

Wave-sheaf or Pentecost Resurrection

part two

Most of the Churches of God have a pretty good understanding of the Plan of God pictured by the days listed in Leviticus chapter 23, except for Pentecost and the Wave-sheaf offerings. It seems that few have really examined the offerings made on those days, because it has not been until comparatively recently that they have even been considered as possible pictures of the *resurrection* of the Firstfruits. Indeed almost all of God's Church still believe the First Resurrection will take place on the Feast of Trumpets.

So, let's take a look at some evidence not so far mentioned, regarding the Wave-sheaf offering. Many of us have long understood that the barley harvest in Ancient Israel pictures the spiritual harvest of the Firstfruit Resurrection. Logic alone should have long ago suggested that the wheat harvest and *its* firstfruit offerings may *not* represent that resurrection.

This is supported by God giving us the illustration of Ruth and Boaz and their *barley* harvest, Ruth 1:22, 'So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.' Boaz and Ruth are ancestors of Christ.

This is far more than a charming country romance about morality, faithfulness and love. The symbolism is rich. Boaz represents the Kinsman-Redeemer, just as Christ will redeem Israel, His elect people, and His bride. Boaz is the Lord of the harvest, and Ruth comes to his notice through her diligent work in that harvest. He recognises her faithfulness to her mother in law Naomi, and her diligence and love in gleaning in the harvest on behalf of another.

Later, Boaz is found winnowing the barley in his threshing floor, separating the barley grain from the chaff, and remains there overnight to guard and protect it. Ruth had been told by Naomi about the close relationship between Boaz and her family and the duties this relationship created for Boaz, and when she asked him to spread his skirt over her (Ruth 3: 9) he spread his cloak over her as a token of his desire for marriage, cf. Ezekiel 16:8, 'And when I passed by again, I saw that you were old enough for love. So I wrapped my cloak around you to cover your nakedness and declared my marriage vows. I made a covenant with you, says the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.' New living Translation.

The symbolism here is quite telling, Boaz is seen working to separate the barley from the chaff, just as Christ will separate out His Bride from amongst those less diligent believers who were not fully prepared, at His coming, Mathew 25:10, 'And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.'

Boaz then confirms his promise to Ruth with a gift of six measures of barley for Naomi in appreciation of what she has brought about, and thereby confirms his promise is for the individuals who become his Bride and *also* for the nation, the converted remnant of Israel.

Naomi's plan for Ruth to find rest and security in a marriage to Boaz illustrates the truth that that *our* rest will be found at the feet of *our* redeemer, and in our marriage to Him when the harvest of the Saints is complete. The link between the barley harvest and the Firstfruit Resurrection is established by the Book of Ruth.

It is only after the barley is harvested that the harvest of the wheat occurs, but as part of the firstfruits offerings *it* must be baked into bread, and not unleavened bread, but leavened, Leviticus 23:17, 'You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be *baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the LORD.*'

Unlike the Wave-sheaf offering of the barley harvest, sprinkled with olive oil and frankincense, part of which was offered as a burnt offering (Lev. 23:13) **no offering containing leaven could be burnt on the altar**, (Lev. 2:11) and yet these two loaves *are* firstfruits, as we just saw in Leviticus 23:17.

For many years we thought of that premier sheaf of the barley harvest, as it was waved by the High Priest, as depicting the acceptance of Jesus Christ at His ascension by His Father in Heaven. If it involved *only* Christ and His Father, that may have explained why it is not a holy convocation, like the other Holy Days which can picture the whole of humanity.

But as we saw in part one, *"the Sheaf is waved before the Lord, Leviticus 23:11, "to be accepted for you" (King James) by our Father. Yes, Christ, as "First of the Firstfruits" is typified by this sheaf, but it is made up of very many stalks, which, when beaten, provide hundreds of grains of barley, and so we need to examine this verse more closely in the Hebrew to gain an understanding of its full meaning. The Hebrew is more correctly translated, "for you to be accepted", or, "for the acceptance of you". It pictures the acceptance by our Father of Christ, the First of the Firstfruits" and, the words indicate, the balance of the Spiritual firstfruit barley harvest also. In other words, those key words "for you to be accepted" also picture **our** resurrection and acceptance by our Father, as the Bride of Christ !"*

So, in 1Thessalonians 4:14, 'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep **in Jesus** will God bring with him.' When we die, we sleep *in* Jesus. Because of our justification through Christ, we die *in the Lord*. Revelation 14:13, 'And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who **die in the Lord** from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them!" The Firstfruit Wave-sheaf was a pledge of the coming harvest, and when Christ was accepted by His Father, we were accepted as part of Him, "in him", Romans 6:5, 'For if we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.' Berean Study Bible.

It is also significant that there is no sin offering attendant upon the Wave-sheaf offering, though there is with the two leavened loaves. Why is that? Simply because, as *fully* repentant and *obedient* to God's word, Christ's sacrifice payed the penalty for our sins and his life as our High Priest enables our continued justification. His ascension and acceptance by His father in Heaven **FOR US**, for we are in Him, sanctifies the whole Firstfruit Barley Harvest, Romans 11:16, 'For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.' We are the lump and the branches! John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides **in Me**, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

So we see that the Wave-sheaf offering is not just about Christ and our Father. The olive oil and frankincense added to the barley offering (Leviticus 2:15) symbolise the priesthood and deity of both Christ and His future Bride. 1Corinthians 15:20-23, 'But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the **firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ** shall all be made

alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.'

But what about the wheat firstfruits? If the firstfruit barley really does represent the Bride of Christ, these wheat firstfruits are 50 days late. The seven weeks picture the full gathering of the spiritual *barley* harvest, and the spiritual *wheat* harvest, though they keep the Commandments, apparently will not be fully prepared at the return of Christ. Some may be spiritual virgins who look only to Him, Matthew 25:1, "'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like **ten virgins** who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom,' but, even so, at the return of Christ *half* do not reach the demanding, diligent, faithful standard Christ requires of his Bride, Proverbs 31:29, "**Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.**"

The 'guests' we read of in Matthew 22:10, "'But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment', are not actually at the wedding *at all*, this is the sifting process in the Church between the grain and the chaff we read of in Ruth. They have been 'called', but are not fully prepared with their wedding garment of repentance and so not 'chosen' to become the Bride, verse 14. Many of us are like that – just not diligent and faithful enough to face up to our human nature and overcome, and so lack the wedding garment Christ expects.

So, these are the wheat firstfruits, who keep the Commandments. (Revelation 12:17) Some may be spiritual virgins. Nevertheless, the door to the marriage is shut against them. They miss the first resurrection because they are not considered close enough to God's will and word. Joshua 1:8, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.' Truly our calling and the whole word of God, not just the parts we are comfortable with, should fill our lives, influence our every activity, guide our every decision in order to to become the Bride of Christ.

All is not lost though for the wheat Firstfruits, for many of them have "done excellently", Proverbs 31:29. Their reward will be according to their efforts, Revelation 22:12, "'Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done." However, because they were not fully prepared for the First Resurrection, they must reach full repentance during the Great Tribulation, and it is apparent from Revelation 7:14-17, that for many of them, their reward will be in the New Jerusalem, after the *Second* Resurrection : "Sir," I answered, "you know."

So he replied, "These are the ones who have **come out of the great tribulation**; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, 'They are before the throne of God and **serve Him day and night in His temple**; and the One seated on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. Never again will they hunger, and never will they thirst; nor will the sun beat down upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the centre of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'" Cf. Revelation 21,22.

Revelation 14:14-20 proves that the First Resurrection takes place *before* the Great Tribulation.

There remains to answer only the suggestion that the Wave-sheaf Day is not a High Sabbath because it may only be about Christ and His Father. The answer to that may be that all the other Days listed in Leviticus 23 picture events relevant to ALL mankind, but Wave-sheaf is relevant only to Christ and the elect 144,000 **in Christ**, of Revelation 14:1-5. Notice that we cannot be dogmatic. Paul says we see these things 'through a glass darkly' but the scriptures are there for us to read and weigh, with God's help. So why does it all matter? Because it shows that, *if* the Wave-sheaf does include the Bride, the Wheat Firstfruits don't. Christ measures them and his standards for His Bride are supreme. They have done well, but not well enough!

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