

Leviticus 23:9-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/lev/lev-23/leviticus-239-14/>

God declares the Feast of First Fruits to be His appointed time.

God admonishes the people that *when you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest*, to give offerings from the *first fruits* (i.e. best) of the *harvest*. The specific crop they were harvesting in the spring would be barley. The statement, “*When you enter the land*” indicates this only applies to crops harvested in the land of Israel. The fact that the priest was waving the offering *before the LORD* indicated the tabernacle (or later the temple) was in operation.

Next it is commanded that *he* (the priest) *shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted*. This is called a *wave offering*. The priest would elevate the *sheaf* of grain up and down in a vertical motion, then side-to-side in a horizontal motion. It has been noted that this motion creates a shape of a cross. A sheaf (“Omer” in Hebrew) is a bundle of barley or wheat that was usually bound with a rope in the middle.

In addition to the *wave offering* was the *first fruits offering*. The *first fruits* was the first part of the bounty of the harvest. Each Israelite was to also bring *a male lamb one year old without defect, a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil*, and also a *drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine* (about 1.4 liters). An *ephah*, a dry measurement, was a little over a bushel and weighed approximately 40 pounds. So, *two-tenths of an ephah* would have been about eight pounds of *fine flour*. All these were to be given as offerings of the *first fruits* of the *harvest*. The *wave offering* of the *First Fruits* always takes place *on the day after the sabbath* following Passover. In other words, on a Sunday. Jesus Christ resurrected on the Feast of *First Fruits*. Knowing this, the apostle Paul said:

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”
(1 Corinthians 15:20)

This means that the Bible is teaching that there will be many others who will be resurrected as Jesus was (1 Corinthians 15:42).

Next God declares the following statute, *until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth*. Until God received the *wave offering* of the *first fruits* on the Feast of *First Fruits*, Israelites could not eat *bread nor roasted grain nor new growth* that had emerged since winter. This meant that the very *first part* of each harvest was to be dedicated to God. This teaches that we are to put God *first* in all aspects of our life. Paul was likely thinking of this principle when he instructed the church at Corinth to “put aside and save” some money for an offering to God “on the first day of every week” (1 Corinthians 16:2).

The feast of *First Fruits* is declared to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. This means this appointed time was to continue for the entire age, and apply no matter where they dwelt.

Biblical Text

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 “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. 11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD. 13 Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. 14 Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.