

## The First Sheaf of the Harvest

*Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you enter the land I am giving you and reap its harvest, you are to bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. He will wave the sheaf before the LORD so that you may be accepted; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you are to offer a year-old male lamb without blemish as a burnt offering to the LORD. - Leviticus 23:10-12 HCSB*



Around 1445 BC, Yahweh commanded His people to take the first sheaf they harvested each year and to bring it to the priest who would wave it before the Lord.

Notice first that this was done in order to be accepted by the Lord. Second, it was to be done on the day AFTER the Sabbath – not the Sabbath itself. Third, this “wave offering” was to be closely associated with the burnt offering of an unblemished lamb. Fourth, it was to signify a new beginning and the bounty of the Lord. Fifth, the feast of Pentecost was to follow 50 days after the wave-sheaf offering.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly 1,500 years later, the Lord Jesus Christ, in view of His coming crucifixion said to the disciples, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. "I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop."<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter, although He was found blameless by the court, He was tortured, beaten, mocked and crucified. He submitted to this in order to pay for the sins that we have committed.

After He died, He was buried in a grave in a nearby garden. Nevertheless, the world's measures were hopelessly insignificant when compared to the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit.

Here comes the cool part. First, Jesus' willingness to be that “grain of wheat that must fall into the ground and die” had the effect of making those of us who claim Him acceptable to God.<sup>3</sup> Second, He was raised on the day after the Sabbath<sup>4</sup> which is why the Ransomed celebrate and worship Him on Sunday.<sup>5</sup> Third, He was the unblemished Lamb whose sacrifice atones for our sins. Fourth, because of His sacrifice, we enjoy a new beginning and the bounty of the Lord. Fifth, as the Israelites' harvest couldn't begin until the wave-sheaf offering was accepted by God, similarly the Holy Spirit was not poured out until Pentecost, after Jesus returned to the Father.<sup>6</sup>

Just as the first sheaf of the harvest was referred to as the “firstfruits”, so is Jesus.<sup>7</sup> This is because He was the first of what will be many to resurrect from the dead.<sup>8</sup>

So Christ had the Last Supper on Passover, was resurrected on the day of the Wave-Sheaf offering and then told His disciples to “wait” for the coming of the Holy Spirit which occurred on the day of Pentecost! Small wonder then, that the Ransomed pay close heed to the biblical Feasts!

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 23:16-17

<sup>2</sup> John 12:23-24

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:7 cp John 1:29

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19;

<sup>5</sup> Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2

<sup>6</sup> Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-4

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20 cp Colossians 1:1, 18

<sup>8</sup> Acts 26:23