

Time of the Firstfruits Offerings

God is the Owner and Master of all times. Therefore, He had an *appointed time* for ALL feasts and festivals, including the time of firstfruits, because each feast was to represent either the Crucified Christ or the Resurrected Christ.

I. First Omer of Ripe Fruit Was Offered on the Morrow after the Sabbath — at the *Beginning* of the New Harvest.

The firstling sheaf of the *Passover*, the first feast to be celebrated, had to be presented to the LORD *before* the grain harvest commenced. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the required sheaf was barley, and no harvest work was to be done until this offering of the firstfruits from the barley fields had been performed (Ant., iii, 10,5).

Then, the first sheaf of the *new harvest*, which was to be accompanied by a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, with its meat and drink offering, was offered to the LORD. Previous to this offering, neither bread nor roasted grain of the new harvest was allowed to be eaten. Hence, the *time* of the firstfruits offering was at the *beginning* of the new harvest.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, **When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto 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.** And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering unto the LORD. And the meat-offering thereof *shall be* two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD *for* a sweet savour: and the drink-offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth *part* of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, **until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be** a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings (Leviticus 23:9-14).

After Israel had attained her freedom, her national independence, and had possessed Canaan's Land, she was required to bring the *first omer* that was cut in the harvest fields to God's Priest in His Sanctuary.

The first omer that the soil produced and that the sun ripened was not for Israel; it was for the LORD and His Priests in His Sanctuary who taught God's *Torah-Truth* so that the people could fulfill the demands of the Law. This omer had to be the *ray-sheeth*, the first in place, time, rank, and order of the harvest. It also had to be the *bik-koor*, the first ripe or hasty fruit of the harvest. No other cuttings were to precede the cutting of this first omer.

The cutting of the first omer was to be used to pay grateful homage to God for His Almighty Power, Mercy, and Grace which were the reasons the tiny seeds had been brought to maturity, becoming ripened fruit.

The Priest waved the omer of firstfruits to and fro and up and down, making the form of a Cross.

The offering of the first-cut omer represented the LORD Jesus Christ giving Himself "Selflessly" to God for all mankind so that humanity could be saved and ripened in exclusive surrender to the LORD. Jesus laid all His earthly existence at the Feet of His Heavenly Father and His *Torah-Truth*, acknowledging that it is only and solely through the Ruling Influence of the Father's *Torah-Truth* and His Master Plan and Purposive Will that man can find true realization of lasting joy and peace and Eternal, satisfying prosperity.

On the third day after the Passover, God commanded that the Priest wave the first ripened sheaf of the harvest before the LORD, in the form of a Cross. This action pictured Jesus Christ rising from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. After Jesus Christ, as the Firstfruits from the dead, had been to His Father, He gave Himself — His Resurrected Body and Blood — as Firstfruits to His people, a Royal Priesthood, for their spiritual maintenance, just

as the natural firstfruits were given to the Priests and the Levites to maintain their lives.
The Apostle Peter revealed that Christ's believers are a Royal Priesthood.

But **ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:9,10).

Since believers, Christ's people, live and are maintained by the precious Life of His Omnipresent, Resurrected Body and Blood, they continually are to shew forth His praises for His Mighty acts.
Before Jesus went to the Cross, He established the Truth of how believers are to live and to be maintained.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.** Who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: **so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me** (John 6:53-57).

As the Old Testament Priests lived in the natural realm by eating the natural firstfruits, believers live in the spiritual realm by "eating" Jesus Christ and His Resurrected Body and Blood, the Firstfruits from the dead.

The Hebrew word for *sheaf* is *omer*, which is the same word which was used for Israel's measurement of the Manna in the wilderness. After Israel had passed through her experiences of blood, Fire, and Water, a picture of Christ's Death and Resurrection, God fed her with the Firstfruits, the omer of the Corn of Heaven, just as Christ feeds believers with the Firstfruits of His Body and Blood, today.

Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, And had rained down *manna* upon them **to eat**, and had given them **of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food:** he sent them meat to the full (Psalm 78:23-25).

God fed Israel with the Manna, the Corn of Heaven, the omer of Firstfruits from Heaven, so that she could understand the Spiritual Principle of how His people are to live by Christ, through His Death and Resurrection, because He is the first ripened Fruits of exclusive Surrender and complete Obedience to the Father's Master Plan and Purposive Will. Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, was the *first* among men who hastened to obey, perfectly, the Father's Will.

Israel's eating of the Manna, the Firstfruits of Heaven, was to teach her that, as she was living in the wilderness by God's Firstfruits from Heaven, so also the Priests and the Levites would live by eating the firstfruits she dutifully would pay to God in Canaan's Land.

The Hebrew word that is used to describe the *Corn* of Heaven is *daw-gawn*, meaning to increase. *Daw-gawn* is from the root word *daw-gaw*, meaning to move rapidly, to spawn, to become numerous, and to grow. These meanings of the word *daw-gaw* teach that the good Angels, who continually feed on God's Corn of Heaven, move rapidly and quickly spawn new desires in order to fulfill God's Master Plan and Purposive Will.

For example, the Living Creatures or Cherubims in Heaven move so rapidly to obey and fulfill the Father's Master Plan and Purposes that they are as flashes of lightning as they run forth and, then, return to their LORD and Master, the Eternal Source of all things.

And the living creatures ran and returned **as the appearance of a flash of lightning** (Ezekiel 1:14).

Likewise, as the believer feeds on Jesus Christ, the "Firstfruits Bread from Heaven," he, too, will move rapidly, spawning desires to obey, completely, the Father's Plans and Purposes for his life.

The LORD Jesus Christ told the Church at Pergamos that if she would overcome the sins of idolatry, fornication, and the deeds of the Nicolaitanes that He would feed her with His "Hidden Manna" or His "Firstfruits of Corn," the exclusive Surrender and complete Obedience that are necessary to cause the heart and will to run speedily in performing the LORD's Plans and Purposes.

Christ's Bride is called "firstfruits" in Revelation 14:4 because, during her lifetime on Earth, she fed on Jesus Christ, the Corn of Heaven, the Firstfruits from the Dead. Therefore, she herself became firstfruits, running as a flash of lightning to perform the Father's Holy Will.

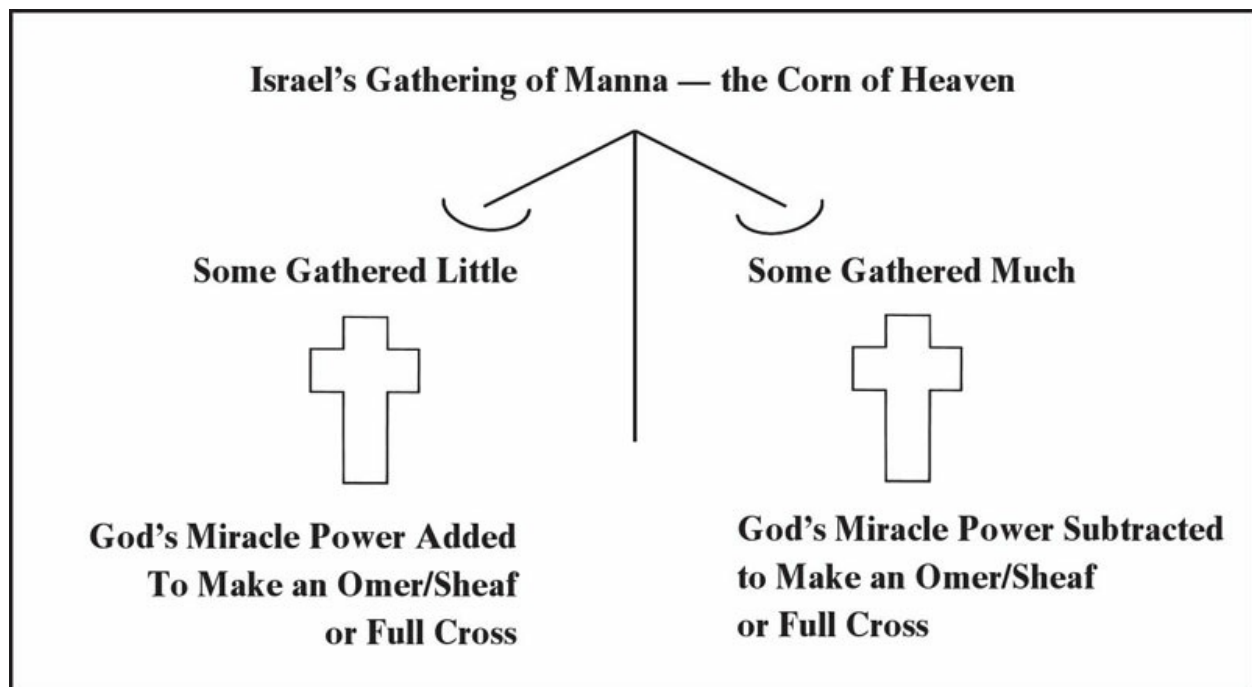
Jesus taught His Disciples to pray that God's Will be done *in Earth* as it is in Heaven (Matthew 6:10). In other words, believers should feed on Christ Jesus, the Firstfruits, so that they can move rapidly and spawn new desires to

do the Father's Holy Will in their earth or bodies of clay, just as the good Angels feed on the Corn of Heaven and move as a flash of lightning to perform the Father's Holy Will. After the Angels have run as a flash of lightning to perform God's Holy Will, then, with the same lightning speed, they return to Him, the Living God, Who is their Source of Life.

God fed Israel with an omer or a sheaf of firstfruits to sustain her life while she was in the wilderness.

This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, **Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents.** And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating (Exodus 16:16-18).

God wrought miracles concerning Israel's gathering of the Manna. Those who gathered *more* than their allotment found it *decreased* to the form of an omer or a sheaf, when it was measured or shaped in the form of a Cross, as it were. Likewise, those who gathered *less* than their allotment found that God's miraculous Power *increased* it to the form of the omer, the sheaf, or the form of the Cross, as it were.



God's miraculous demonstration of feeding the Manna Bread, the Corn from Heaven, to His Espoused Bride, Israel, when she was in the wilderness, is a glorious picture of Christ feeding His Body and Blood to His Espoused Bride as she journeys through this present worldly wilderness on her way to the Heavenly Canaan's Land, the New City. Christ's Body and Blood are the Firstfruits of His exclusive Surrender and complete Obedience to His Father's Plans and Purposes.

God also commanded that an omer, a sheaf, or a cross, as it were, of this Heavenly "Corn-Bread" or Firstfruits be laid up in the Holy of Holies as a witness of its message, which were these Truths:

- Israel had lived and had been maintained by God's Heavenly Omer (Sheaf or Firstfruits) in the wilderness.
- God's desire was for the Israelites to allow the Corn from Heaven to influence their hearts so that the same rapid obedience would be spawned in them that is in the obedient Angels who obediently run out and, then, return to do the Father's Holy Will.
- These firstfruits were a picture, most of all, of how Israel, as a Bridal Nation, was to live and to be maintained as a nation by the LORD Jesus Christ, her Messiah. Also, they pictured Christ's Provision for His Spiritual Bride.

However, the nation of Israelites, as a whole, never learned nor knew the real nature or secrets of this Hidden

Corn, the Firstfruits from Heaven.

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, **which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know**; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.... Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, **which thy fathers knew not**, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; (Deuteronomy 8:3,16).

Only a few of the old adult crowd of Israelites who had come out of Egypt experienced the hidden Nature of the Firstfruits of Heaven, which spawned rapid obedience in them to fulfill the Father's Plans and Purposes. The few who profited from eating the Manna were four in all:

- **Caleb**

The Firstfruits of Heaven had spawned such rapid movement of obedience in Caleb that he stood against all ten of the spies who brought back an evil report against Canaan's Land.

And **Caleb** stilled the people before Moses, and **said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it** (Numbers 13:30).

The Corn of Heaven spawned such rapid movement of faith in Caleb that he was ready to hasten to accomplish the task of possessing the land. Although Caleb was forced to wander in the wilderness for forty years with the unbelieving, disobedient nation, he moved rapidly to help possess the land, once he had entered into the land with the new generation. Caleb's exploits and victories are recorded in the Book of Joshua, chapter fifteen.

- **Phinehas**

Phinehas, the son of Aaron, spawned such rapid movement from feeding on the Manna, the Firstfruits of the Corn of Heaven, that he moved with the speed of lightning to slay the Israelite man and the Midianite woman who were engaged in whoredom connected with Baal-peor. By his act, he stayed God's Wrath and Jealousy and turned the plague of death from the nation of Israel (Numbers 25:5-12).

- **Joshua**

Joshua, who was full of Wisdom and the Spirit of the LORD, hastened to submit to the mantle of responsibility of leading the new generation of the children of Israel into Canaan's Land and of helping them to possess the land (Numbers 27:18-23). Like Caleb, Joshua had fed on the Firstfruits of the Corn from Heaven; therefore, he had spawned rapid moving-confidence in the LORD that caused him to believe that Israel could possess the land and prevail over the old wicked inhabitants of Canaan. Like Caleb, Joshua perceived the land as a good land, a land worth fighting for, in order to possess it.

- **Eleazar**

Because of Eleazar's faithfulness to eat of the Heavenly Manna, the Firstfruits of the Corn of Heaven, he could move rapidly in obedience to the Father's Plans and Purposes and receive the Ministry and the Garments of the High Priesthood from his father (Numbers 20:25-29).

Eleazar was one of the four out of the old generation of Israelites whom God counted worthy to go in and possess Canaan's Land, the Prize of being a part of the LORD's natural Bride among the nations of mankind.

The omer, the sheaf of the firstfruits, that was heaved up and down and waved to and fro in the form of the Cross was to be preserved as a permanent witness of how Christ's Espoused Bride is to live by His Firstfruits of exclusive Surrender and complete Obedience.

And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, **Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations**; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, **Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.** As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron

laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept (Exodus 16:32-34).

Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the **golden pot that had manna**, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; (Hebrews 9:4).

God gave Israel the Corn of Heaven to keep her alive so that there would be someone to keep the *Torah*. God gave His *Torah*-Truth to Israel to govern and to guide her life that He had maintained by feeding her the Firstfruits or the Corn of Heaven.

The Hebrew word for *pot* is *tsin-tseh-neth*, meaning a vase, from *tsaw-noon*, meaning a cooling flask. The warmth of the sun was injurious to the consistency of the Manna because it made the Manna melt. Consequently, the pot in which the Manna was to be preserved, for such a long time, had to be one that would keep out heat. Some Jewish historians say that the pot was of stone overlaid with gold. If so, in order for the Manna, the Firstfruits of the Corn of Heaven, to be preserved, the pot had to be stored in a *cool place*.

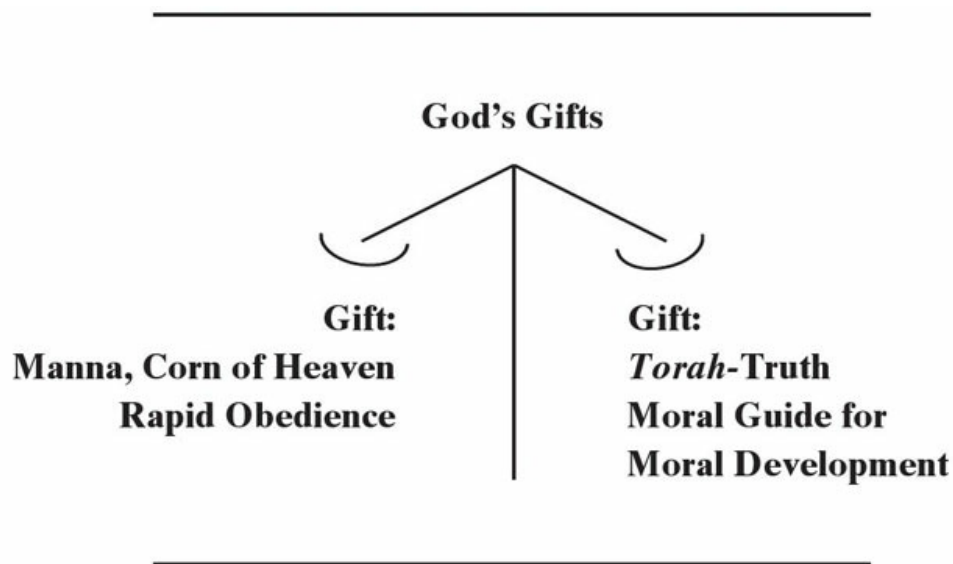
Since cold is a symbol of Christ's Humility, we know that Christ's exclusive Surrender and swift Obedience are preserved in the "cold pot" of His Humility that is found in the Crucified Christ.

Likewise, if believers are to be keepers and doers of Christ's Living, Moral *Torah*-Truth, they must take on the cold vessel of His Humility in their wills that will preserve the Firstfruits of His exclusive Surrender and complete Obedience within their hearts.

God commanded Moses to preserve the Manna, the Firstfruits of Heaven, when He first sent it. Later, when God's Gift of the *Torah* was placed within the Ark of the Covenant, Aaron laid the cool flask or pot of Manna before it, demonstrating the Union or joining together of the *Torah* and the Manna.

In order for a soul to be a doer of God's Moral Truth as laid forth in His *Torah*, the Truth must be joined to the Strength of Christ's Manna-Bread of exclusive Surrender and swift Obedience. How beautiful are God's types and shadows in the Old Testament; and how exciting are their fulfillments in Christ Jesus in the New Testament.

God's Gift of Manna was to be stored in the Ark along with His Gift of the *Torah*. God gave Israel Manna, the Corn of Heaven, so that she could spawn rapid obedience to keep and to obey His *Torah*, which was also a Gift from God.



Before God gave Israel His *Torah*-Truth, He gave her His Gift of Manna, the Corn of Heaven, so that she would be prepared to keep His *Torah* when He gave it to her.

The Firstfruits of the Corn of Heaven, which God gave to Israel, was a figure, type, and shadow of the LORD Jesus Christ (God's Eternal Firstfruits from Death) Who will be laid up in the Holy of Holies or the New City throughout Future Eternity as a Witness of His Bread of exclusive Surrender and swift, complete Obedience to His Father's Holy Will as the Crucified Christ.

The LORD Jesus Christ, the Firstfruits of Humanity to ripen in exclusive Surrender and complete Obedience to the Father's Holy, Purposive Will, is a Witness that *all* the harvest of mankind ultimately will *have* to ripen in

obedience to God by bowing their knees to Him and confessing with their mouths that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the Glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10).

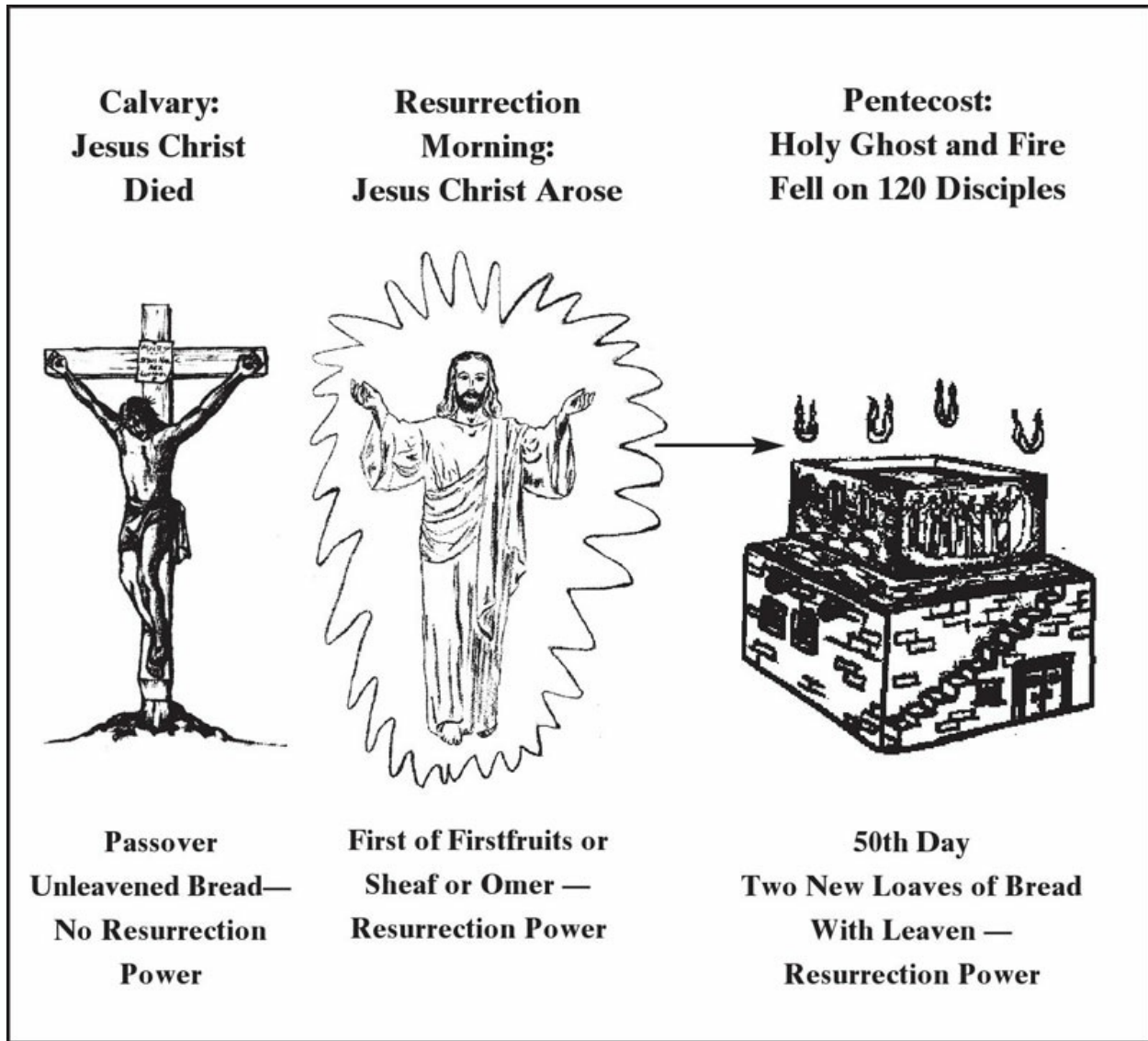
II. New Leavened Bread Was Offered Fifty Days after the Wave Offering of the First-Ripe Sheaf or Omer.

The firstfruits of the *leavened bread* offering was presented to the LORD at the time of the *close* of the harvest. After the offering of the first-ripe omer or sheaf, Israel counted fifty days to mark the time of the new-bread offering at Pentecost. The new bread was a leavened-bread offering.

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: **Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the LORD.** Ye shall bring out of your habitations **two wave-loaves of two tenth deals:** they shall be **of fine flour;** they shall be **baken with leaven;** **they are the firstfruits unto the LORD.** And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be *for* a burnt-offering unto the LORD, with their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, *even* an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. **And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave-offering before the LORD,** with the two lambs: **they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest** (Leviticus 23:15-20).

After Israel had waved a sheaf or omer of their firstfruits at the time of the beginning of their harvest, they were to count forward seven Sabbaths; and on the morrow after the seventh Sabbath (or on the fiftieth day), they were to offer a new kind of firstfruits — bread baked with leaven.

This fiftieth day was the Day of Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:9,10) or the Feast of Harvest. After Israel had presented to the LORD her sheaf or omer of first-fruits, she had liberty to thrust in the sickle into the field and reap the new harvest. Then, they celebrated the finishing of their harvest with the Feast of Pentecost, at which time they offered two loaves of bread with leaven.



Israel ate *unleavened* bread with the Passover lamb, signifying that when Jesus would die on the Cross He would be Unleavened Bread because He would not yet have received the Father's Unbegotten Resurrection Glory (Romans 6:4). He would die as *Unleavened* Bread; He would rise in His Father's Glory as *Leavened* Bread.

The annual Feast of the Passover was instituted in remembrance of Israel's deliverance out of the death and darkness in Egypt. The giving of the *Torah*-Truth upon Mount Sinai, the fiftieth day after Israel had come out of Egypt, was a picture of the Holy Spirit's quickening of the Truth from Jesus Christ — God's Living *Torah*-Truth — on the Day of Pentecost. The shadow and type of this annual feast was fulfilled when God poured out the Holy Ghost upon the 120 disciples who were gathered in the Upper Room (Acts 2:1). Fifty days after Christ, the Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for mankind, the Holy Ghost came to bring the Father's Unbegotten Resurrection Power upon the Disciples. The Power of the Holy Ghost revived and quickened the Words of Christ, the Living *Torah*-Truth, to their hearts and minds.

The Israelites brought a new firstfruits offering of their wheat on the Day of Pentecost.

Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: (Numbers 28:26).

At the end of the seven weeks of harvest, the Israelites were to bring a new meat-offering or meal-offering to the LORD in grateful appreciation to Him for His Power and Mercy that had given them a good harvest and that had

given and preserved their fruits. When God sows His Spiritual Seeds of Truth in the believer's heart, He expects to reap accordingly from the believer's natural blessings.

The day of firstfruits was to be a day of Holy Convocation or *mik-raw*, a public meeting for reading and rehearsing the LORD's *Torah*-Truth; it was a Sabbath day of rest. Hence, God forbade any type of slavish, servile work to be done because it was a day of natural rest when fresh, new Spiritual Seeds from the LORD's *Torah*-Truth were to be received. The day of first-fruits was a time of peace, ease, refreshment, calm, repose, and tranquility, as God's Presence and Power united the Priests and the people, afresh and anew, with Himself.

Chapter Four

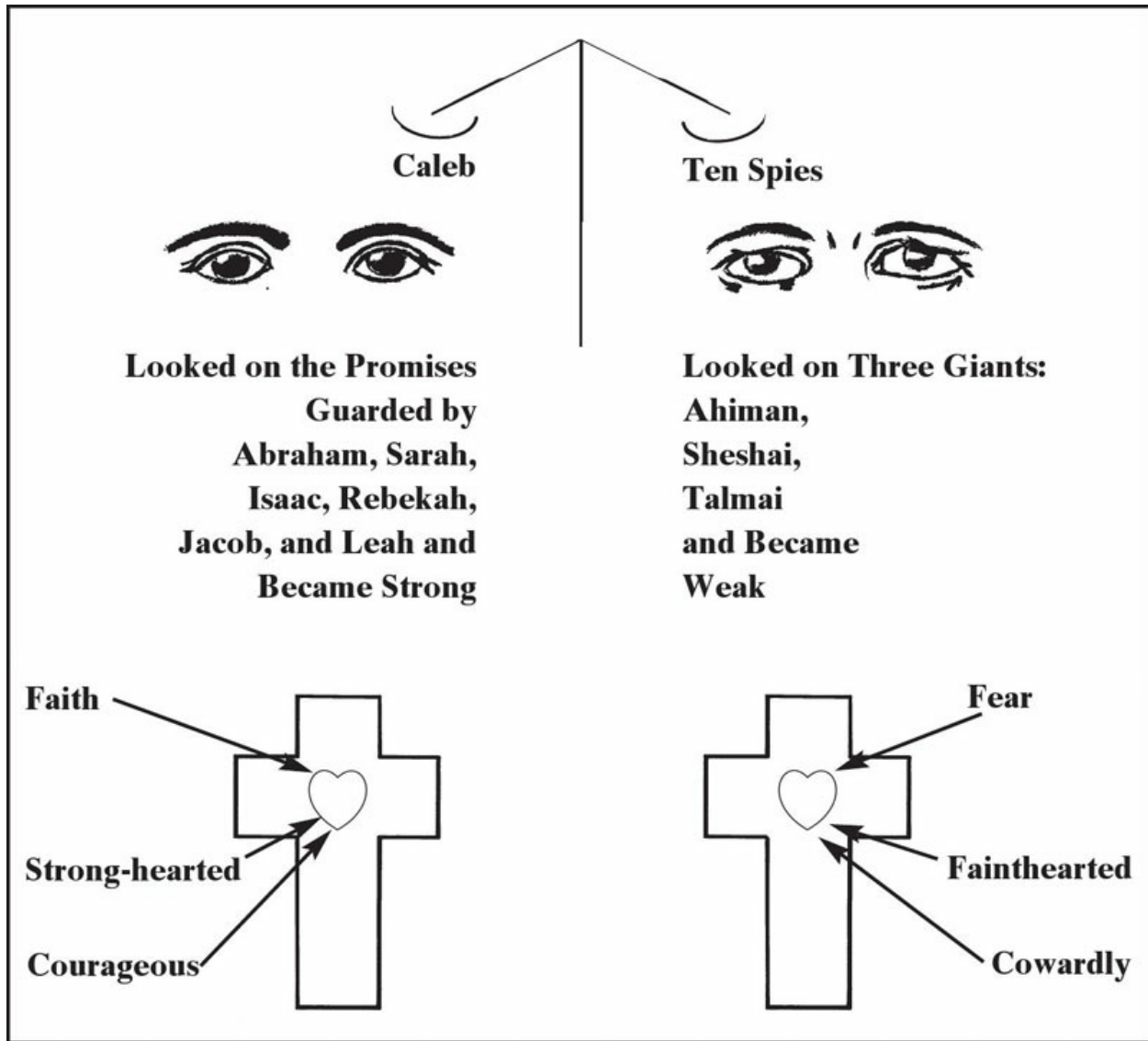
God's Zeal for the Firstfruits

In His Holy Zeal for the firstfruits of Canaan's Land, God had Moses send twelve spies to search out the land in the time of the firstfruits of the vineyards before Israel endeavoured to possess the land.

And what the land *is*, whether it *be* fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. **And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes....** And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought* of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.... And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it.... And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature (Numbers 13:20,23,24,27,32).

The spies took particular notice of Hebron because of the giants who dwelled there and because, near Hebron, there was the field of Machpelah where the Patriarchs of Israel were buried (Genesis 49:29-33). Their dead bodies had kept the possession of the land, as it were, for their descendants.

The twelve spies were in unison and total harmony when they began their search of Canaan's Land. The Hebrew Scriptures read: "...and they went up on the south side and came in *unison* to Hebron" (Numbers 13:22). However, Hebron became the dividing point of the unity between the spies. When ten of the spies saw the great giants in the land, they became fainthearted and were filled with a fear that left them completely without courage because they looked upon the godless, wicked *creatures* of the land. But Caleb looked, by faith, upon his *Creator* and walked fearlessly throughout the land of Hebron, which included going to Machpelah, the burial place of the Patriarchs. The ten spies looked on the three sons of Anak: Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi; but Caleb looked on the six persons in their tombs in the field of Machpelah who were guarding God's Promise.



Caleb looked upon God's Promises that He had given to Abraham and Sarah, to Isaac and Rebekah, and to Jacob and Leah, and he became strong and walked the length and breadth of Hebron, making a demonstration of his unalterable faith, his strong-heartedness, his dauntless courage, and his swift readiness to possess the land. God saw Caleb's faith and promised him the land.

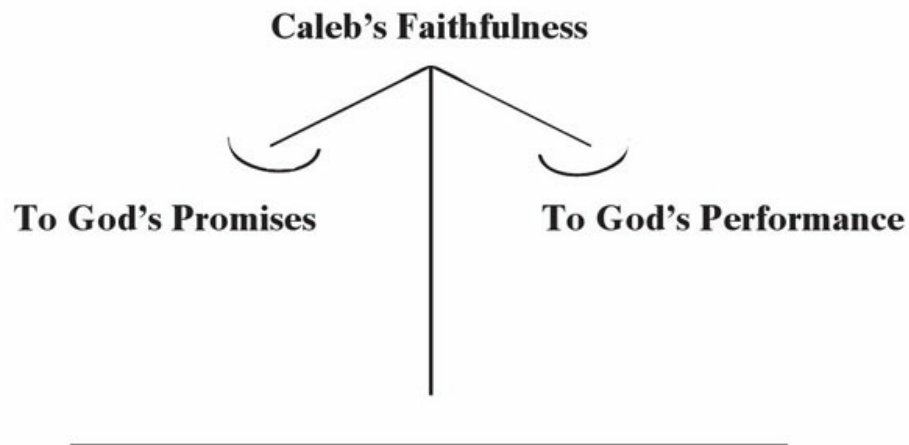
Save **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh; **he shall see it**, and to him will **I give the land that he hath trodden upon**, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD (Deuteronomy 1:36).

Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant **Caleb**, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, **him will I bring into the land whereinto he went**; and his seed shall possess it (Number 14:23,24).

Because Caleb faithfully and fearlessly followed the LORD's Purposive Will, he was counted worthy of God's Moral and Material High Calling to inherit Hebron in Canaan's Land.

Caleb's different spirit, different eyesight, and different will enabled him to feel, to see, and to know that he could possess the land according to the promises given to his forefathers — the Patriarchs. Caleb was diametrically different from his comrades, and his difference supported and saved him from sharing their distrust and disbelief of God's Promises. Caleb wholly followed the LORD, fulfilling the LORD's expectation for him by remaining faithful

unto Him. Caleb declared his total faithfulness and loyalty to the LORD, both by believing in God's Promise that Israel would possess the land and in performing the necessary actions to possess the land.



Caleb wholly followed the LORD; therefore, he saw God perform His Promise. This event is recorded in the Book of Joshua.

Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as *it was* in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but **I wholly followed the LORD my God**. And Moses swore on that day, saying, **Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance**, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while *the children* of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I *am* this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I *am as* strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength *was* then, even so *is* my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great and fenced: **if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said**. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, **because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel**. And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba; *which Arba* was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war (Joshua 14:6-15).

All of Caleb's glorious, victorious experiences were connected to the Principle of Firstfruits. Caleb had eaten of the Manna, the Firstfruits of Heaven, and it had worked in him a desirous spirit to run swiftly to perform God's Purposive Will. Caleb also had heard the *Torah*-Truth that said giving their firstfruits to the LORD was a guarantee of His Blessing upon the rest of the harvest, and Caleb had believed what he had heard. Consequently, when the spies escaped out of Canaan's Land with the victorious firstfruits, Caleb knew that this was a guarantee of victory over the land and its inhabitants. Despite his advanced age, Caleb announced that he was capable of conquering Hebron with its giants.

The ten spies who returned to the camp in Kadesh also carried the victorious *first-ripe grapes* as the tangible evidence of the fruitfulness of Canaan's Land and as the guarantee of victory over the land and its inhabitants; yet, their report, inspired by their cowardice and faintheartedness, caused the hearts of *God's people* to melt with fear and unbelief. The ten faithless spies accomplished the opposite of God's Purpose, which was to *melt* the hearts of His *enemies* (Joshua 2:11; 5:1).

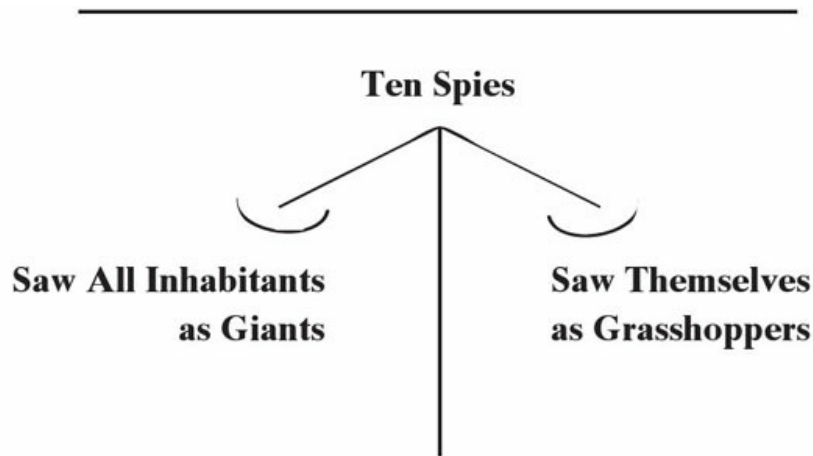
When the believer's heart melts with cowardly fear, as did Israel's at this time, it is an indication that some corner or crevice of his heart is at enmity with God.

The spies had left the dry, burning sands of the barren desert and the unrestrained growth of the wilderness and had arrived in Canaan's Land — a place of living, green, fruitful beauty in which running waters, gurgling their songs, hurried down the majestic mountain sides and through the verdant valleys, ministering their life-giving forces — and, instead of claiming what God had said was to be their inheritance, ten of the spies became filled with fear

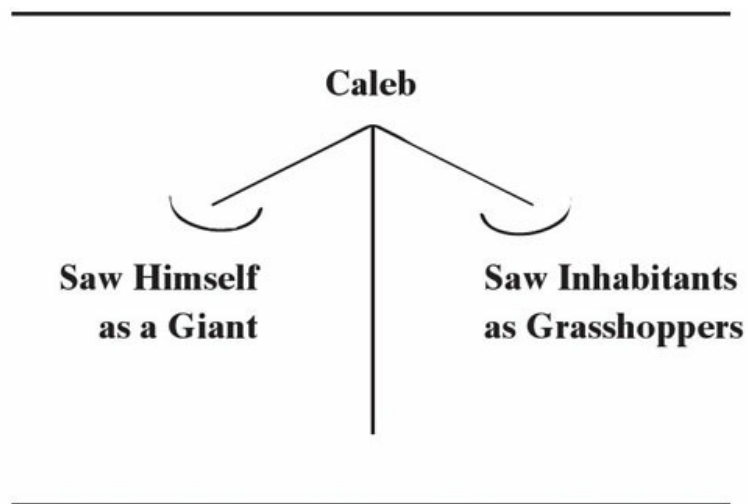
and doubted God when they beheld the creature-giants in Hebron.

But, Caleb knew and believed his Creator's Promises; therefore, he was filled with faith and hope and looked forward to possessing the land. The ten slanderous spies also should have remembered God's Divine Promises, given to their forefathers, the Patriarchs, which said that God would give Canaan's Land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to them and their seed.

Yet, in spite of God's Promises and the beauty and fruitfulness of the land, ten of the spies brought an evil report about the land and its inhabitants back to the camp, declaring and announcing the utter impossibility of conquering it. Their fear caused the ten spies to transform all the inhabitants of the land into giants and themselves into grasshoppers in their own eyes.



But Caleb's faith had the direct opposite effect on his eyesight! He saw the inhabitants as grasshoppers and himself as a giant, fully capable of overthrowing them.



The ten disbelieving spies abhorred and despised the land and its victorious firstfruits, which they took with them as they escaped out of the land. Because the ten spies despised the victorious first-fruits of Canaan's Land, the victorious harvest of possessing the rest of the land was denied them. Their unbelief doomed them to wander forty years in the wilderness until their carcasses fell there.

Although these ten sinful men had seen God's severe punishment of Miriam for her slander against God's servant, Moses, they fearlessly slandered God's Holy Land and His Holy Promises and His Holy Power to perform His Promise to help Israel conquer the wicked inhabitants of the land. So, they not only blasphemed God's Word,

Power, and Promised Land, they also, by the malicious slander of their wicked tongues, moved the people to revolt and rebel against God, His Master Plan, and His Purposive Will.

They missed the whole message of the victorious firstfruits of the grapes they had brought back for the LORD. The bunch of *first-ripe* grapes, with which they had escaped out of the land, was a secure guarantee that God would give them the rest of the harvest of all the fruits in the land. They actually held the firstfruits of the land in their hands, but their previous failure to eat, by faith, of God's Firstfruits of the Corn of Heaven left them empty and senseless concerning the firstfruits of Canaan's Land. As a result of their failure to put all their belief and confidence in their Creator, they missed the Prize — their inheritance of being God's Bride in Canaan's Land.

Chapter Five

The Law of Firstfruits Required an Offering of Daily Bread

God also commanded Israel to pay firstfruits on all the dough for her daily bread.

Then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave-offering unto the LORD. **Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave-offering:** as ye do the heave-offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it. Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave-offering in your generations (Numbers 15:19-21).

The offering of the firstfruits of the *daily* bread was an acknowledgment and recognition that God was the Infinite, Divine Source of all blessings contained in Israel's places of daily living: her fields, barns, and homes.

The firstfruits of the daily-bread offering generated fresh, new thoughts of grateful appreciation toward the LORD in the heart of the offerer. It is God's loving, tender Care, through His Divine Providence, that dispenses His Fruitful Blessing on every tiny seed that ripens in the field and on every individual in the home that keeps His Holy Will alive upon the Earth.

Thus, just as a sheaf of grain had to be raised up out of the field of corn as a firstfruits offering unto the LORD, so also a piece of Israel's dough had to be lifted up to God and given to the representative of the LORD's Sanctuary. As the offerer lifted up the daily firstfruits of his bread dough, he dedicated his own existence and that of his household to keeping the *Torah*-Truth in their hearts and to supporting God's Sanctuary.

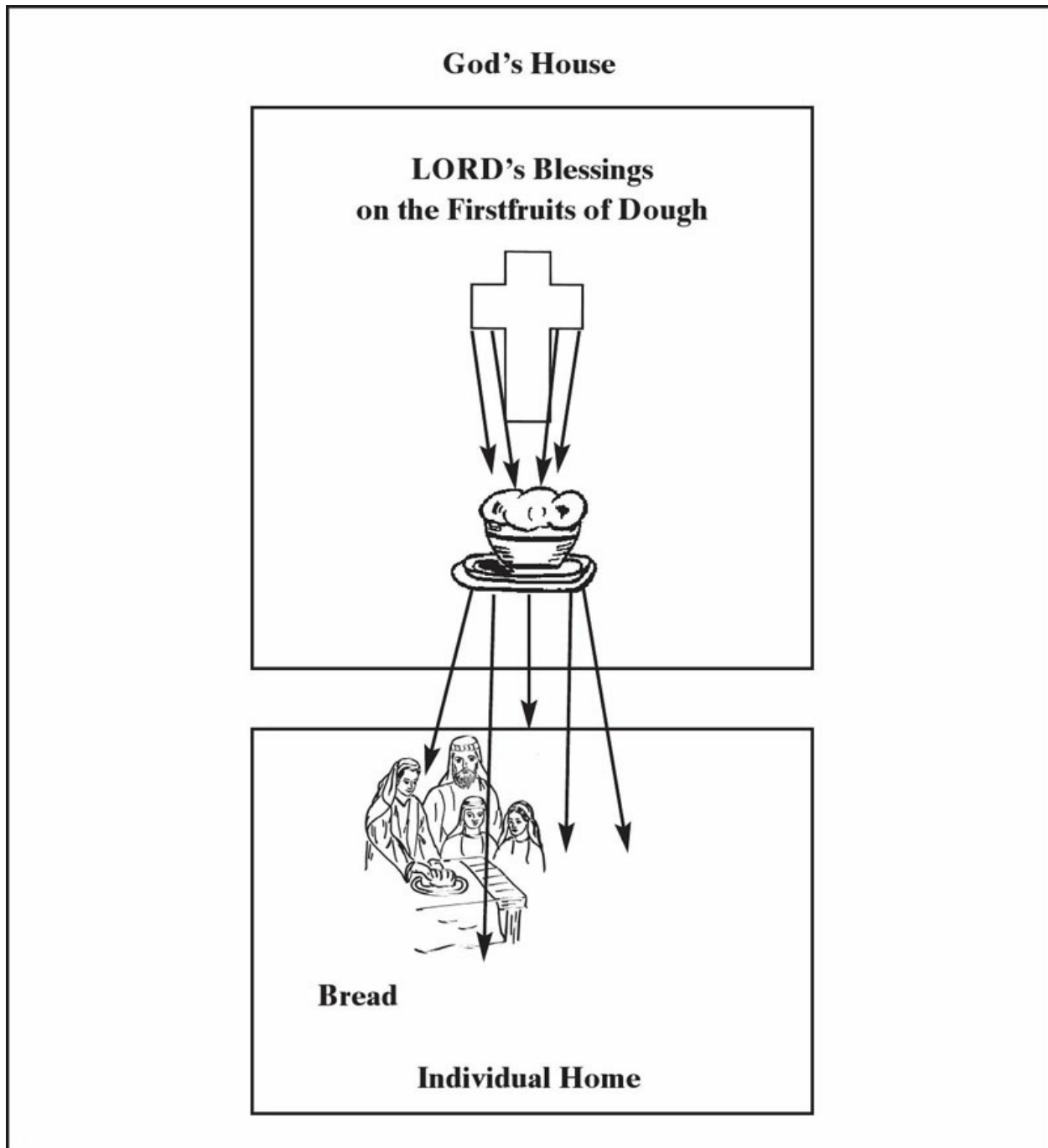
After the firstfruits had been dedicated to the LORD, the LORD's Rivers of Fruitful Blessings flowed down upon the first-fruits and on out to the rest of the unripe fruits in the fields, vineyards, and orchards so that Israel could have a new bread to offer at the end of the harvest and so that she could have a daily- bread offering to heave up in the form of the Cross before the LORD.

God commanded the Israelites to offer firstfruits out of their daily bread so that they symbolically could acknowledge that their individual existence depended completely upon the LORD God and upon the *Torah*-Truth that came out of His House. It also acknowledged that the *purpose* of their very existence was *to fear the LORD* by serving Him and *to maintain* both His *House* of *Torah*-Truth and His appointed *servants*.

Likewise, Jesus taught that believers, today, are to pray for their daily bread, both spiritually and naturally, so that they can live and exist to maintain God's Truth in them by feeding upon Christ Jesus, the Bread of Truth, and so that they can support His House, where His Word is preached, and also support His servants.

The first of the dough offerings was called *challah* in Hebrew, meaning it consisted of at least one omer of flour — about three quarts.

This offering was as obligatory as the offering of grain from the threshingfloor at the time of the annual harvest. Israel had to give to the LORD, by giving to His appointed Priest, the first of their dough, in order to cause the LORD's blessing to rest upon their house and upon the individual members in the home.



After Israel had given the firstfruits of her dough to maintain God's appointed ministers of the *Torah*-Truth, God blessed their individual bread in their own homes with the Omnipresent Life and Glory of His Holy Name. Thus, their natural and spiritual lives were maintained.

All firstfruits in the land were to be devoted to the LORD through the persons of His servants. God repeatedly informed Israel that His Priests were to be the recipients of the firstfruits.

And the first of all the firstfruits of all *things*, and every oblation of all, of every *sort* of your oblations, shall be the priest's: **ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house** (Ezekiel 44:30).

Every sort of Israel's oblations were to go to the LORD's Priests who, in turn, fed Israel spiritually with the

LORD's *Torah*-Truth. The very first of Israel's dough, before it was put into her ovens, as well as the very first of Israel's fruits, before they were stored in her barns, were to be given unto the LORD for the maintaining of His servants. Since God's appointed Priests provided Spiritual Bread for Israel, it was proper and good for them to reap a portion of Israel's natural bread.

The house of Israel also reaped the LORD's Priests' prayerful Blessings which they prayed upon them in the Name of the LORD.

Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise **ye shall bless the children of Israel**, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them (Numbers 6:23-27).

The Blessing from God's servants does not originate in their *personal* "well-wishing." Rather, it flows from God, the Eternal, Divine Source of all Blessings, and through the mouths of His servants, as a divinely appointed service. It is the responsibility of God's servants to bless and to pray for the keeping or protection of all spiritual, physical, and material possessions of the LORD's people. Likewise, God's servants are to pray for the keeping of the possessions of God's people so that their spiritual, physical, and material possessions may be kept from all harm and injury. As Israel paid her firstfruits of her dough, she was counted worthy to receive the LORD's *Keeping Power* ministered through His servants.

The LORD's Keeping was the first part of the Priestly Blessing.

The second part of the Priestly Blessing consisted of the Illuminating Light of God's Face which causes the heart to see and understand God's Governance and Guidance of the world and of the heart itself. When the Illuminating Light of God's Face shines upon the heart, the heart understands and perceives how to satisfy God's Heart by being a doer of His Word. The Light of God's Face illuminates the believer's heart about the moral conduct God expects from him as he follows the LORD's Ruling Governance and Guidance and shows him that his duty is obedience to the Rule and Reign of the LORD's Spirit and Word. When Israel paid the firstfruits of her daily bread, she was blessed by receiving the Illuminating Light of God's Face. Therefore, she could walk in the Light, as she was in the Light of God's Face, and be a doer of His Word.

The third part of the Hebrew Blessing consisted of the Peace from God's Face that was bestowed upon His people. This Blessing of Peace speaks of a closer and more intimate relationship with the LORD. After the believer has received the Blessing of having the LORD give and maintain his spiritual, physical, and material possessions, and after he has received the Blessing of the LORD's Illuminated Face so that he is made to know and understand God's Will and His Ruling Governance and his duty to it, then the believer is ready for the peaceful Light from the LORD's Face that brings him into an exclusive surrender to Him, giving the believer insight that he exists for the sole purpose of using his spiritual, physical, and material strength, which result from his having a harmonious union with God's Purposive Will, to help implement God's Master Plan and Ruling Governance in the Earth. Thus, through the LORD's Keeping Power, Illuminating Power, and Peaceful Power, believers can establish a God-fearing, God-loving, and God-serving circle of souls upon the Earth.

As long as Israel faithfully and dutifully paid the firstfruits of her daily bread, she had access to the Blessings of the LORD's Keeping Power, Illuminating Power, and Peaceful Power upon her houses and upon all the individual members in her homes.

Whenever Israel defected from God, she stopped paying her firstfruits offerings. Therefore, God rebuked Israel for robbing Him of His firstfruits offerings.

Will a man rob God? *Yet ye have robbed me.* But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? *In tithes and offerings.* Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even this whole nation* (Malachi 3:8,9).

When Israel had been remiss in paying the Priests her tithes and offerings of firstfruits, which were due them, God considered that they were doing the same thing as robbing Him.

Their dishonest, fraudulent deeds toward God and His Priests brought a curse upon their land. Because they did not give to God and His Priests, God and His Priests could not give the Blessings of His Keeping Power, His Illuminating Power, and His Peaceful Power upon their houses, family members, and lands. As a result, there was drought upon the land, small fruitfulness from the land, and plagues of locusts. Yet, Israel remained unmoved by God's Divine Judgments upon her disobedience. Still, God pleaded with Israel through His Prophet, telling her that if she would bring her tithes and offerings into His House, He would open the windows of Heaven and bless her

with more than was specified and required.

The wise man in the Book of Proverbs also confirmed the abundant Blessings that rest upon those who honour God with their substance — their tithes and firstfruits.

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine (Proverbs 3:9,10).

Although God does not desire to influence the believer to perform good deeds by promising great rewards, He does promise to reward him if, from his heart, he sincerely and lovingly obeys His Commandments. Believers must delight in the *Holy Privilege* they have to obey God's Word and not delight in the *reward* for being a doer of His Word.

To believers who honour Him by paying tithes and firstfruits, the LORD promises to fill their barns (not their bags) with plenty and to overflow their winepresses with the fresh liquid from their grapes.

Chapter Six

Giving Firstfruits Is the Way the Believer Acknowledges God's Divine Blessing upon His Successful Works

In addition to the sheaf of firstfruits that was offered for the whole congregation and for the land, each individual in Israel had to bring his own basket of firstfruits at the end of the harvest, acknowledging God, in grateful appreciation, as the *Giver* of every good and perfect gift, and acknowledging Him as the Source and Reason for all his successful work.

Today, as well as in the Old Testament Dispensation, each person is dutifully obligated to honour God with the tithes and firstfruits of his material substance, which are only a small token of the immense gratitude man owes to God for His Provision for and Care of him.

And it shall be, **when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance**, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; That **thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth**, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put *it* in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there. And **thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD swore unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.** And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous: And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and honey. And **now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God: And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you** (Deuteronomy 26:1-11).

God taught Israel to glorify Him with their firstfruits before gratifying the appetites and desires of their own flesh. When a person faithfully and dutifully pays his firstfruits, God's threefold Blessing rests upon the remaining portion of his livelihood; therefore, the appetites and desires of each person's heart, soul, and body are satisfied with what is left for them.

The presenting of Israel's firstfruits to God was a time of acknowledging God's Divine Blessings upon the successful works of Israel's hands; it was a time of joyful praise and happy thanksgiving and remembrance of how God had delivered them by His Almighty Power, His Manifold Mercies, and His Great Grace. Israel had been rescued from the slavish hardships of the past and exalted as God's Great Bridal Nation to dwell in comfort and contentment in a rich and fertile land. Therefore, it was her responsibility to remember where she had been brought from and where she had been brought to, by gratefully paying her firstfruits.

The thanksgiving offering of firstfruits was the visible proof that the Israelites had possessed the land and that God had faithfully fulfilled His Divine Promises by His Performance when He had given them the land that flowed with milk and honey.

This day of firstfruits was a day for especially remembering their father Abraham's humble beginning. He was a wandering, unsettled nomad who strayed from place to place, and when his descendants moved into Egypt to escape the famine in their own country, they were few in number.

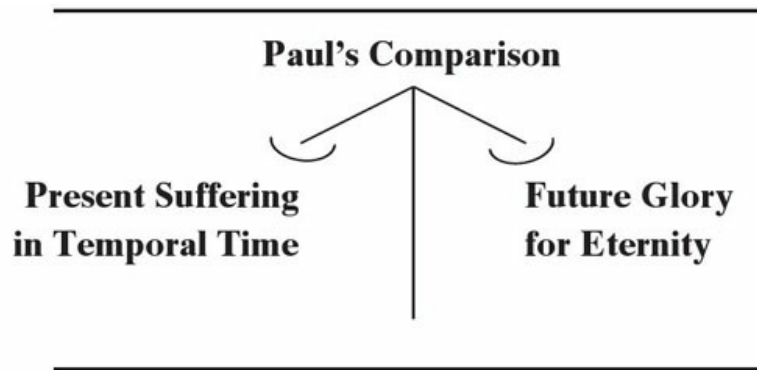
God commanded that, by remembering the past, Israel's day of exaltation and gratitude be joined to her day of humiliation and suffering. In the midst of her exaltation and abundance, God desired that Israel offer a memorial to

her former destitution and, thus, acknowledge her absolute unworthiness to claim that she had possessed the Promised Land through her own strength and ability.

These verses present a lesson for believers to learn, which is this: after God has fulfilled His Divine Promises to believers who are overcomers, by taking them to the New City in Heavenly Canaan's Land, they still will remember their days of humiliation and suffering here on Earth, which only will enhance their exaltation and gratitude in the New City. Up there, those who have overcome this world, their flesh, and the Devil will declare that their past sufferings are not worthy to be compared to Christ's Eternal Glory, which shall be theirs.

For I reckon that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us** (Romans 8:18).

The Apostle Paul reasoned with the believers in his day by putting the sufferings of this present time on one side of the scales, while he put their future Glory on the other side of the scales.

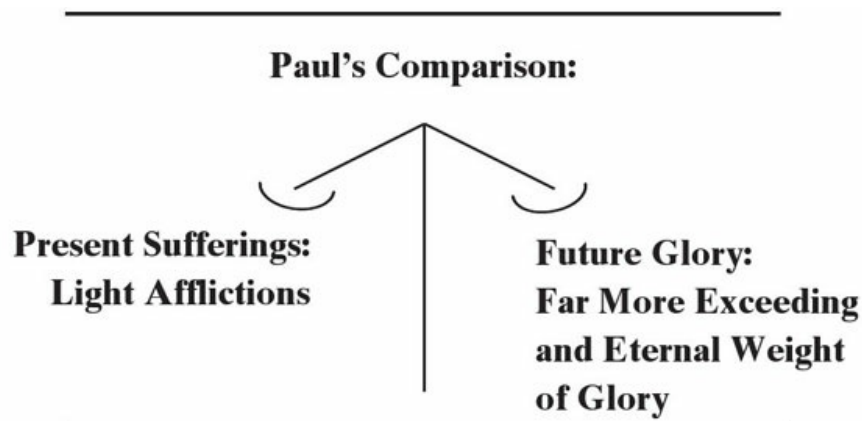


The sufferings of this present time last no longer than a person's short journey through this evil world, and they strike no deeper than his humanity. But in the future, the Eternal Glory that believers who are overcomers will share with Christ in the New City will last forever and ever.

Paul, again, made a comparative analysis of this same Principle when he wrote to the Church at Corinth.

For our **light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory**; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for **the things which are seen are temporal**; but **the things which are not seen are eternal** (II Corinthians 4:17,18).

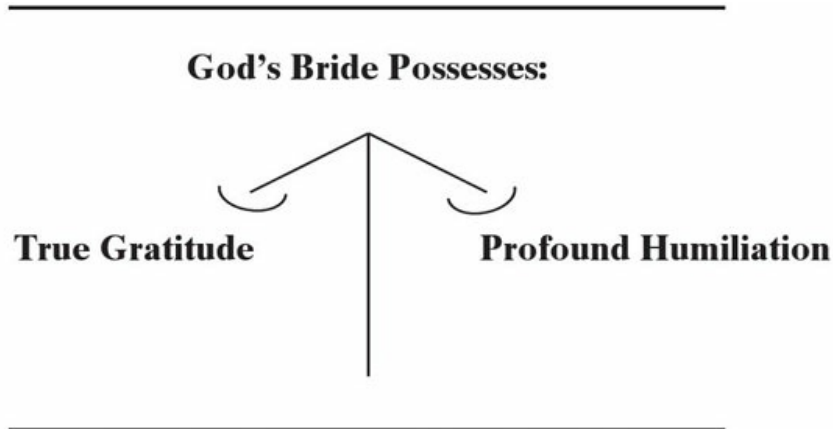
In this Scripture, Paul called believers' present sufferings "light afflictions," and he called their future Eternal Glory "a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory."



Paul considered the sufferings of this present time to be *light*, as compared to the *Eternal Weight* of God's future Glory. This is a witness to believers that whatever painful sufferings, distresses, illnesses, losses, calamities, or

misfortunes are imposed upon their humanity, in this fleeting space of time, are *light in weight and force*; therefore, they are not worthy to be compared to God's Eternal Weight of Glory or to the Eternal Value or quality of it. Therefore, believers should give their precious LORD great praise and thanksgiving for the privilege of inheriting the Prize, the Eternal Weight of His Glory. And, they also should acknowledge their utter unworthiness even to live, to serve Him, to suffer light afflictions for Him, or to inherit the Prize of His Eternal Weight of Glory.

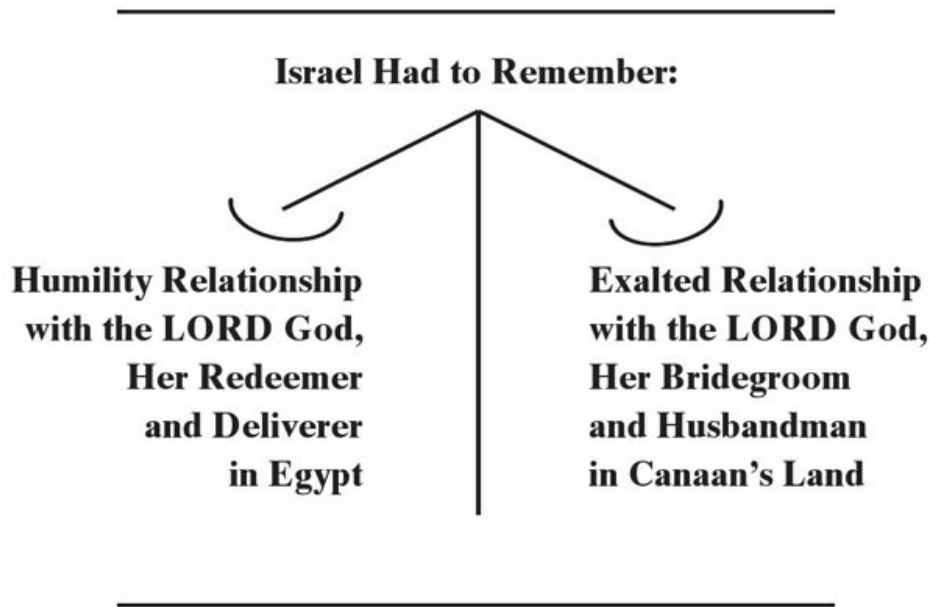
The believer must never forget that acceptable, true gratitude always is joined to profound humiliation.



Believers must remember, as Israel did, that they were ready to perish when Jesus Christ found them and washed them in His own precious Blood, bringing them near to His own Heart. Therefore, God's people should give their grateful appreciation unto Him as they remember their profound humiliation when they were bound in the deep abyss of sin, and no other human being could liberate them.

In the midst of abundant joy and the life the believer shares in the exalted Christ, he should remember, with true gratitude, his profound humiliation when he was lost, undone, and bound by sin.

God asked the Israelites to remember their former humble state of affliction, toil, and oppression, when they had served their enemies; and, then, they were to contrast it to their state of exaltation in the Promised Land. They were to be grateful in their remembrance of the relationship they had with God as their great Redeemer and Deliverer in the days of their humiliation in Egypt; and they were to remember the relationship they had with God as their Divine, Infinite Husbandman and as the *Source* of all their blessings in the days of their exaltation in Canaan's Land.



Israel's firstfruits were reminders of the Grace that the LORD extended to her as her Redeemer and Deliverer;

they also were reminders of the manifold Mercies and great Grace that the LORD extended to her as her Divine Bridegroom and Husbandman, the Infinite Source of all her blessings.

The offerer of the firstfruits was to hold his basket before the LORD while making his declaration of remembrance of the LORD's past Redemption and Deliverance of him and the LORD's present Blessings upon him. Then, he was to deposit his firstfruits, solemnly, before God's Altar for the Priest to wave and to heave up to the LORD in the form of the Cross.

The firstfruits were brought up to the LORD's Temple in a procession of the people, who made great demonstrations of joy and gratitude as they quoted the LORD's Promises and Performances.

Afterward, the bearers of firstfruits returned to their families to feast on their harvest and to rejoice over their portion of the harvest.

Chapter Seven

Firstfruits Possess Miraculous, Multiplying Power

The paying of firstfruits is a wonderful experience because it turns on the wonderful, astonishing Power of God to work miracles in behalf of the believer. It releases God's Supernatural Power to move and work *above and beyond* the known laws of nature.

God's miraculous Power is *above* the comprehension of the spectator and is *beyond* the established course of nature. God's Highest, Divine, Supernatural Law of the Miraculous overrides the lower, established laws of nature and goes according to His Holy, Purposive Will. Hence, God is able to intervene in His lower, established laws at will.

An incident in the Prophet Elisha's life proves this. One time a man brought his firstfruits, which consisted of twenty loaves of barley and full ears of corn in the husk, to Elisha, and God's Power supernaturally increased them to feed a hundred people.

And **there came a man** from Baal-shalisha, **and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits**, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD (II Kings 4:42-44).

There was a dearth in the land during the days of Elisha; so when a man from Baal-shalisha brought Elisha, the man of God, a present of his firstfruits — twenty loaves of barley bread and full ears of corn — his gift had a twofold value because the man was obedient to pay his firstfruits and because bread was scarce in the land.

When the Priests and the Levites were not faithful to God in Jerusalem, God's sincere servants paid their firstfruits to the Prophets. Elisha *freely received* the gift of firstfruits from the man from Baal-shalisha, and he *freely shared* with the sons of the Prophets.

Sharing his valuable gift of bread made it possible for Elisha to perform the miracle of feeding one hundred men; and there was bread left over.

The faithful farmer came to Elisha, bringing his firstfruits to the Prophet. He wanted to be sure it was Elisha, the man of God, who received them; therefore, he did not trust them to others.

If the faithful farmer had not brought his firstfruits, there would not be a record of God's glorious, Divine Intervention in behalf of Elisha and the hungry people who followed him. But, God honoured the farmer's obedience, in bringing his firstfruits to the Prophet, and Elisha's generosity, in sharing his food, by supernaturally multiplying the farmer's firstfruits.

Elisha lovingly shared his gift of firstfruits; consequently, God caused them to grow and to increase.

Elisha took no thought for the morrow because he had an opportunity to perform a righteous deed by feeding all the people that very day. Spiritual leaders always should set a generous, liberal example. When God's leaders obey God's Word, they always experience God's miraculous Works.

Elisha's servant scorned the idea of setting such a small helping of bread before so many, but he saw God's miraculous Works when God blessed and multiplied the small provision of bread so that the poor, hungry ones were satisfied and bread was left.

God's great oceans of the Earth are another example of the great Principle of Freely Receiving and Freely Giving. Because the great oceans are in a constant state of evaporation, they continually and freely give back what they have freely received from the Heavens. They freely send up their waters to form rain clouds that freely give their life-giving waters to the Earth's dry, thirsty land and to the rivers. As a result of the clouds' giving freely, the Earth is

watered, causing it to remain green and beautiful, and the rivers are refilled so that they can freely give back to the great oceans.

Some miserly souls who do not believe in the Law of Sharing or “Evaporation” get all they can and keep all they can get. Because of their selfishness, they become stagnant, polluted pools and never bring life and beauty to others. But, the faithful farmer in Elisha’s day was like the giving ocean; he freely gave his firstfruits to the man of God who, in turn, freely gave to the sons of the Prophets; thus, since the farmer and Elisha employed God’s Law of Sharing, God miraculously increased the gift of firstfruits, bringing life, joy, and satisfaction to Elisha and all his guests. God’s Miracle Power, which He put upon the firstfruits, caused them to bring forth a great increase of bread.

Likewise, in the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Firstfruits from the Father’s Bosom, freely received a little boy’s loaves and fishes; and, because He put His Miraculous Power of the Law of Firstfruits upon the loaves and fishes, they increased to such a proportion that Jesus could feed thousands, with bread and fish to spare.

How marvelous is the LORD’s Master Plan and Purposive Will!

In the Book of Deuteronomy, God confirmed this Spiritual Principle of Truth concerning the Priests’ portion of the firstfruits.

And this shall be the priest’s due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether *it be* ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. **The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.** For the LORD thy God hath chosen Him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever (Deuteronomy 18:3-5).

As well as blessing the remainder of their harvests, Israel’s giving of firstfruits to God’s servants caused God to multiply and increase His *Torah*-Truth in their midst. The firstfruits were devoted to the LORD Who, in turn, appointed His Priests as His receivers.

God expects the same devotion today. Believers must honour God’s servants whom He has honoured so that the Eternal Bread of Truth can be multiplied in their midst. When believers give their firstfruits to those whom God has appointed, they honour God by honouring His servants.

Believers should honour those who teach them in the LORD’s Word and in His Holy Name and in His sacred service by bringing them their tithes and firstfruits. Thus, when God is praised and glorified in His House, He miraculously will increase His Bread of Truth in His House. By freely giving tithes and first-fruits, believers furnish the necessary comfort and encouragement to those who are engaged and employed in the LORD’s service.

Chapter Eight

The Rewards the Believer Receives for Giving Firstfruits to the LORD

God is so Great, Generous, and Good to recompense the believer for faithfully performing his just duty. Man is not worthy to live, to serve, or to suffer for the LORD's Namesake. How much less worthy he is, then, to receive God's present and Eternal rewards for doing His Holy Will.

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. **The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of LORD thy God.** Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk (Exodus 34:22-26).

God forbade Israel to assume that the ripening of the first-fruits of their bread was an act of nature apart from His Almighty Power. He wanted them to acknowledge that He was the Source of the Power that blessed them.

The Festival of the Firstfruits marked the beginning of the counting of the Festival of Weeks, which totaled seven times seven weeks up to the fiftieth day or the Feast of Pentecost.

As Israel ripened *spiritually*, performing her deeds of obedience in her moral development, God blessed her natural land and the natural fruits of her land.

God gave Israel positive and negative Commands which they were to obey. And, He gave her His Divine Promises concerning the rewards for her obedience.



God gave Israel five Commands: two were positive and three were negative. God's positive Commands required that (1) all males appear three times a year at the LORD's House; and that (2) all the first of their firstfruits be brought to the LORD's House. God's three negative Commands forbade Israel to offer leaven in the offerings that typified the Crucified Christ. Leaven was a type of sin; also, it was a type of the Father's Resurrection Power. Since the blood sacrifices represented Jesus' Holy Blood (which was without sin) being poured out on the Cross, there could be no sinful leaven, as it were, mixed with them. And, since leaven also represented the Father's Unbegotten Resurrection Power, which raised Jesus Christ after He had been in the heart of the Earth for three days and three nights, there could be no offering of "resurrection" leaven, as it were, with the offering of the blood sacrifices which typified the Crucified Christ.

God also forbade Israel to seethe a kid in his mother's milk because the heathen in the land did this before sprinkling the milk on the land, thus giving their fertility idol the honour and glory for their firstfruits and the whole harvest. God forbade this practice, requiring, instead, that Israel bring the first of her firstfruits to the LORD's House, thereby acknowledging that He was the sole Cause and Effect of their firstfruits and their whole harvest.

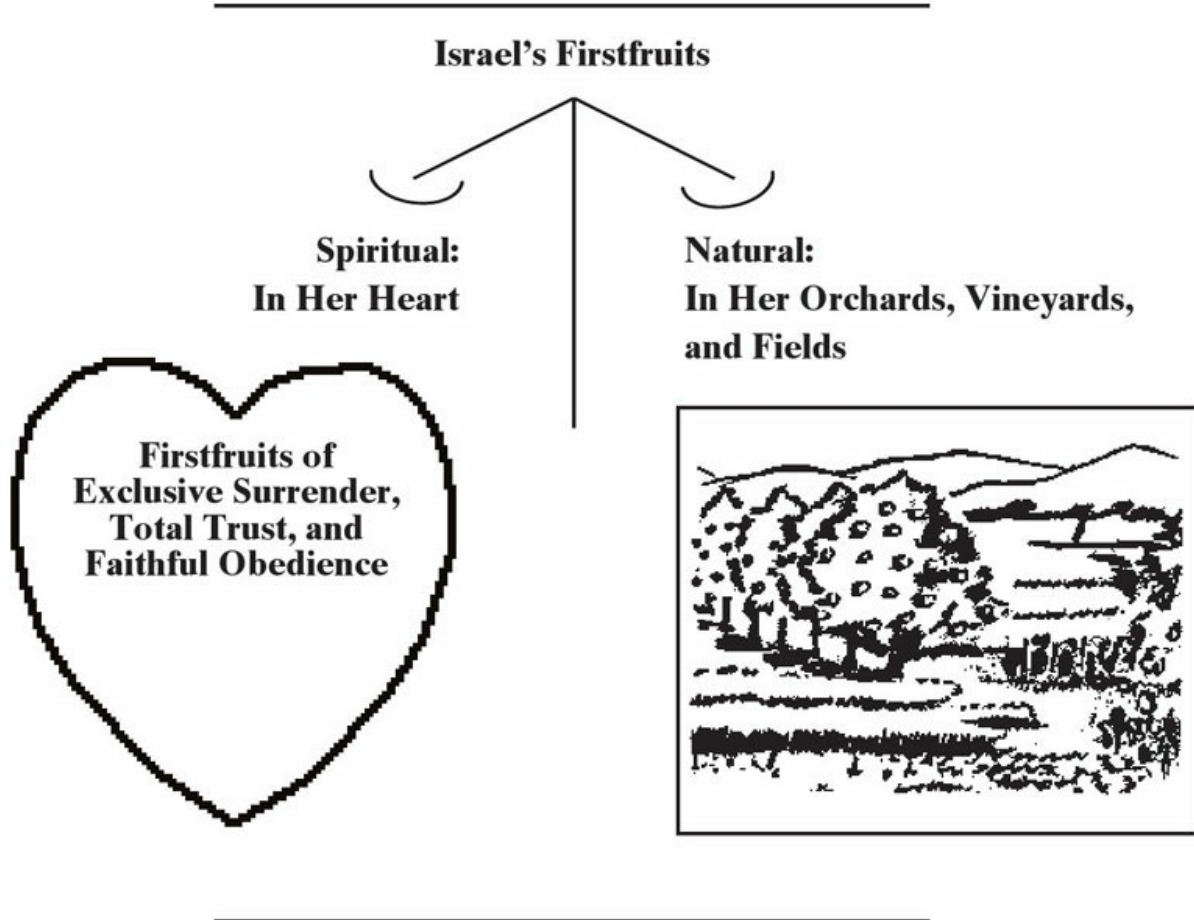
God's first Promise to Israel, if she were obedient, was His Pledge to go before her and cast out *all* the opposing heathen nations so that she could possess the land.

God's second Promise to Israel consisted of His Pledge to enlarge her borders, which was an assurance that she would grow and increase in size, becoming large enough to occupy the land from which He would displace its

heathen inhabitants.

God's third Promise consisted of His Pledge to Israel to prevent her enemies from desiring to invade her lands and steal the fruits of her whole harvest while she was in His Temple in Jerusalem dutifully performing His Holy Will of carrying the first of her firstfruits to His House.

In order for her to make her pilgrim journey up to the House of the LORD, Israel's spiritual fruits — her exclusive surrender to the LORD; her total trust in Him; and her faithful obedience to Him — had to be ripening in her heart while her natural first-fruits were ripening on her trees, vines, and stalks because, when the people left their homes, they had to leave everything under the LORD's Protective Care, trusting their whole harvest to Him.



When Israel obediently and faithfully approached the LORD God, according to His Master Plan and Purposive Will, He gloriously and graciously protected her fields, orchards, and vineyards that were left exposed to the invasion of her neighbours. He also protected the poor women, the children, the sick, and the aged who were left at home. The way of dutiful obedience is the way of assurance and safety.

It was easier for Israel to accept that God's Almighty, Powerful Hand intervened in her natural life to provide her freedom from Egypt and, ultimately, her entrance into Canaan's Land than for her to accept that, through her obedience to God's *Torah-Truth*, His Almighty, Powerful Hand could intervene in her carnal will to provide her spiritual freedom from fleshly rebellion.

If Israel were faithful in *keeping* the *Torah-Truth* in her heart, she would be delivered from her carnal flesh; consequently, she would know the pleasure of God's spiritual freedom.

Israel needed much spiritual growth in her soul and heart in order for her to be faithful in obeying the *Torah-Truth*. As she matured and ripened, spiritually, in faithfulness to God's *Torah-Truth*, and as she grew, spiritually, in trustful Love of the LORD, her natural fruits matured and ripened in her fields, orchards, and vineyards, and her flocks grew and increased. Thus, God always faithfully rewarded Israel, if she dutifully paid her first-fruits to Him.

Likewise, as the believer gives the best of his substance to the LORD — the best of his strength to pray and to

study — God always increases him with spiritual growth and with His Eternal Treasures of Truth.

Part Two

The Revelation of Firstfruits in the New Testament Dispensation

Chapter One

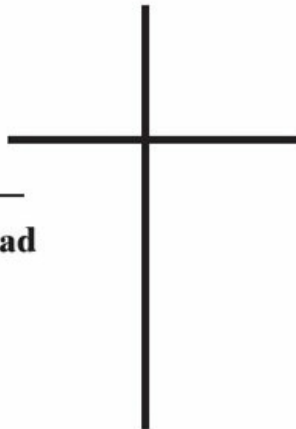
The LORD Jesus Christ — The Firstfruits from the Dead

The fulfillment of the type and shadow presented by the first-fruits offerings in the Old Testament Dispensation is found in the New Testament.

First among the Firstfruits is the LORD Jesus Christ because He was the first to be raised from the dead by the Unbegotten Resurrection Power of the Father.

PART TWO

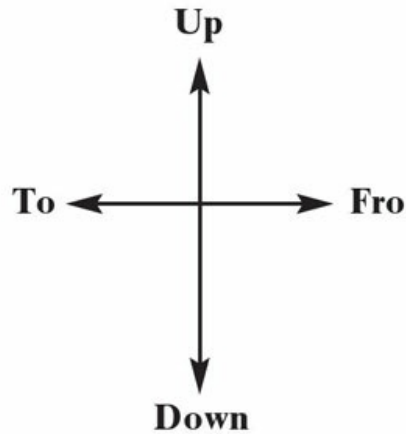
- The LORD Jesus Christ —
The Firstfruits from the Dead



PART ONE

In the type and shadow presented in the Old Testament, the firstfruits were waved before the LORD in the form of the Cross which was a picture of Jesus Christ, the Firstfruits from the Dead.

Firstfruits Waved Up and Down and To and Fro



The Old Testament firstfruits were waved by the Priest before the LORD on the morrow *after* the Sabbath or the first day of the week; and, after being threshed in a court of the Temple, a handful of them was cleansed, roasted, and pounded with a pestle in a mortar. Oil was mingled with the offering, and again it was waved before the LORD in behalf of the nation, as a grateful acknowledgement of the people's dependence on the LORD for their existence. Until this was done, the harvest remained untouched.

The Resurrected Jesus Christ, Who became the Firstfruits from the dead, gratefully acknowledged His dependence upon His Heavenly Father for His existence.

As the living Father hath sent me, and **I live by the Father**: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me (John 6:57).

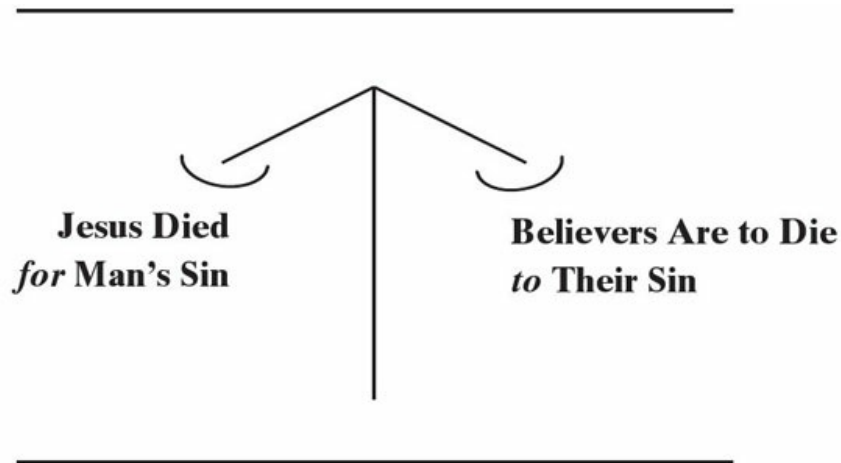
Jesus plainly declared that His Heavenly Father was the Eternal, Unbegotten Source of His Existence, just as Jesus is the Eternal Source of man's existence. God the Father is the original Cause of Jesus' existence, and He is the continual Cause of His Being. Likewise, Jesus Christ is the original Cause of man's existence, and He is the continual Maintainer of man's being.

The firstfruits were emblematical of the abundance and excellence of the Father's Unbegotten-Glory Life that was manifested in the LORD Jesus Christ when He was raised from the dead.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like **as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father**, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3,4).

The interment of Christ's Body in the grave and the Presence of His Soul in Hell gave conclusive evidence of the reality of His Death.

Jesus died *for* man's sin, but believers are to die *to* their sin.



Jesus died a death of slow, lingering torment *for* man's sin. Similarly, the believer's death *to* sin is painfully slow and difficult as he allows Christ Jesus to mortify and to crucify the unrenewed, moral disposition in his old man.

Although Jesus Christ died *for* sin, He did not remain dead; the Father raised Him up as the Firstfruits from the dead. Jesus died *once*; and by His one Death, He satisfied the demands of God's Law, which called for the death of all guilty offenders. Therefore, the Resurrected Christ Jesus legally claims complete justification from sin and death for all who believe in Him, since He took man's Place in Death, Hell, and the grave.

The Father's Unbegotten Glory demanded the resurrection of His Son for two reasons:

- (1) The Father desired to clear His Son from the false accusations made by the Jews who had condemned Him as a blasphemer because He had made Himself equal with God when He said He was the Son of God. The Father's Unbegotten Glory vindicated His only Begotten Son by raising Him up as the Firstfruits from the dead.
- (2) The Father also desired to attest to the powerful efficaciousness of Jesus' Atoning Blood and Death by raising Him from the dead. After the Father's demands for justice had been satisfied, He raised His Son from the dead. Jesus' Death effectually accomplished the Father's Master Plan and Purposive Will concerning the redemption of the human race.

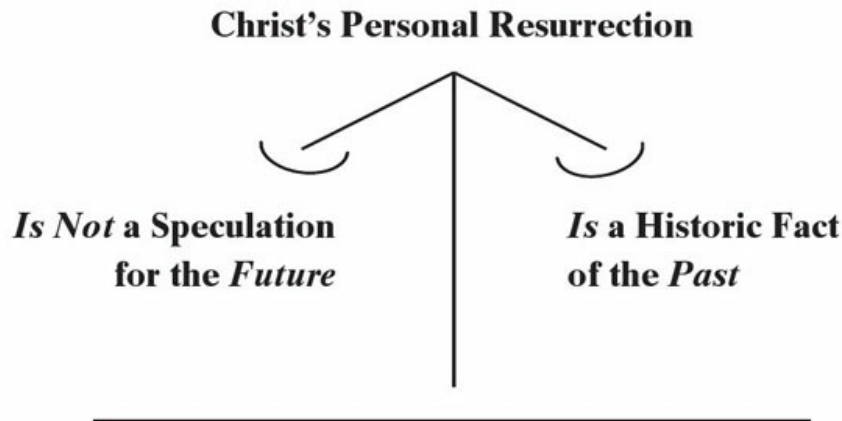
Christ's Resurrected Life is the Earnest or the *sampling* of a *full harvest* of resurrected souls.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For **if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and **the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:** and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

It is not necessary for the enlightened believer to give way to an excessive and hopeless sorrow when their loved ones die, if they have died believing in Christ as their Redeemer and Saviour. Hopelessness is reserved for ignorant heathen who know not Christ's Power of Resurrection from the dead.

Death to a believer is a sleep for the body and a birth for the soul into a greater portion of Christ's Eternal, Progressive Life that will bring the believer from his state of mortality into immortality. The weak, mortal bodies of those who have died as overcomers will be raised by Christ Jesus at the resurrection and transformed into beautiful, strong, glorious Temples, making them a suitable Eternal Residence for their glorified souls. The resurrection of the dead is the Divine, Almighty Work of the Unbegotten Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Father's Resurrection of His Son is a Divine Pledge to mankind that there will be a resurrection of *all* souls — saints, believers, and sinners.

Christ's Personal Resurrection is not an assumption or a speculation for the *future*, but a historic fact of the *past*.



The historic fact of Christ's *past* Resurrection assures the certainty of man's *future* resurrection.

Christ's Resurrection is not a problem for man to solve; His Resurrection is the resolution of all man's problems. Christ's Resurrection is both a certainty and a blessedness. At His Coming in the air, Christ will raise not only those who have died in Him, but also will transform those who are alive and waiting for His appearing.

When Jesus comes in the air, He will not descend in humiliation nor in a fleshly Body to tabernacle among men. Rather, He will descend in His Father's Exaltation and in a Resurrected Body filled with the Father's Unbegotten Glory, and He will take up with Him in the air an overcoming, prepared people to tabernacle with him in Glory. Jesus Christ will not return emptied of His Glory; He will return in His Father's Unbegotten Resurrection Glory, Majesty, and Almighty Power! He will return with a commanding shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the Trump of God, to raise the dead bodies of believers who were overcomers when they died and to transform the living believers who are overcomers. These are comforting, cheering, and calming words to the believing heart.

For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for **the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth;** they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:26-29).

The Father has Life in Himself, and He has given His Son to have Life in Himself. The Father has given His Son the Power of having all Creative Life, all Redemptive Life, and Resurrection Life. In the resurrection of the "all dead," some will be raised to life, and some will be raised to damnation. The Father's Resurrection of His Son is a guarantee that *all dead* shall rise.

Jesus Christ is the Firstfruits from the dead. Therefore, the Father's Resurrection Blessing, which is upon the Son, will spread to the rest of the harvest of the dead. Because Christ's dead Body stood up, all dead bodies must stand up.

The Old Testament saints gratefully brought firstfruits to the LORD, looking forward, by faith, to the Resurrection of the LORD Jesus Christ. New Testament saints gratefully bring the firstfruits of their successful labours, looking backward, by faith, to Christ's Resurrection from the dead and looking forward, by faith, to the resurrection of their mortal bodies.

Jesus Christ became the Firstfruits from the dead unto the LORD when His Father raised Him up with His Unbegotten Resurrection Power. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historic fact, not a future dream or speculation.

The Old Testament firstfruits were a typical representation of Jesus Christ being presented to God the Father after His Resurrection.

But **now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.** For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits;** afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

In these verses, the Hebrew word for *firstfruits* is *ray-sheeth*, which indicates that Christ was highly exalted as God's Firstfruits from the dead to the *first* in place, time, order, and rank.

The firstfruits were of the same *nature* as the after-fruits; therefore, Jesus had to take on a real *human nature* so that when He arose from the dead, He would become the Firstfruits from the dead and would be able to sanctify the whole harvest of human souls because He would be the Firstfruits Offering, having offered Himself as the Firstfruits to God.

Since He was a *man*, Jesus' Resurrection to Immortal Life is the Firstfruits of the human race that was resurrected from the dead by the Unbegotten Power of the Father. The firstfruits were of superior excellence, the first to ripen, stronger and more vigorous than the rest of the harvest; therefore, they were the *best*.

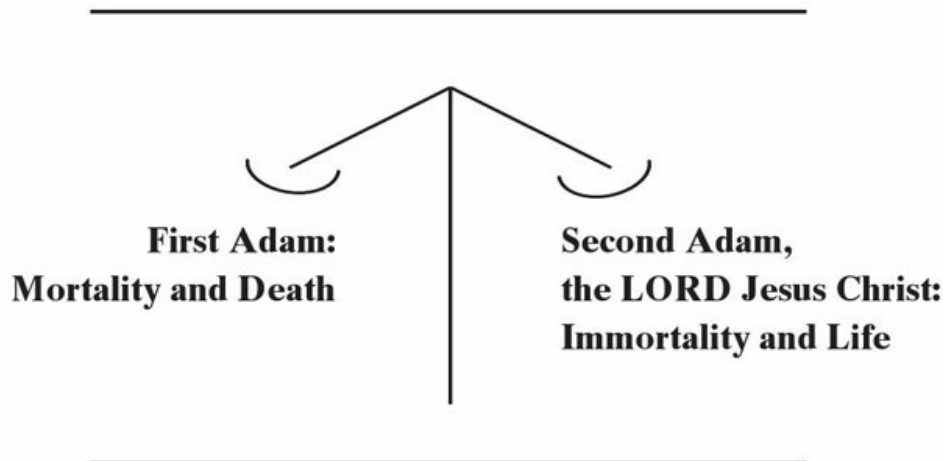
Jesus, as the Firstfruits from the dead, was superior in His excellence to all humans, including the raising of the dead, because of these facts:

- Jesus was without sin.
- Jesus' Spirit was perfect in purity.
- Jesus' Soul was without base passions.
- Jesus' Will had no rebellion to the Father's Purposive Will.
- Jesus' Understanding was not darkened by mistakes, errors, or prejudices.
- Jesus' Body was without sensual appetites.

As the first-ripe Fruit from the dead, Jesus was perfect in ripeness; that is, He was complete in Holy Love and totally satisfying in delight to the Heavenly Father. Jesus, as a Man, was the first to be perfectly obedient to His Father's Perfect Purposive Will, even unto death — an Holy Death. He was not guilty of dying a disobedient death, out of God's Holy Will, as Adam the First had died.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was an *Earnest*, given by God so that through Christ *all* shall rise from the dead. Because Christ has risen, all shall rise.

Through the First Adam came mortality and death. Through Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, came Immortality and Life.



First, Jesus Christ will raise believers from death who have died as overcomers; then, He will raise *all* believers who were not overcomers when they died; and, finally, He will raise *all* non-believers.

When the Father raised His Son from the dead, He gave Him a Name *above* every Name, and He vested Him with *all* Power in Heaven and in Earth.

Wherefore **God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth** (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus is unique, and He possesses the most superior Name of all names. The LORD Jesus Christ, the legitimate Son of God, came in His Father's Name.

I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive (John 5:43.)

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our **Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named** (Ephesians 3:14,15).

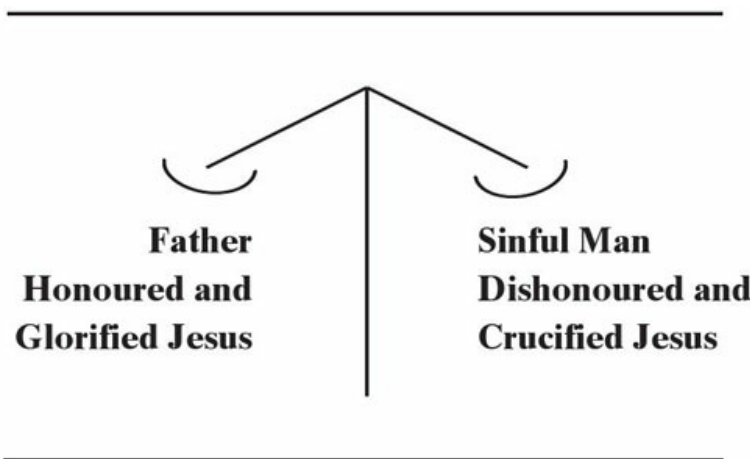
Hence, Jesus' Name is Holy, Powerful, Saving, and Divine. Man's estimation of Jesus' Name is dual. Some people love, admire, and wonder at Jesus' Name; others hate and abhor it and think His Name is commonplace. Nevertheless, the Father already has highly exalted the Name of Jesus by eternally joining it to the Names of *Lord* and *Christ* (Acts 2:36) and by giving it all Power in Heaven and in Earth.

The Name of Jesus is a Saviour that saves men from the penalty and guilt of sin. Jesus' Name must be and will be acknowledged universally whenever all persons bow their knees to it, whether they are friends or foes of the LORD Jesus Christ. Eventually all creation will confess the Sovereignty of the Creator.

After Jesus, the Son of Man, arose and became the Firstfruits from the dead, He was made both *Lord* and *Christ*.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **God hath made that same Jesus**, whom ye have crucified, **both Lord and Christ** (Acts 2:36).

God the Father honoured and glorified Jesus, Whom sinful men had dishonoured and crucified.



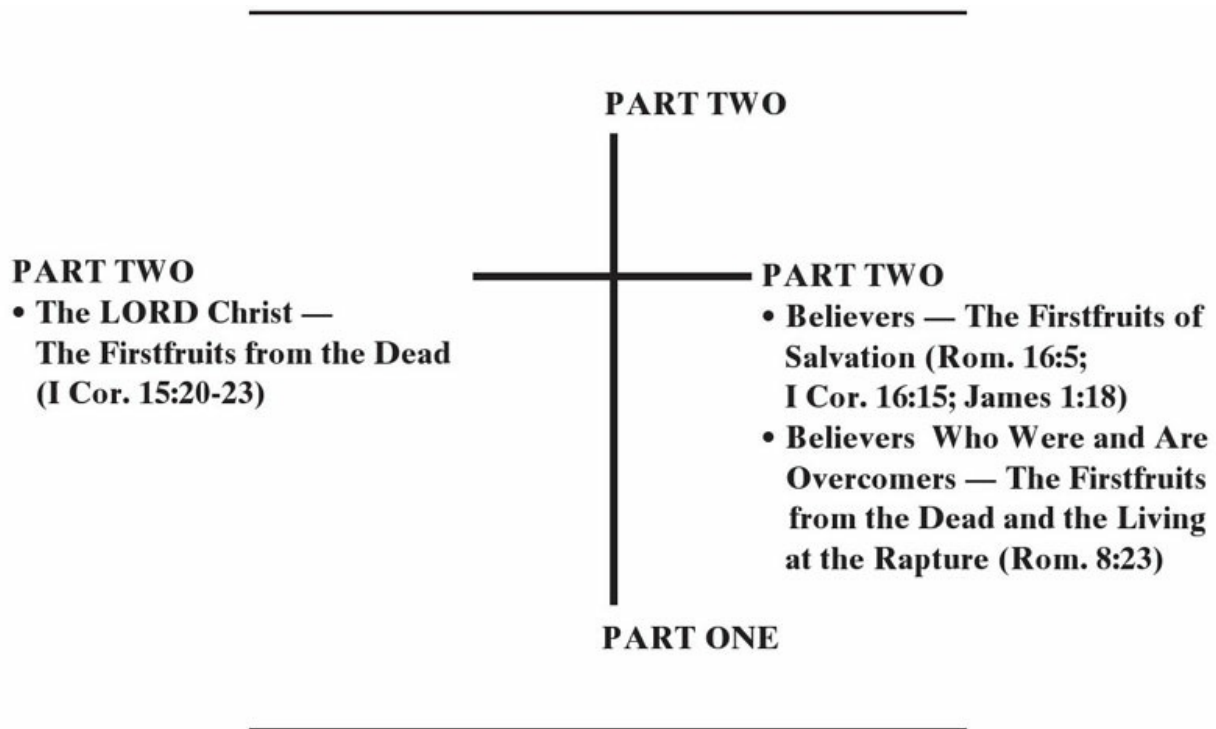
Although Jesus' wicked foes endeavoured to put an indelible, infamous mark of shame upon Him, His Father raised Him up with His Unbegotten Glory and made Him both Lord and Christ, thereby giving Him an Eternal, famous mark of honour. The Father made Jesus the Supreme Lord or the Superior Ruler, Husband, Master, and Possessor of ALL Power in order for Him to reign over all His creation. The LORD also made Jesus the Christ, the Anointed Word, the Messiah. In other words, God deified the Son of Man, making Him God.

What unparalleled Glory and Exaltation the Father clothed His Son with when He raised Him from death, accepting His offering of Himself as the One Who was the first to ripen in doing God's Purposive Will. Thus, Jesus, the Son of Man, became the Firstfruits from the dead, and as such, He has the Power to "ripen" the rest of the harvest of souls who walk in God's Purposive Will, fulfilling His Master Plan for their lives!

Chapter Two

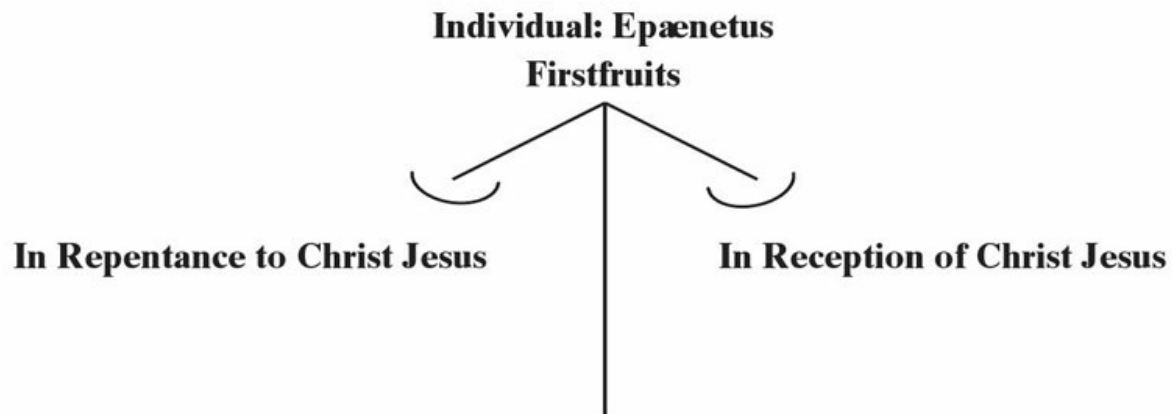
Believers — The Firstfruits of Salvation; and Believers Who Were and Are Overcomers — The Firstfruits from the Dead and the Living at the Rapture

Jesus Christ, having become the Firstfruits from the dead, has the Power to bring those who believe on Him into the blessings of the Firstfruits. Thus, believers become Christ's Firstfruits of Salvation through their repentance from sin and their acceptance of Jesus Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross. Then, those who have been and are overcomers during the New Testament Dispensation will be Christ's Firstfruits from the dead and the living at the Rapture.



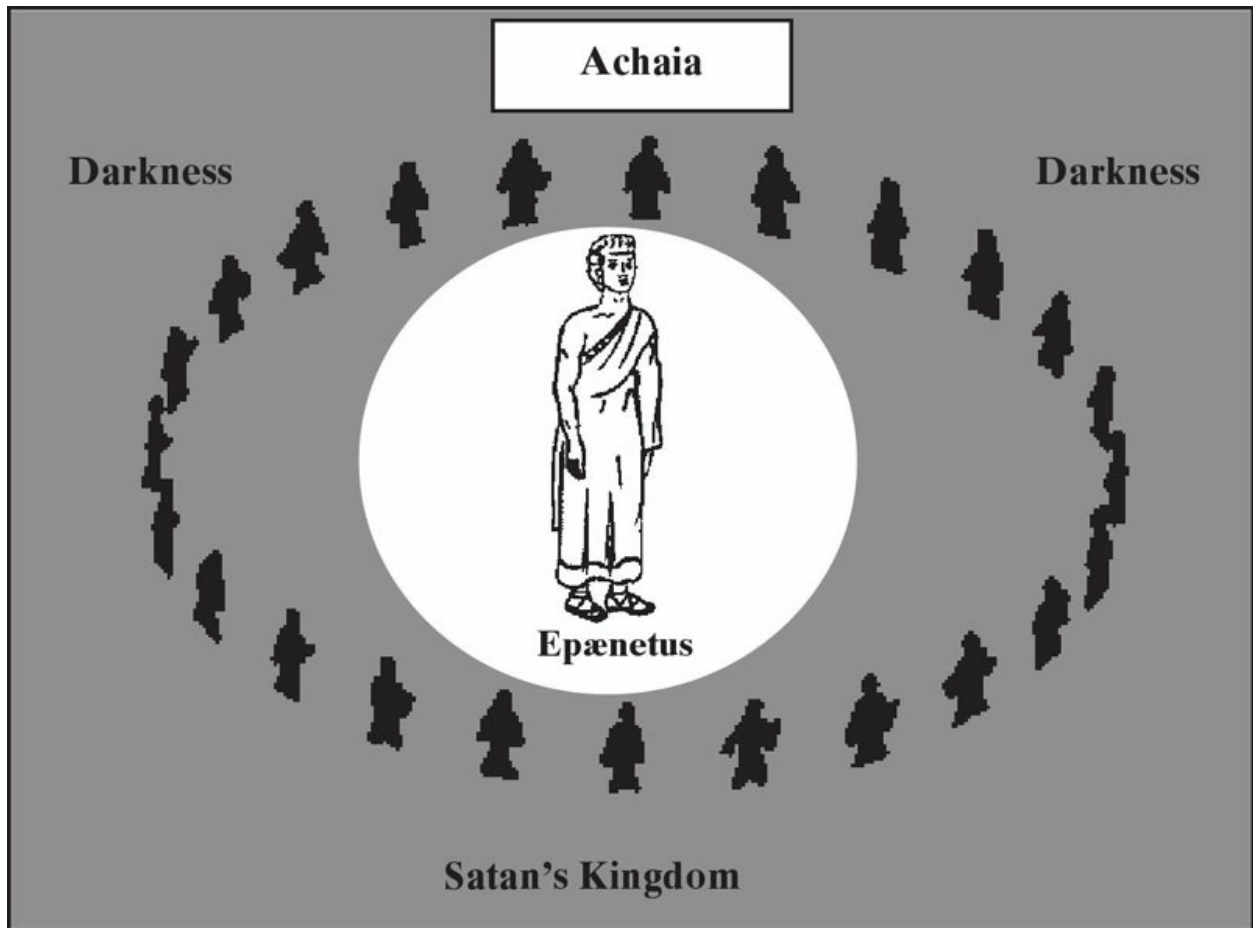
In the Old Testament, the fruit that had hastened to ripen first was honoured by being brought near to the LORD in His House. In the New Testament, Epaenetus, an individual in Achaia, had hastened to ripen first in repentance and in the reception of Jesus Christ as his Saviour; therefore, he was honoured by being brought near to the LORD. Because Epaenetus repented and received Jesus Christ as his Saviour, Jesus came to abide in the house of Epaenetus' spirit, soul, and body. He became the first individual to be firstfruits unto Christ in Achaia.

Likewise **greet** the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved **Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ** (Romans 16:5).



How beautifully ripe in zeal and love was Epānetus, who boldly stepped out, alone, for Christ Jesus. He was a bright and shining light in the midst of the idolatrous darkness of the heathen place called Achaia. He was the first one to utilize the Truth of Christ's Humility which He manifested *below*, on the Earth at Calvary's Cross! And, Epānetus was the first to utilize the exalted Resurrection Power of the Sun of Righteousness from *above*. Therefore, the LORD Jesus Christ came to His Temple (Epānetus) to possess His firstfruits in this individual.

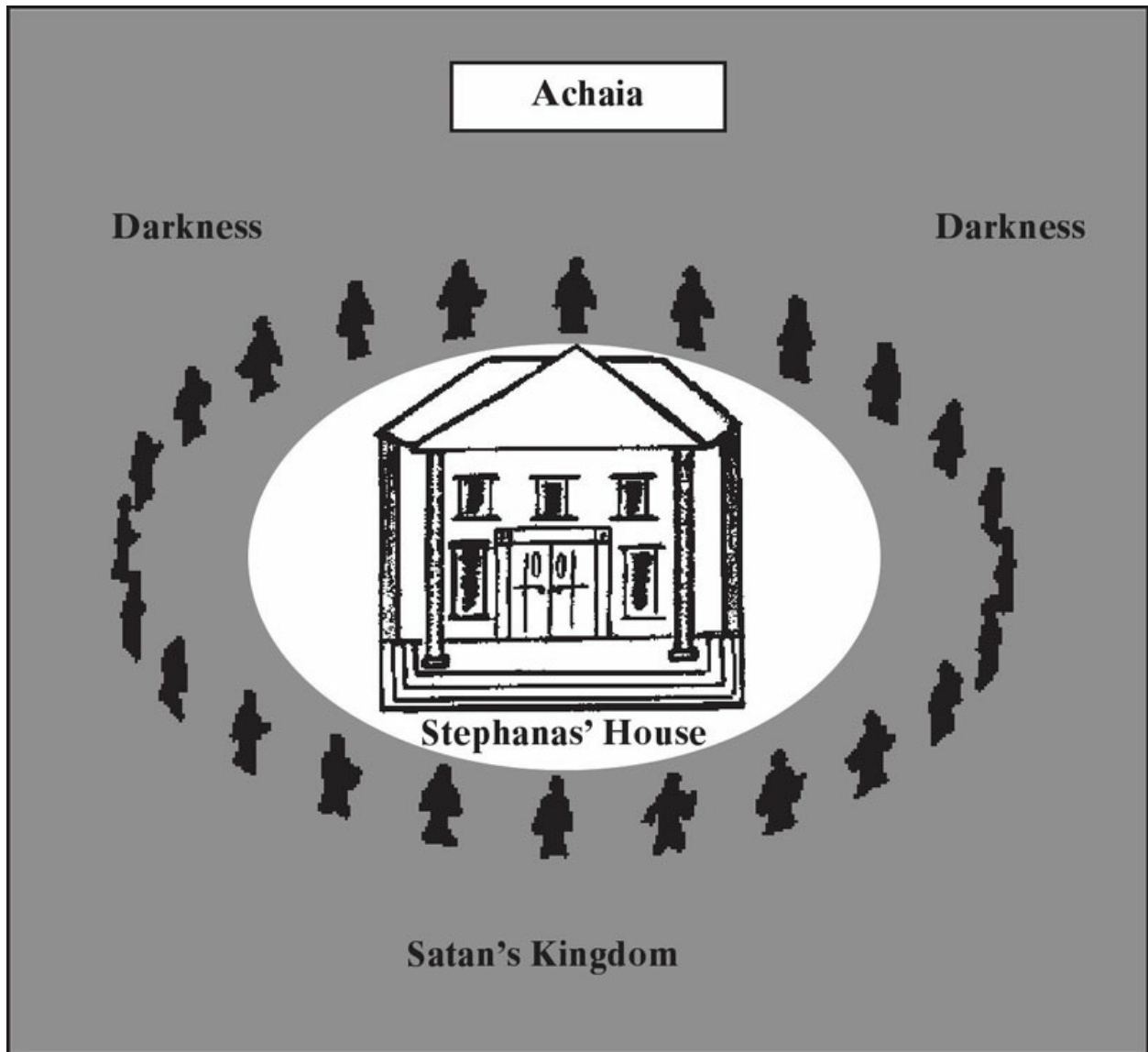
What a beautiful, ripe stalk of "wheat" Epānetus was in Achaia; and what a contrast this individual of Light and Love presented in the midst of Satan's kingdom of darkness!



After Epænetus had become a kind of *individual* firstfruits unto the LORD, the whole house of Stephanas became the first-fruits of a *household* in Achaia.

I beseech you, brethren, (ye know **the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia**, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) (I Corinthians 16:15).

After Epænetus, as an individual firstfruits, took a bold stand for the LORD, the household of Stephanas became a kind of *collective* firstfruits unto the LORD. Stephanas' house also made use of the Power of the Crucified Christ from the Cross *below* and the Power of the Resurrected Christ from *above*. (Jesus Christ is at the Right Hand of God the Father.) Stephanas and his household, like Epænetus, took a bold, shining stand in the midst of the idolatrous, heathen darkness of Achaia.



The LORD Jesus Christ, by His Mighty Power, is able to cause repentant and receptive hearts to ripen into the firstfruits of zeal and love for Him, whether they are alone or in a whole household.

Jesus Christ is busy translating believing souls out of Satan's kingdom of darkness into His own glorious Kingdom of Light, making them a kind of firstfruits unto Himself.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, **that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures** (James 1:18).

Christ is the Firstfruits of Christians, and Christians are a kind of firstfruits of the LORD's creatures.

Just as the firstfruits, which were used to maintain the lives of the Priests and Levites who ministered in prayer and in the *Torah*-Truth, were a peculiar treasure and possession of the LORD in the Old Testament, so is Jesus Christ the New-Testament Christian's peculiar Treasure of Firstfruits Who maintains the believer's life through His Ministry of Prayer and His Words of Truth. As Christians hasten to ripen in the LORD's Master Plan and Purposive Will, they, in turn, become firstfruits to others by praying for them and giving to them the Gospel of the LORD Jesus Christ. Thus, believers become a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. How glorious is the LORD's Eternal Truth of Firstfruits!

The Presence of God's Holy Spirit in the believer's heart is the Firstfruits of the resurrection of the body. It is the Presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart that is the Firstfruits of God's Power and Glory that assures the

believer and guarantees him the resurrection of his body.

And not only *they*, but **ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body** (Romans 8:23).

The Firstfruits of God's Spirit ministers to man in these ways: the Firstfruits of God's Spirit draws a person to Christ; then, it gives the believer communion with the LORD; it leads and guides the believer into all Truth; and it regenerates his old man and assures him of the redemption or the resurrection of his body.

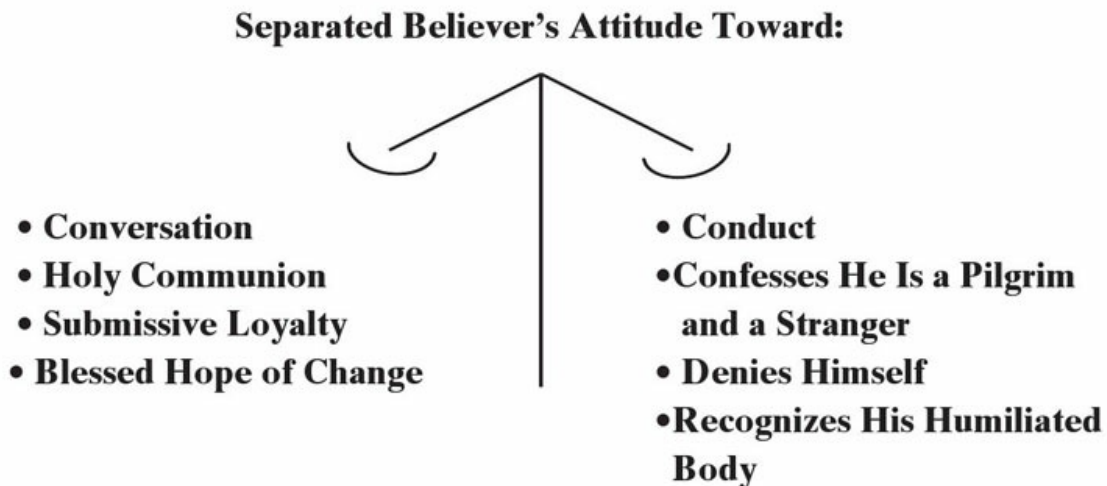
The Presence of the Holy Spirit gives the believer the inspiration of faith, hope, and patience to wait either for the redemption of his body from death at the resurrection, if he is in the grave, or the glorification of his body at the Rapture, if he is living when Jesus comes in the clouds to gather the overcomers to Himself.

Thus, the Holy Spirit is the *Firstfruits*, the *Earnest* of the overcoming believer's Inheritance of Eternal Bliss with God and the Lamb in the New City.

How great are God's Infinite Wisdom, Christ's Eternal Redemption, and the Holy Spirit's Omnipotent Operation that lift the believer up from the level of fallen humanity, giving him a desire to lay hold of the full Statue of Truth in Christ Jesus. All the rich endowment of the believer's *Firstfruits* causes him to groan within himself, expressing the painful distress of the suffering that comes from the cruelty and oppression of his present, earthly conditions; and the Holy Spirit, the believer's Firstfruits, creates a lasting desire within the believer to have his vile mortal body changed into an immortal body.

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the **Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,** according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Philippians 3:20,21).

Having one's *conversation* in Heaven influences one's *conduct* on Earth.



The Greek word for *conversation* is *pol-it-yoo-mah*, which means citizenship. The heavenly-minded heart knows his citizenship is in Heaven, which means that his duties, rights and privileges are governed by the King's Laws in Heaven. The Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ has been given *all* Power in Heaven and in Earth, and He has been given to be the *Head* over all things to the Church. Therefore, the heavenly-minded heart seeks to know the Spiritual Laws of the Resurrected King so that he can understand his duties, rights, and privileges in Christ's Kingdom. The heavenly-minded soul's conversation influences his conduct or behaviour on Earth, bringing his thoughts, feelings,

and actions into conformity with Christ's Divine, Spiritual Laws and directing and guiding his actions according to the Master Plan and Purposive Will of Christ's Headship.

The soul whose conversation is in Heaven is influenced to confess on Earth that he is a pilgrim and a stranger in this present, evil world. He acknowledges that this world is not his home and that he is just passing through.

The heavenly-minded heart enjoys sweet, Holy communion with the LORD Jesus Christ while he is praying and studying God's Word of Truth, which influences him to deny himself in many ways for Christ's sake: he refuses to accept as true the deceitful thoughts of his heart; he refuses to give place to the deceitful desires of his heart that would cause him to defect from Christ's Plans and Purposes; and, he does without the desires and wishes of his human heart in order to gain Christ's Eternal Treasures of Truth.

True submissive loyalty to Christ the King and His Laws enables the believer to resist temptation and to have dauntless courage and deathless strength to fight against Christ's enemies — the world, the flesh, and the Devil. It also enables him to generate pure, holy thoughts concerning Christ's Governance and Guidance of his life. Submissive loyalty to Christ enables the soul to submit in exclusive surrender and to have unswerving allegiance to Christ's Headship.

The heavenly-minded heart also possesses the blessed hope that his vile house or body will be changed at the resurrection, for he continually recognizes the humiliated, mortal form of his earthly, human body. The heavenly-minded heart longs to have his body made like Jesus Christ, the Firstfruits from the dead.

In the meantime, Christ has given believers the Firstfruits of the Spirit in their souls. The "Firstfruits" of the Spirit in the believer's soul are repentance, faith, and love because they come *first*. Just as the wave-sheaf of grain was the *first* of the harvest in Israel, so Christ's Gift of the Grace of His Redemption, Faith, and Love are the "Firstfruits" of the believer's soul. They are Christ's Pledge that the believer will reap a mature, ripened harvest of Christ's Redemption, Faith, and Love as long as the believer, during his spiritual education, obediently follows the LORD in repentance and prayer and in studying His Word of Truth, and as long as the believer obediently follows the LORD in doing deeds of righteousness during his moral development.

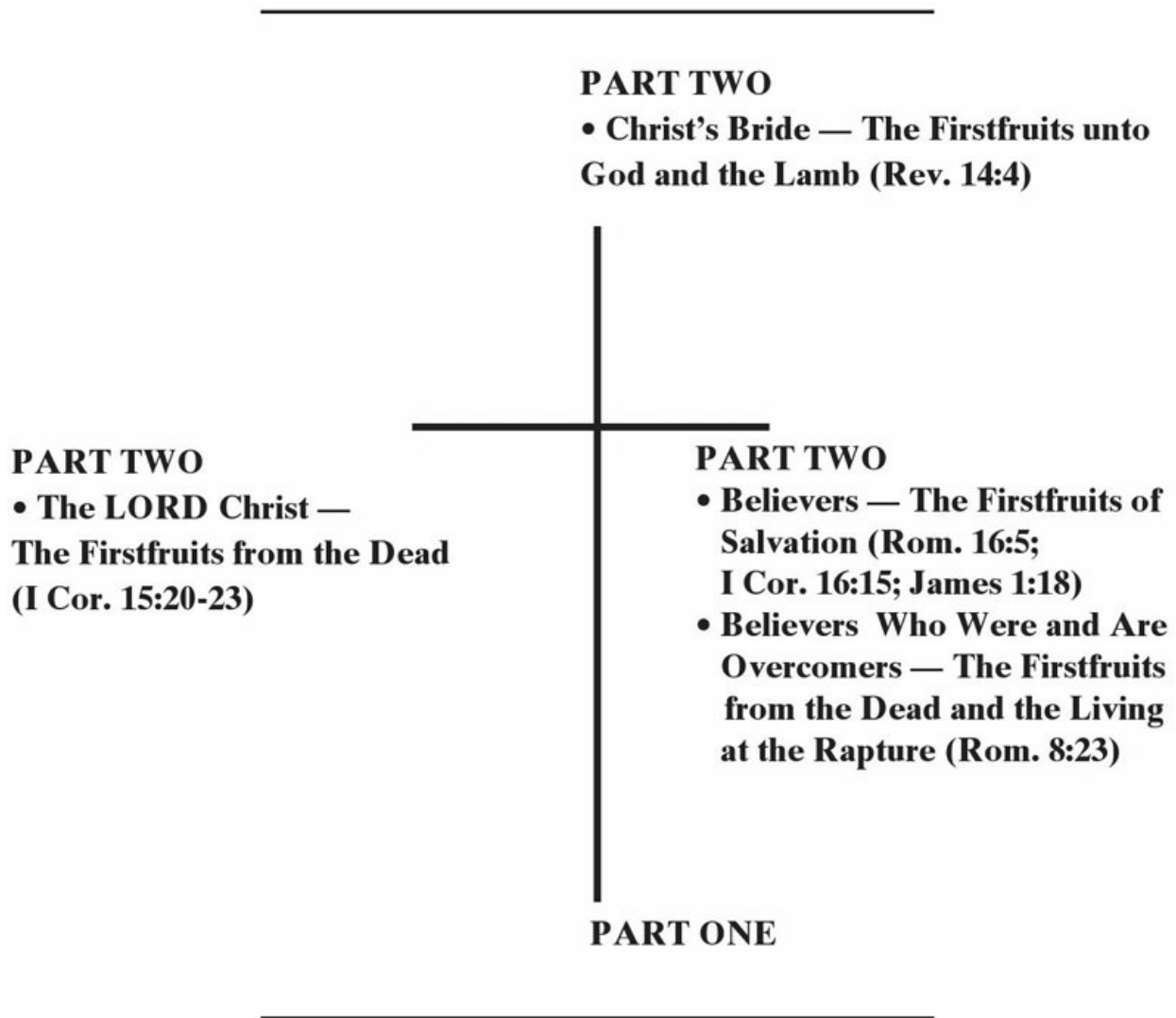
As soon as the Israelite plucked his first wave-sheaf *for the LORD*, he had proof that the rest of the field would ripen into a fruitful harvest. Likewise, if the believer keeps on giving the firstfruits of his repentance, redemption, faith, and love to Christ, he has proof, through them, that the LORD will continue to regenerate, convert, conform, and transform his old heart into a fruitful field of Christ's Redeeming Grace, Faith, and Love.

The quickening of the believer's spirit and soul, by the LORD's Unbegotten Spirit of Power, is the *Earnest*, the evidence, that the LORD Jesus Christ will redeem the believer's body from death and the grave by the Father's Unbegotten Resurrection Glory.

Chapter Three

Christ's Bride — The Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb

One other kind of firstfruits is defined in the Scriptures — Christ's Bride, the Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb in the New City.



These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. **These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb** (Revelation 14:4).

Christ's Bride is described in these verses. The Bride is the *first* to ripen in the full Stature of Jesus Christ because

she is the one, among all other believers, who lays hold of the Crucified Christ not only for her Salvation, but also for the mortification and crucifixion of her flesh; furthermore, she lays hold of the Resurrected Christ by being seated with Him in the Heavenlies through God's Spirit, where she learns the LORD's Spiritual Truths that develop maturity in her by means of her spiritual education and moral development in those Truths. Thus, she gains the favour of having the Father's Name written in her forehead, which is evidence that she is the *peculiar treasure and possession of God and the Lamb*, just as Jesus, the Firstfruits from the Dead, was joined to the Father's Name of Lord and Christ, becoming the Incomparable, All-Powerful LORD Jesus Christ.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and **I will write upon him the name of my God,** and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and **I will write upon him my new name** (Revelation 3:12).

And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him **an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads** (Revelation 14:1).

Jesus promised those in the Philadelphia Church, who were *overcomers*, that they would be Temple-Pillars, inside Pillars, who would stand immovable in their surpassing beauty and stately strength.

The term *overcomer* reveals that there has to have been a spiritual struggle and continual conflict within a person's heart in order for the soul to make a daily advancement in the Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ. To be an overcomer one must persevere in the battle against the world, the flesh, and the Devil. The overcomer cannot be like a flaming meteorite, which is extinguished as quickly as its flames are kindled, and expect to be a triumphant conqueror. True spiritual conquerors always will be filled with the Eternal Flames of Overcoming Truth, the Spirit, and the LORD's Holy Name.

The true spiritual overcomer must set his face like flint and resist all His Master's enemies. As a result of his rock-like steadfastness, the overcomer always will be an immovable Pillar who never knows defeat nor decay; who never is removed from unswerving loyalty to Jesus Christ; who is firmly fixed in his immutable faithfulness to the Truth; and who is unchanging in his steadfast love for the LORD's Holy Name.

A believer who is an "overcoming" Pillar knows the permanence of an uninterrupted communion with the LORD Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom.

The Resurrected Christ promised to write His Father's Name, the Holy Tetragrammaton Name of LORD, upon the Bride's forehead, just as the LORD's Name was written on the golden crown worn by the High Priest. The LORD's Holy Name upon the Bride's forehead will express the LORD'S Ownership, Christ's perfect Love, Christ's exclusive Surrender, and Christ's complete Obedience that will have been formed within the Bride during her lifetime on Earth. In the Bride's earthly journey, she will have overcome the hate, the resistance, and the opposition of the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

Because the Bride follows the Crucified Lamb whithersoever He goeth, she will learn to have His exclusive Surrender and sacrificial Obedience during the earthly days of her flesh; therefore, she will be rewarded with the privilege of bearing the LORD's Name and will gain the Prize of dwelling with God and the Lamb in the New City, where she will continue to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth throughout all Eternity.

The LORD's Name is the Beauty of all creation. How beautiful, then, the Bride's forehead will be! The Lamb's every step is for the purpose of unveiling the Beauty and the Holiness of the LORD's Name. Hence, everywhere the Bride will go she will behold all things through the radiating Resurrection-Rays of the Godly Light of the LORD's Holy Name that will flash forth from her forehead. All who look on her will not see *her*, but they will behold the Beauty and Splendour of the LORD's Holy Name that she is privileged to bear and to lift up on her forehead.

May all believers seek this unique distinction of being in Christ's Bride and wearing in their foreheads the Father's Holy, Beautiful Name with its radiating Rays of Unbegotten Resurrection Glory.

Christ's Bride is the Firstfruits of God and the Lamb because she is the first to ripen in exclusive surrender, sacrificial surrender, and complete, sacrificial obedience unto God and the Lamb. She follows the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! Just as the firstfruits in the Old Testament were brought nigh to the LORD God in His Temple, so also Christ's Bride, the Firstfruits of a Oneness of Spiritual Marriage Relationship with God and the Lamb, will be brought nigh to God and the Lamb in the New City, the New Jerusalem.

Because Christ's Bride will possess the Firstfruits of the Lamb's humility Wisdom, His exclusive Surrender, His sacrificial Obedience, and the Holy Spirit's measureless Presence that abides on the Lamb, she will reap the whole harvest of the Lamb's humility Wisdom, exclusive Surrender, sacrificial Obedience, and the measureless humility

depth and wideness of the Holy Spirit. The *Shekinah* Dove, God's Holy Spirit, will fill the Bride with Her all-comprehending, awe-inspiring Wisdom when the Bride is in the New City. The tranquil benignity and inexhaustible compassion of the Spirit's Understanding will illuminate, eternally, the mind of the Lamb's Bride in the New City.

The full harvest of the Spirit's Strength will be the Eternal Possession of the Lamb's Bride. The Sovereign and Surpassing Majesty of the *Shekinah* Dove's Strength helped Jesus to overcome the Satan and Devil natures of fallen Lucifer on the Mount of Temptation. Likewise, the *Shekinah* Dove's All-Ruling Greatness, which is ministered through the Headship of Jesus Christ, the Lamb, helps the soul of His Bride to overcome all temptation and all Luciferic opposition because she has surrendered exclusively to Him.

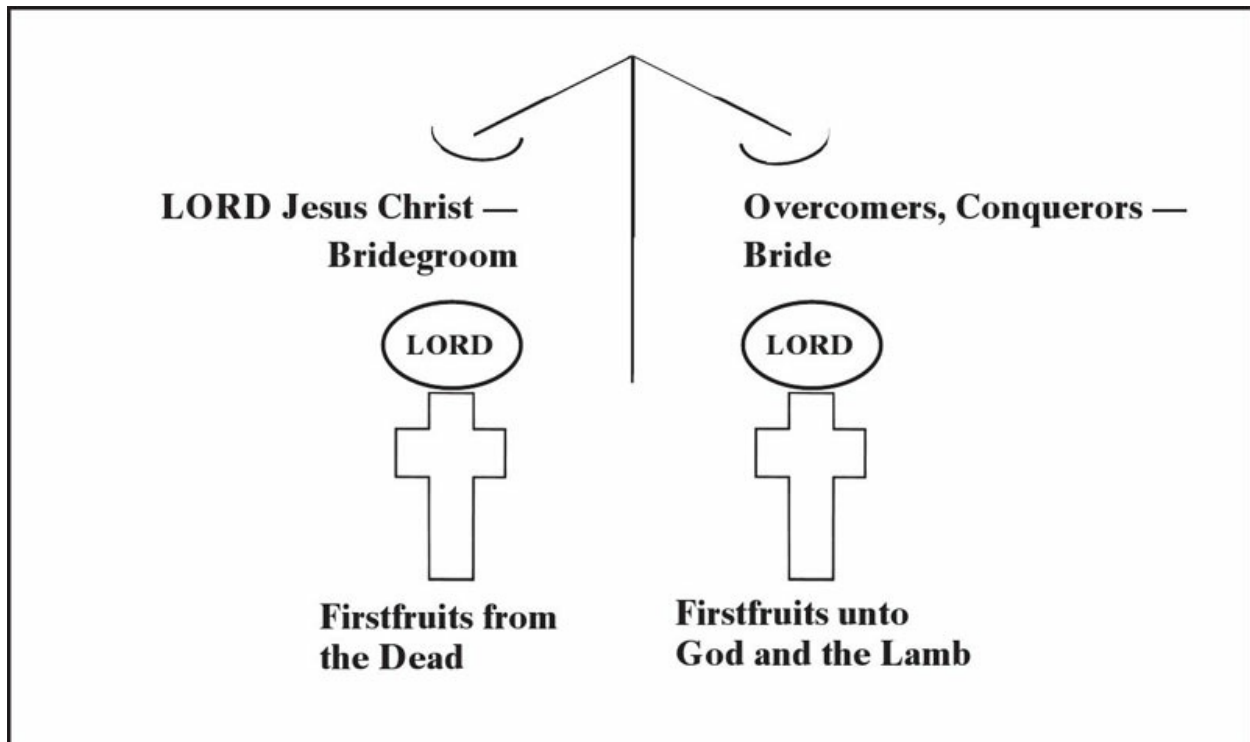
The Strength of the Spirit's irresistible passion for Truth fills the exclusively surrendered, sacrificial soul with the *same* zeal for the Truth that the Holy Spirit possesses. The Lamb's Bride never loses a battle because she has the Spirit's Strength of Warrior-Power to prevent her defeat. The Strength of the Spirit's overwhelming Will always overpowers the human will in every living Temple in which Christ, the Lamb, abides — every time the human will surrenders to Him. The Strength of the Holy Spirit's impetuous swiftness to uphold the Truth and the force it exerts in lifting up the Truth prevent the soul from being a doorkeeper for Self instead of for Christ, the Lamb.

The Dove-Spirit's Infinite *Balance* empowers the Lamb's Bride to trust the LORD and His Divine Decision in all things. Therefore, Christ's Bride experiences the deep secrets of the Dove-Spirit's Beauty, Harmony, and fine Rhythm and Her sweet, vivid, and wonderful Balance as She moves in humility harmony with the Father's Master Plan and Purposive Will. The Dove-Spirit's Balance that She maintains between Her intricate and subtle wealth of Exalted Glory and Humility Glory is precious! The Spirit's Balance of Her compelling attraction to the Bridegroom and the extension of Her captivating Grace to the Lamb's Bride is both marvelous and amazing.

The Dove-Spirit's Omniscient Knowledge is a great treasure of the Lamb's Firstfruits, which is extended to the Bride, now, and which *will become* a rich, full harvest in the future in the New City. The Spirit is equipped with a close and profound capacity, which contains intimate Knowledge of both the Father and His precious, only Begotten Son, the Lamb.

The Dove-Spirit's careful, flawless Word and the Dove-Spirit's quiet and exact Perfection in all things draw all the substance of the Bride's spirit, soul, and body into ecstatic praise to the LORD's Holy Name — in His Sanctuary, in the Firmament of His Power, for His Mighty Acts, and for His Excellent Greatness — during the season of the Lamb's Firstfruits and during the Lamb's Harvest of all souls in Eternity, from His Throne in the New City.

What a high and Holy distinction the Lamb's Bride will possess in the New City as Christ's Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb! Her distinction will be in having the Father's Holy Name written in her forehead with the Father's Awesome, Unbegotten Resurrection Glory, just as Jesus had His Father's Name written in His Forehead with the same Glory.



Summary:

The main points of this study have shown the reader that the Principle of Offering Firstfruits was established as an Eternal Principle since it appears in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The fact that Israel again will bring her firstfruits to the LORD during Christ's Millennial Reign on Earth further proves that God intended that the Firstfruits Offering to be established forever. If, as believers of God's Word, we are to be doers of the Truth and not hearers only, we also are obligated to operate by the Spiritual Principle of Giving Firstfruits to the LORD.

Jewish history says that a sixtieth part of the whole was the *least* measure that could be offered as firstfruits. The people presented their firstfruits to the Priest — even the *King* came before the Priest to offer his firstfruits.

We are to offer our firstfruits to God in the same way. They are to be brought into God's House and given to the Priest. In our case, today, our wages are representative of Israel's produce and wool and bread, from which she gave her firstfruits. It is a portion of our *income* that should be brought as firstfruits into God's House and given to His servants who labour in the Word of God to feed our soul. As it was in Israel's day, believers and Ministers of God's Word, today, live mutually dependent lives. God's servants depend upon believers' tithes and offerings in order to live and to carry on God's Work in this world; and believers are dependent upon Ministers of God's Word to feed their souls with the Milk and Meat of God's Word of Truth so that they will be sustained spiritually.

The Levites were the *firstfruits* to God among the nation of Israel because they were set aside, in place of the firstborn son from each family, to give their lives in service to God in His House. (Firstborn sons were dedicated to God as firstfruits — everything that was the first to come from a seed to fruition being held sacred by God.)

Individuals and Churches who pay their firstfruits are assured, by God's established Principle of Firstfruits Offerings, of having their spiritual and natural harvests blessed and brought to fruition because of their obedience in giving. What a privilege and blessing!

Firstfruits are an offering of gratitude to the LORD for His Creative and Ruling Power. In the Old Testament, when God's people brought in their gratitude offerings of firstfruits to the Priests and Levites, God opened the Windows of Heaven and poured out His Blessings upon them, both naturally and spiritually. The firstfruits were always to be the first and the best of the harvest, and they were to be given with joy, understanding, faith, loyalty, and unswerving allegiance. When we have been taught the principle of Firstfruits Offerings, and have let the Spirit of God quicken this Truth to our heart, we can give in God's accepted way — with joy, understanding, faith, loyalty, and unswerving allegiance to the LORD. Giving to God's true servants is counted as giving to the LORD. It is His

Command.

When God sows His Spiritual Seeds of Truth in our heart, he expects to reap accordingly from our *natural* blessings.

God's loving, tender Care, through His Divine Providence, dispenses His Fruitful Blessing on every tiny seed that ripens in the field and on every individual in the home that keeps His Holy Will alive upon the Earth.

Israel gave a daily bread offering, too. The daily bread offering acknowledged their dependence on the LORD and His *Torah-Truth* for their lives. It also acknowledged that the purpose of their existence was *to fear the LORD* by serving Him and *to maintain the House of His Torah-Truth and the livelihood of His appointed servants*. This is true for us, too. Giving of our daily bread, our earnings, acknowledges that we do not exist without Divine Help from God and that the purpose of our existence is to fear and serve Him.

Giving their firstfruits of bread to God's appointed Ministers guaranteed God's Blessing of the Omnipresent Life and Glory of His Holy Name on the bread in Israel's individual homes, which maintained each family member's *natural* and *spiritual* life. We can have this Blessing in our homes, too, when we obey God's Command to give firstfruits.

All firstfruits in Israel were to be devoted to the LORD through the persons of His servants. The Priests were the recipients of the firstfruits; in turn, the Priests fed the people, spiritually, with the Truth. Since God's appointed Priests provided Spiritual Bread for Israel, it was *proper* and *good* for them *to reap* a portion of Israel's natural bread.

A person's natural substance, brought into God's House to provide for His servants, is only a small way for gratitude to be shown to God for one's life and the maintenance of one's life.

When a person faithfully and dutifully pays his tithes and firstfruits offerings, God's threefold Blessing rests upon the remaining portion of the person's livelihood.

The faithful farmer brought his firstfruits to Elisha, and because he did, the faithful Prophet and his followers were fed miraculously.

As well as blessing Israel's harvests, their giving of firstfruits to God's servants caused God to multiply and increase His *Torah-Truth* in their midst. The firstfruits were devoted to the LORD Who, in turn, appointed His Priests as His receivers.

God expects the same devotion today. Believers must honour God's servants whom He has honoured so that the Eternal Bread of Truth can be multiplied in their midst. By giving first-fruits to those whom God has appointed and anointed for service in His House, believers honour *God*.

From the beginning of this study, the Firstfruits have been shown to be *from* God and *for* God. Christ's Bride, the Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb, are no different — they are *from* God and *for* God.

Paying firstfruits to the LORD of Harvest is an unspeakable privilege of believers — not only naturally, but spiritually; for the Truth of the Word of God and the Resurrection of the LORD Jesus Christ guarantee an abundant reward, both now and in Eternity.

May God bless all these Truths to your heart, and may you be one of the privileged few to be with God and the Lamb in the New City as part of the Firstfruits of the Father and the Son!



Outline of Book

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God's Eternal Principle of Giving Firstfruits, as Revealed in the *Torah*, Was Established in Abram's Time

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The Revelation of Firstfruits in the *Torah*

I. Firstfruits Were from God and for God as a Sacred, Holy Possession, Which He Reserved for His Servants — the Priests and the Levites.

II. King Hezekiah Was An Example of One Who Obeyed God's Command to Give Firstfruits.

III. Nehemiah Was Another Example of One Who Obeyed God's Command to Give Firstfruits.

Chapter Two

The Description of the Firstfruits Offerings unto the LORD and the Ways They Were To Be Offered

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II. Part of the Corn Was To Be Offered with Oil.

III. All of the Corn Was To Be Offered with Frankincense.

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God's Zeal for the Firstfruits

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Chapter Seven

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