

# THE PARABLES OF JESUS - Part 7

## The Parable of the Harvest

### The Resurrection-Harvest at the End of the Age In Fulfillment of Israel's Feast Days

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. *Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn...."*

.... Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field. And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and *the harvest is the end of the age*; and the reapers are angels. So *just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the (this) age*. The Son of Man will *send forth His angels*, and they will *gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire*; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. *Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. He who has ears, let him hear.

### Christ - The First Fruits - The Full Harvest

1 Corinthians 15:20-24

But now Christ has been *raised from the dead, the first fruits* of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: *Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end*, when he hands over the kingdom to the God and Father...."

In the context of 1 Corinthians 15, *what* did the "first fruits" represent?

*Who* was Christ the first fruits of?

Notice the parallels between *the harvest* in Matthew 13, *the resurrection* in 1 Corinthians 15, and *the gathering* in Matthew 24, on the following chart....

MATTHEW 13	1 CORINTHIANS 15	MATTHEW 24-25
The harvest, separation of wheat from tares (13:30,39-41)	The resurrection (15:23)	The gathering, separation of sheep from goats (24:31 25:31-33)
Coming of the Son of Man	Second coming of Christ (15:23)	Coming of the Son of Man (24:30)
The "end of <i>this</i> age" (13:39-40)	The "end" (15:24)	The "end of the age" (24:3,14)
The establishment of the kingdom - the righteous inherit the kingdom (13:41-43)	The handing over (delivering-up) of the kingdom (15:24)	The establishment of the kingdom - the righteous inherit the kingdom (25:34, Luke 21:31)
		Fulfilled in Jesus' generation (24:34)

What does this chart tell us about the harvest in Matthew 13?

Now, notice the difference between the NASB and NIV translations of 1 Corinthians 15:23....

But each in his own order: *Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming.* (NASB)

But each in turn: *Christ, the first fruits*; then, when he comes, *those who belong to him.* (NIV)

I suggest that 1 Corinthians 15:23 teaches *three distinct phases* of this resurrection-harvest at the end of the Jewish age. Furthermore, I suggest that these three distinct phases *correspond to three distinct people(s).*

1. *Christ* - the first of the first fruits
2. *The last day's generation* (30-70AD) - the first fruits of the full harvest
3. *All Israel* - the ingathering of the full harvest (the faithful of the Old Testament)

We will only have time in this study to discuss the first two, let's begin....

## The 3 Feasts of The Lord

Exodus 23:14-16

*Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.* You shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. Also, you shall observe *the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits* of your labors from what you sow in the field; also, *the Feast of the Ingathering* at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field.

## The Passover

Leviticus 23:5

*In the first month, on the fourteenth day* of the month at twilight is *the Lord's Passover.*

Historically, when was the first Passover observed, and what was its purpose?

What event did this feast point to, and when was this feast ultimately fulfilled?

THE PASSOVER IN EGYPT	THE PASSOVER IN JERUSALEM (30AD)
On the 14 <sup>th</sup> day of the 1 <sup>st</sup> month	On the 14 <sup>th</sup> day of the 1 <sup>st</sup> month
The sacrifice of an unblemished lamb	The sacrifice of Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God
Redeemed (delivered) them from the bondage of slavery in Egypt under Pharaoh	Redeemed (delivered) them from the bondage of sin, death, and law under Satan
Began a forty year (one generation) exodus which brought them into Canaan, the promised land	Began a forty year (one generation) exodus which brought them into the Kingdom of God, the new creation (See Luke 9:28-31 concerning Jesus' exodus)

Explanation of the chart:

-For those who observed the Passover in Egypt, the blood of the lamb delivered from physical bondage and began their exodus towards their inheritance, the land of Canaan.

-For those who had put their faith in Christ, the blood of that Lamb - the spotless Lamb of God - delivered from the spiritual bondage of sin and death and began *their second exodus* towards their inheritance, that is, the kingdom of God and the heavenly Jerusalem.

## The Feast of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus 23:6

Then *on the fifteenth day of the same month* there is *the Feast of Unleavened Bread* to the Lord; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.

Explanation:

The feast of unleavened bread was a week-long celebration, beginning the day after Passover. This feast showed *the purity that Israel was to walk in following the Passover*, illustrated by eating only bread without leaven, leaven being symbolic immoral influence.

Historically, when was this feast first observed?

What is the spiritual application for this feast today?

## The Feast of First Fruits

Leviticus 23:9-11

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in *the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest* to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted; on the day after the Sabbath, the priest shall wave it....

Explanation:

This feast was celebrated *on the day following the Passover Sabbath, that is, two days after the Passover, on the third day*. On this day, the *first fruits of the harvest* were offered to God. These first fruits marked the beginning of the spring grain harvest. The idea was *to dedicate the first ripened stalks of grain to God, in anticipation of a greater harvest to come*. These first fruits would be barley, which ripens in some areas as early as March.

*Who and what* did this “first fruit” offering represent?

Historically, when was this feast ultimately fulfilled?

What is the implication of this as it relates to the resurrection-harvest of Matthew 13?

## The Feast of Pentecost / Feast of Harvest / Feast of Weeks

Leviticus 23:15-17

You shall also count for yourselves *from the day after the Sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete Sabbaths. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath*; then you shall present a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring in from your dwelling places *two loaves of bread* for a wave offering.... *as first fruits to the Lord*.

Explanation of the feast:

The feast of Pentecost was celebrated *fifty days after the feast of first fruits*. The two loaves of bread were offered to the Lord *as first fruits signified the completion of the spring harvest*. But that’s not all. The feast of Pentecost and the offering of the two loaves as first fruits marked *the beginning of the interval between the spring and fall harvests, and began the time for the offering of all first fruits for the fall harvest*.

*Who and what* did this “first fruit” offering represent?

What is the relationship between *these first fruits and the first fruits mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:23?* (NIV)

Historically, when was this feast first observed?

What event did this feast point to, and when was this feast ultimately fulfilled?

<b>PENTECOST IN THE WILDERNESS</b>	<b>PENTECOST IN JERUSALEM (AD30)</b>
50 days after the Passover in Egypt	50 days after the Passover (Jesus) in Jerusalem
The giving of the Law of commandments written on tablets of stone	The giving of the Law of Christ written on hearts of flesh
Inauguration of the Old Covenant	Inauguration of the New Covenant
The forming of the nation of Israel <i>according to the flesh</i>	The forming of the nation of Israel <i>according to the Spirit</i>
First fruits (first generation) to inherit the land of Canaan	First fruits (first generation) to inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God

Explanation of the chart:

-At Pentecost (the feast of Harvest), which was 50 days after the Passover in Egypt, the Lord himself descended on Mt. Sinai and the nation of Israel was birthed through the giving of the Old Covenant, the Mosaic Law. Those who came out of Egypt were *the “first fruits” of all who would inherit the promised land, the physical land of Canaan.*

-At Pentecost in AD30, which was 50 days after the death of Jesus (the true Passover Lamb sacrificed in Jerusalem), the Spirit descended upon the apostles signifying the birth of a new nation - true and spiritual Israel - through the giving of the New Covenant. *Those who received the Spirit became the “first fruits” of all who would inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God at the end of the Jewish age in AD70.*

What is the implication of this as it relates to the resurrection-harvest of Matthew 13?

## The Two Loaves on the Day of Pentecost

As we close, it is important that we see the connection between *the resurrection*, the *pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost - the feast of Harvest*, and the *“two loaves of bread”* that are mentioned in Leviticus 23. Notice that these “two loaves of bread” were the first fruits offering....

Leviticus 23:17

You shall bring in from your dwelling places *two loaves of bread* for a wave offering, made of two-tenths of an ephah they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven *as first fruits to the Lord.*

But what did this first fruit offering of the “two loaves of bread” represent? More specifically, what did they represent *in the context of the harvesting of the first fruits on the day of Pentecost?*

Ezekiel 37:1-5,11-14,21-22,26

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, you know. Again, He said to me, “Prophecy over these bones and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus, says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold, *I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life....* Then He said to me, “Son of man, *these bones are the whole house of Israel;* behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’ Therefore, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, *I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.* Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. *I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life,* and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it,” declares the Lord..... Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have

gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them *one nation* in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and *they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms....* I will make *a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them.* And I will place them and multiply them, and *will set My sanctuary in their midst forever.*

In fulfillment of these prophecies, immediately after the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon Israel signifying the birth of a new united nation under the power of a New Covenant, Peter stood up on the feast of Harvest (the day of Pentecost) and said this....

Acts 2:36,41

Therefore, let *all the house of Israel* know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified.... So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and *that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

*Conclusion:*

*Israel's "end of the age resurrection-harvest" began with the resurrection of Jesus (the first of the first fruits) in AD30, continued with the first century believers (the first fruits of the rest of the harvest) beginning on Pentecost (the feast of the harvest), and culminated in AD70 with the ingathering of the full harvest - the salvation/resurrection of all Israel. Matthew 13 and the parable of the harvest pictured the then-present last day's resurrection-harvest of Israel at the end of the Jewish/Old Covenant age. Christ would rise first, and 50 days later the first fruits would begin to be raised up (harvested) with him.*