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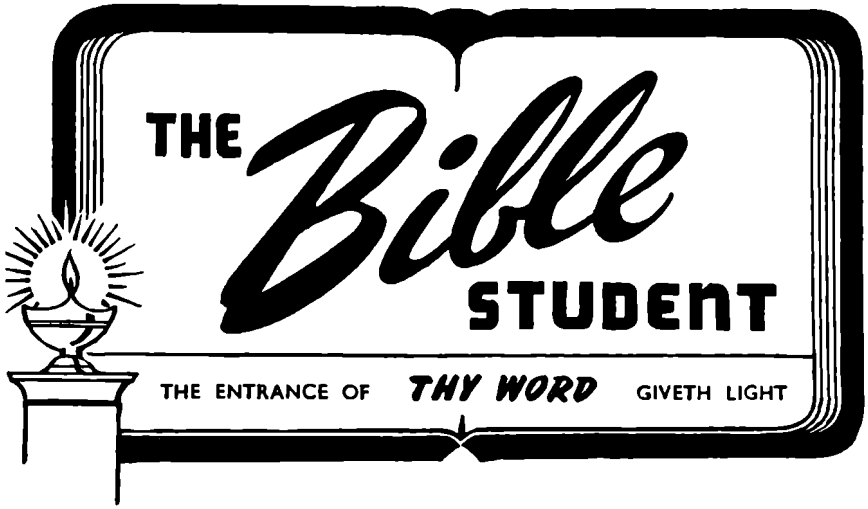
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A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

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New Series
Vol. XXIV. No. 4

OCTOBER
1953

CONTENTS

EXPOSITORY STUDY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL	145
NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES	...	...	151
PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL	...	...	154
'BEHOLD MY SERVANT'!	...	...	160
BIBLICAL HEBREW WORDS	...	...	167
SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS	...	...	172
PROGRESSIVE REVELATION OF HOLY SPIRIT	...	...	179
NOTES ON HEBREWS	...	...	185
THE STORY OF HIGH ALTITUDES (<i>devotional</i>)	...	...	190

Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

1 Ch. 22: 19, 2 Ch. 1: 9 it is really *Yahveh*, the God of (heaven, your fathers, Israel, etc.). The combination was probably used in Gen. 2 and 3 to make it clear that the Creator God dealt with His first creation as personally and as much in grace as He did with Israel in the wilderness.

The title *Yahveh tseba'oth*, the LORD of hosts, is used very widely. It seems really to be a contraction of *Yahveh 'elohe ha-tseba'ot*, the LORD, the God of hosts (Am. 6:14, etc.). The name is first found in 1 Sa. 1:3, but there are no valid grounds for thinking that the origin of it must be sought in the later period of the Judges. On the basis of verses like 1 Sa. 17:45 ('... the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel') it has been widely assumed that the title first meant that *Yahveh* was Israel's war-god. It is much more probable that the inclusion in the 'hosts' of the stars and angels is as old as the title, and that from the first it hailed *Yahveh* as Lord of all power whether celestial or terrestrial.

(In the next issue, 'Words of Relationship')

SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS

A TYPOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEVITICUS 23

By THE EDITOR

IV. The Subject Considered Analytically

3. THE FEAST OF FIRST-FRUITS

(a) VIEWED TOGETHER WITH FEAST OF WEEKS

In taking these two Feasts together first we need to remind ourselves of what has already been pointed out—that *together* they form the second pair of the seven, and are related to the first pair by being dependent upon them. Further, in these two pairs of Feasts the first members of each pair refer their teaching to Christ, whilst the second members refer to the believer and the church. A reference to previous chapters will make this clear.

Looking at the two Feasts, let us note four points of comparison and contrast:

1. *Both were to be celebrated in the land of Canaan*, in fact, they could not have been celebrated outside of it.

The teaching implied has already been referred to under the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And remembering that both

feasts were 'harvest festivals,' implying resurrection, we have here the thought that 'like as Christ was raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should *walk in newness of life*' (Rom. 6: 4)—which is resurrection life. But such a walk is only possible 'in the land'—which, as seen before, is spoken of in the New Testament as 'in the heavens.' Whether for the church or the individual believer the 'land' is the proper sphere of the Christian life and walk.

2. *Again both Feasts are connected with the ingathering of the harvest.* But the first (the Feast of First-fruits) differed from the second in being held at the commencement of the barley harvest—which ripened before any of the other grain; whilst the second was held at the end of the harvest season when both the barley and the wheat had been gathered in, seven Sabbaths (fifty days) intervening between the two.

There is another harvest field for the first ripe fruit of which the Lord of the harvest had long been waiting—a harvest of which '*Christ is the First-fruits*'¹ and the whole redeemed family, '*all they that are Christ's*' perfected in resurrection glory 'at His coming,' shall be the fulness.

3. *The third point to note is the contrast between the kinds of offerings* presented before Jehovah. Let us look at first one, then the other.

(a) *In the Feast of First-fruits* the main offering consisted of a sheaf (an *omer*) of newly-cut barley—the grain in the ear, unbaken and untouched (as it were) by hand. It was to be waved before Jehovah, 'to be accepted for you.' The beautiful fresh grain was there as a result of death, and exemplifies for us Christ's own words spoken centuries later: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit'.² So death had to pass upon Him if He was to be able to take that glorious title, 'First-born' from amongst the dead, 'that in all things He might have the pre-eminence'.³ How very wonderfully that Sheaf of First-fruits pointed onwards to the day of Christ's glorious Resurrection! It was both type and prophecy, 'that He should be the First that should rise from the dead'.⁴

¹ 1 Cor. 15: 23.

² Jn. 12: 24.

³ Col. 1: 18.

⁴ Acts 26: 23 (the R. V. is probably more correct, but still embodies the thought of priority in resurrection.)

(b) The main offering in the *Feast of Weeks* consisted of 'two wave loaves,' made of fine flour and baked. They were also called a 'First-fruits' unto Jehovah, though the two words are somewhat different in the Hebrew. Then applied to the Church the appropriateness of the type is immediately apparent—for that one body is now to have no distinction between Jew and Gentile and yet is composed of both.¹ The Church's oneness with her risen Head is at least hinted at in the *fine flour*—an ingredient, in fact the main one, in every meal-offering, which stands ever as a type of that Holy One 'in whose spirit there is no guile.' This Church, holy and spotless, is the very one He is going to 'present to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; that it should be holy and without blemish'.² Apart from His own bodily resurrection this could not have been possible.

4. *The only other point to note is a very important one,* for it serves to illustrate the present contrast between Christ the Head, and the Church His Body.

(a) In the First-fruits Feast two significant differences were to be observed in the offerings that accompanied the main offering. There was to be no *leaven* allowed and the *sin-offering* was omitted. The only offerings allowed were the burnt-offering and the meal-offering, both of which served to emphasize the sinless character of Christ. The designed omission is without doubt to guard the spotless holiness of the Antitype to whom the Feast pointed. Thus the whole picture of the Christ is preserved intact—His solitary dignity and pre-eminence both in death and in resurrection; His peerless, holy character; His representative ministry at the right hand of God—'the priest shall wave the sheaf *before Jehovah,*' 'to be accepted for you.'

(b) In contrast, the two loaves of the Feast of Weeks were to be 'baken *with leaven,*' and there was to be a *sin-offering* also, added to which was the *peace-offering*. Does this seem to imply that sin is permitted in the Church which is His body? Emphatically, No! But as long as the Church is the 'church militant on earth' it will ever be in the presence of sin; and whilst judicially every member of that Body is holy and 'sanctified in God the Father,' it is still true experimentally that the sinful

¹ Eph. 2: 14-18; cf. 1 Cor. 12: 13.

² Eph. 5: 25-27.

nature is there and will assert itself if not kept in its right place. It recognizes both the presence of sin and the possibility of sinning. But at the same time it also provides the sin-offering for the cleansing of sin, and the peace-offering for the grace to 'walk in newness of life'—because 'He is our peace.' There is also the burnt-offering and the meal-offering telling of every possible exigency being met by Christ Himself.

(b) VIEWED SEPARATELY

It is instructive to note the time when the Feast of First-fruits took place. Verse 11 of the chapter indicates its very close connection with the previous Feasts, and specially the phrase: '*on the morrow after the Sabbath.*' To get the significance of this expression we must again remind ourselves of what was mentioned previously that the lamb slain as a sacrifice in the Pass-over became the food that introduced the 'Feast of Unleavened Bread'; so the latter followed the former without any break. That brings us to the 15th day of the month, which was to be a 'day of holy convocation.' It might either have preceded or coincided with the weekly Sabbath—but whether the one or the other, this Feast of First-fruits was to commence '*on the morrow after the Sabbath*'—i.e., on the *first day of the week*. Now we turn to the N.T. to find it written: '*The first day of the week* cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth *the stone taken away from the sepulchre* . . . Jesus saith unto her Mary!¹

Henceforth, for the Church, the first day of the week becomes the Lord's Day, the day of His resurrection from the dead. Notice that this was the *third* day after the paschal lamb had been slain; at the very time, or within a few hours of the time, when the leaders and priests of Israel were busied in preparing and presenting in their Temple the *Omer* of First-fruits.

In this connection David Baron very suggestively quotes Isa. 4:2, and says: 'The construction of the Hebrew demands that the expression, "*The fruit of the earth,*" should be regarded as another title of "*The Branch of Jehovah.*" It is one of the most remarkable prophecies of the mystery of the Divine and human natures of the Messiah in the Old Testament.' He then goes on to quote Adolph Saphir—'Exactly as the type had pre-figured

¹ Jn. 20 : 1, 16.

it, so was He offered up unto God. And on the morrow after the Sabbath He came forth the Sheaf, the Branch out of the earth. . . . Suffering and death were behind Him. He had died once unto sin, but now He lived unto God.'

Here is the glorious Head of redeemed humanity coming forth out of the earth, that He might sit at the right hand of the Father. How wonderfully is the Passover fulfilled unto us; Christ our Passover is offered; Christ the First-fruits of the dead is RISEN!

It has ever been the Church's glorying that the Resurrection of her great Head and Lord is the 'Foundation Stone of Christianity'—taken in conjunction with its essential correlative, the Atoning Death. Or, to use another figure, it is the key-stone of the Arch of Salvation, of which the Incarnation and the sacrificial Death of Christ, are the two great Pillars. Everything in Christianity, everything in the Church, everything in the Bible, everything in the earth, we may say, is of little or no value if *this* bulwark of the Faith is anything but *literal fact*. In these days of increasing unbelief and wholesale attack upon the central truths of Revelation, it is most essential we pause to study and understand this glorious truth for ourselves.

(c) SUMMARY

We may summarise the subject as follows; it will be convenient to view it in three aspects: 1. As *an historical Fact*; 2. as a *cardinal Doctrine*; 3. as a *holy Dynamic* for the daily life of service and testimony. In so considering it, we shall the easier realize that, it is not merely a great doctrine, but it has *life* and motive-force. Not 'mere dogma,' to be 'held' by those professing Christianity in differentiation from other Religions; but it is, what even in these Feasts it is designed to typify, a spiritual source of Life-Power. It is this which makes it so vital a truth for the whole Body, and every member severally.

1. *Considered as an Historical Fact.* A famous Lord Chancellor well said, 'No fact of ancient history is attested by evidence so abundant, and unique.' There are several lines of evidence to prove the fact, but we must confine ourselves to three only:

(a) The existence of the *primitive Church* is a very definite proof. It cannot be denied that the early Community of Christians

came into existence as the definite result of belief in the Resurrection. The characteristic theme of apostolic preaching was the Resurrection. On every occasion when they were faced by unbelievers, Jews or Gentiles, their testimony was of 'Jesus and the Resurrection'.¹ Both the apostles, Peter and Paul, in their addresses made it prominent, as a study of the earlier chapters of the Acts shews.² Two facts stand out: (i) the Society was gathered together by preaching; (ii) the *theme* of the preaching was the Resurrection of Christ. There was nothing vague about the preaching or the theme. Had it been possible at all, there were enough Jewish enemies existing only too eager to use any *contrary* evidence had it existed. But 'the silence of the Jews is as significant as the speech of the Christians' (Fairbairn). And we can heartily endorse the statement that 'as the Church is too holy for a foundation of rottenness, so is she too real for a foundation of mist.' (Archbishop Alexander).

(b) The second proof is found in *the Scripture record* itself, mainly of course in the Gospels.

In all four Gospels the appearances of Christ are recorded without any sign of hesitancy or of 'special pleading.' There are two sets of appearances, one in Jerusalem and the other in Galilee, and their number and the amplitude and weight of their testimony cannot easily be explained away, but bear the closest examination. For example, the story of the walk to Emmaus,³ the visit of Peter and John to the tomb,⁴ and the appearance to Mary herself, all reveal striking marks of reality and simple straightforwardness. Moule comments on Luke 24, 'It carries with it, as great literary critics have pointed out, the deepest inward evidences of its own literal truthfulness. For it so narrates the intercourse of a "risen God" with commonplace men as to set natural and supernatural side by side in perfect harmony. And to do this has always been the difficulty, the despair of imagination. . . . The risen Christ on the road to Emmaus was a fact supreme, and the Evangelist did but tell it as it was.' The same tokens of credibility are observable in all the other appearances. That there *are* difficulties we do not deny, but 'the very difficulties are a testimony to a conviction

¹ Acts 4: 2.

² See *e.g.*, Acts 2: 32; 4: 10; 10: 40; 9: 5; 13: 30; 17: 31; 1 Cor. 15: 1-4.

³ Luke 24.

⁴ John 20.

of the truth of the narratives on the part of the Christian Church through the ages. The records have been fearlessly left as they are because of the facts they embody.' (Griffith Thomas).

(c) Another evidence is the *personal story of the Apostle Paul*. He possessed the three essentials of a true witness: intelligence, candour, and disinterestedness. His conversion and work stand out clearly as a background to his own fearless preaching of the Saviour, of the Resurrection in particular. 'He affirms that within five years of the crucifixion of Jesus he was taught that, Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He was raised the third day according to the Scriptures.' (Kennett). He *writes* this less than twenty-five years after the great Event, and with complete assurance after quoting the summary of the *evidence* (given in 1 Cor. 15:3-7), adds his own personal experience (v. 8)—'last of all . . . He appeared to me also.' So that 'Within a very few years of the time of the crucifixion of Jesus the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus was, in the mind of at least one man of education, absolutely irrefutable.' (Kennett). This personal testimony of one who at one time was the implacable enemy of the Nazarene and of His people (as he himself humbly confesses), but later became the mighty instrument in God's hands for the establishing of Christ's Church, it is difficult to refuse.

The story has often been told of how Lord Lyttelton and his friend Gilbert West left Oxford University at the close of one academic year, each determining to give attention respectively (during the long vacation) to the conversion of Paul and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, in order to prove the baselessness of both. They met again in the autumn and compared experiences: Lord Lyttelton had become convinced of the truth of Paul's conversion, and Gilbert West of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The *living* Fact of the Resurrection still stands impregnable!