

A study in the Word.....

Presented by John Walsh, largely based on Dr. Stephen E. Jones' book *Creation's Jubilee*

GOD'S THREE HARVEST FESTIVALS

This teaching on the Festivals is the work of Dr. Stephen E. Jones. As a lover and seeker of biblical truth, I feel fortunate beyond words to have been introduced to the teachings of Dr. Jones about six years ago. It is my hope and prayer that you will find as much delight and joy in his work as I have. I have also had the pleasure of meeting Stephen three times and talked a number of times with him on the phone. I found him to be humble and approachable in the extreme with a lovely sense of humor and a quick wit! This teaching is from his book: *Creation's Jubilee*. I present it to you with some slight minor editing!

When Israel came out of Egypt, God told them they were to commemorate their main experiences in certain ceremonies conducted upon specific holidays, or festivals. The three main celebrations were Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. These are also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Harvest (or Feast of Weeks), and the Feast of Ingathering. God's basic instructions were given in Exodus 23:14-17.

Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. ¹⁵You 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. ¹⁶Also 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. ¹⁷Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

The feast of **Passover** and the seven days of Unleavened Bread, is first. It commemorates the day Israel left Egypt under Moses on their way to the Promised Land. The second feast, **Pentecost**, or Harvest, commemorates the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, the day the fire of God came down upon the mount, and God spoke to all the people. The third feast, **Tabernacles**, or Ingathering, commemorates two things: (1) the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness; and (2) the time Israel was *supposed* to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land.

These experiences were set up to remember certain key experiences in the life of the nation. But they also have other levels of meaning. On the personal side, Passover signifies our **Justification** from the bondage of sin ("Egypt"). Pentecost signifies our **Sanctification** by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Tabernacles signifies our **Glorification** at "*the redemption of our body*" (Romans 8:23), when we inherit our "Promised Land."

The Three Harvests: Barley, Wheat, and Grapes

A particular harvest is associated with each of these three feast days. Passover is associated with the harvest of **barley**; Pentecost is associated with the harvest of **wheat**; and Tabernacles is associated specifically with the **grape** harvest. Because this is so little-known, most do not understand Paul's teachings on the three harvests.

In the land of Palestine, barley was the first to ripen in the spring of the year. When the people came to Jerusalem for the Passover, each brought a handful of ripe barley to give to God as the firstfruits of the harvest. On the Sunday after Passover, the priest took some of the barley and waved it up and down before God (Lev. 23:10-14). The New American Standard Bible has a footnote on this passage, which reads:

"The feast of *first fruits* involved presenting to the Lord a sheaf (lit. an omer) of the *barley* harvest . . . First fruits symbolized the consecration of the entire harvest to God and was an earnest, or pledge, of the full harvest yet to be gathered."

Only barley could have been used, because the wheat had not yet ripened at Passover in that part of the world.

There is an Old Testament story that shows this as well. Recall that in the days of Moses, God put ten plagues upon Egypt before Pharaoh allowed Israel to leave. Israel finally left the day after the tenth plague, and this came to be celebrated as the feast of Passover. The seventh plague to come upon Egypt shortly before Passover was the *hail*. The Bible tells us that the hail destroyed the barley, because it had already eared out (ripened), but the wheat was not destroyed, because it had not ripened yet. Exodus 9:31 and 32 says,

³¹Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³²But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripen late.

A footnote in the NASV comments on this:

"The *wheat* and spelt (an inferior kind of wheat) were not harmed at this time because *they ripen a month or so later.*"

So we see that the wheat ripened later around the time of Pentecost. Just as barley was offered to God on the first day of the week after Passover, so also was wheat offered on Pentecost seven weeks later. This is made clear in Exodus 34:22, which reads,

²²And you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, *that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest*, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.

The grapes ripened at the end of the growing season, in late summer. The grapes were harvested and thrown into the winepresses to be trodden down, and the juice was collected. On each of the seven days of the feast of Tabernacles a pitcher of grape juice from this harvest was poured out before the Lord as a drink offering in the temple (Lev. 23:27).

And so we see there were three main feast days of Israel: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Each of these called for temple ceremonies involving a different product of the harvest: barley, wheat, and grapes. The first two are *grain*; the last is a *fruit*. These are harvest festivals at the three times in the year when all the males were to stand before the presence ("face") of God. These three festivals are prophetic of the "harvest of souls," where the divine command goes forth for men to stand before God.

The Significance of Barley in the Bible

If we were to study the passages in the Bible where barley is mentioned, we would find much valuable information about the first resurrection and the character and calling of those who qualify for it. The fact that barley matures early tells us that the "barley firstfruits" are the first people to mature spiritually to bring forth the fruits of the kingdom that God requires. Barley also can survive drought, heat, and cold much more easily than can wheat.

In the story of Elisha, for instance, during a drought, a man brought him the firstfruits of barley (2 Kings 4:42). This occurred about the same time Elisha overcame death in the pot of stew, which signifies resurrection. The prophet then multiplied the barley and fed a hundred men.

A New Testament example is found in John 6, where Jesus fed the five thousand. It occurred at the time of Passover (6:4), and the lad brought five *barley* loaves and two fish (6:9). After multiplying the bread, Jesus told his disciples to "*gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*" Later in the same chapter, Jesus gives us the lesson in this story three times, saying, "*I will raise him up at the last day*" (6:39,44,54). In other words, even as twelve baskets of barley fragments were gathered so that nothing would be lost, so also the barley company, which was broken to feed the people, will be raised up at the last day of this present age. Twelve is the Biblical number of divine government. **The barley people are called to rule and reign with Christ.**

As for the calling of the barley company, we read that Gideon and his army were called "*a loaf of barley bread*" (Judges 7:13). God is raising an army of overcomers who will rule with Christ to subdue all nations under His feet. Their weapons are a trumpet and a clay pitcher with a torch hidden inside. Gideon gave his army instructions that they were to remain quiet until the trumpet sounded. Then they were to smash the earthen jars and reveal the torches inside.

The trumpet signifies resurrection, for Paul tells us that the dead will be raised "at the last trump," (1 Cor. 15:52) that is, the seventh trumpet. As for the clay pitcher and the torch inside, Paul says that the glory of God is hidden within us for a time, and that "*we have this treasure in earthen vessels*" (2 Cor. 4:7). **A time is coming when the last trumpet will sound, and these bodies of death, the "earthen vessels," will be broken to reveal the light of the glory of God.** This will occur at the first resurrection.

The Significance of Wheat in the Bible

A study of wheat in the Bible teaches us about the Church in general and the manner in which the Church is raised and judged briefly in the second resurrection. The firstfruits of Pentecost signify the second resurrection, when the Church is raised up to stand before the face of God. As we said earlier, wheat ripened by Pentecost. On that day the high priest was to offer to God two loaves of wheat bread *baked with leaven*. Once God had received His portion, then the people were allowed to harvest and eat of that year's crop of wheat.

The feast of Pentecost focuses upon people who are leavened. Israel received the law at Mount Sinai on the day of Pentecost. On this day they were formed into a kingdom, as God spoke the Word to them. The people were afraid of the fire and ran from the voice of God. (See Exodus 20:18-20.) The people were leavened and did not want to step into the fire of God to stop the leaven. So Pentecost was not fulfilled in the days of Moses.

In the second chapter of Acts, **Pentecost was finally fulfilled because the disciples did not run from God, but embraced the fire.** Yet a basic problem remained - the

Pentecostal Age was still leavened, and the Church in general has followed Israel's example under Moses by refusing to hear God's voice and by running from His fire.

Pentecost was not designed to bring perfection, i.e., an unleavened condition. Pentecost gave us only an "earnest" of the Spirit, a downpayment, rather than the fullness. The NASV calls it a "pledge." Ephesians 1:13 and 14 says,

¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴which is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

This is affirmed in 2 Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5. As a consequence, we presently live in an age of leaven, an age of an imperfect kingdom of priests who lack the fullness by which they may bring the kingdom to perfection. If there is one thing we have learned in the Pentecostal Age, it is that we cannot inherit the perfected kingdom on the basis of a mere earnest of the Spirit. Only those with the fullness of His Spirit can fully inherit the promise. This is frustrating to the barley company, of course, who live in a Pentecostal Age, yet desire the fullness of the Spirit. But **all must await the appointed time**. It is a corporate blessing that God will give to the entire barley company at the same time, and this must await the time when all those of the barley company have been born and have come to full maturity.

This situation is typified by Caleb and Joshua in the days of Israel in the wilderness. These two men were like the barley company in the midst of the wheat company, "*the church in the wilderness*" (Acts 7:38). They wanted to cross the Jordan and enter their inheritance early, but because the majority of the Israelites had refused to enter, Caleb and Joshua had to wander in the wilderness as well. This hardly seems fair, but God works on both an individual and a corporate level. Individuals may certainly manifest barley character in their heart, but they cannot enter the Promised Land until the appointed time.

In the New Testament we are seeing the same pattern being repeated. The people of the New Testament kingdom have been wandering in a wilderness of their own for 40 Jubilees (40 x 49 = 1960 years). Although the Calebs and Joshuas of this present age have seen the Promised Land and have longed to cross the Jordan into their inheritance, this has been denied them until the appointed time. Most of these overcomers have died not having inherited the promise. However, God will raise them from the dead at the seventh trumpet of some year, so that they may enter their inheritance alive with those of the barley company who are alive in that day.

Perhaps the most significant Old Testament passage dealing with the wheat harvest is found in the story of Saul's coronation as the first king of Israel (1 Sam. 9-12). The

people had demanded a king before David was born, so God gave them Saul to reign over them. The kingdom was thus renewed (1 Sam. 11:14), but it was a kingdom mixed with leaven. Saul was crowned on the day of Pentecost, for in Samuel's coronation speech he says in 1 Samuel 12:17: "*Is it not the wheat harvest today?*" That is, it was the day the two loaves of wheat bread were being offered to God, signaling the beginning of wheat harvest.

Saul was to Israel what the Church was in the New Testament era. Saul started out doing what was right, but in the second year of his reign he disobeyed God, and as a result he became disqualified to rule Israel. (See 1 Sam. 13:1, 13, and 14.) Nonetheless, God allowed him to continue ruling Israel for another thirty-eight and one-half years.

This followed the pattern of Israel under Moses precisely. Recall that under Moses the people refused to cross the Jordan in their second year as well, and as a consequence, God made the nation wander in the wilderness for another thirty-eight and one-half years.

In the New Testament, the same pattern held true once again. At Pentecost the Church had a fine start, but the people (as represented by their rulers in the Sanhedrin) refused to obey God. The focal point came in the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), who fulfilled the part of Caleb and Joshua in urging the people to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. Even as the people *nearly* stoned Caleb and Joshua, so also did they *actually* stone Stephen. This was the New Testament era's refusal to "cross the Jordan," and it resulted in a 40-Jubilee wandering in a wilderness again.

This understanding is corroborated by the meaning of the name "Stephen." In Greek, *stephanos* means "crown." And so the stoning of Stephen in symbolism was the rejection of the crown of life. The refusal to "cross the Jordan" and inherit the Promised Land was the rejection of the inheritance promised to us that is our hope, the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23).

And so this past age has been the era of Saul's rule. The kingdom was indeed established at Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts. But it was not the perfected kingdom, typified by the Davidic rule. It was instead an imperfect kingdom, *full of leaven*, as history has shown, typified by the reign of Saul in the Old Testament. As in the days of Saul and David, the nation must await the end of Saul's reign before the Davidic reign can begin.

It is the age of the Church, the wheat harvest. Those of the barley harvest, like Caleb and Joshua, must await the completion of the Church age before inheriting the first resurrection. Stephen's kingdom message in Acts 7 was rejected when he urged the high priest to follow Joshua-Jesus across the Jordan. And so we were sentenced to wander in the wilderness-again!

As we can see, there is always an element of judgment surrounding the feast of Pentecost. The fire that came upon Mount Sinai at the first Pentecost was supposed to bless the people with the divine presence. However, the people drew back in fear. They were afraid to hear His voice, and thus they lost the divine presence. The fire of God then moved to an alternate location, an external tabernacle made with hands. Without the divine presence upon the people, and without the ability to hear the voice of God within their hearts, they could not have the faith necessary to cross the Jordan later. Thus, Pentecost proved to be a judgment to them.

When Saul was crowned on Pentecost, Samuel prophesied "thunder and rain" that day (1Sam. 12:17). Rain on Pentecost was as unusual as snow in summer and honour in a fool (Prov. 26:1). Thus, rain and thunder on Pentecost would have been regarded by the people as judgment, even as Samuel obviously intended. We read in 1 Sam. 12:17:

¹⁷Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, that He may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the LORD by asking for yourselves a king.

On the other hand, "*thunder and rain*" also signifies the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the voice of God. Thus, while there is judgment in this situation, there is also an element of blessing. It is, in fact, a *mixture* of good and evil, which is precisely the meaning of the two loaves of wheat bread mixed with leaven that were offered to God every Pentecost.

There are many other Biblical examples we could show here, but time and space do not permit this. We must instead go on to show the significance of the wheat harvest in this matter of the second resurrection of the Church. The second resurrection will, of course, be a great blessing to all the believers who were not raised earlier in the first resurrection. Nonetheless, because all those believers are yet mixed with leaven, there is also an element of judgment that comes at the same time. Paul speaks of this judgment in 1 Corinthians 3:15.

¹⁵If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

This speaks of men in whom the foundation of Jesus Christ has already been laid. It speaks of believers. But because these people are a carnal mixture of wheat and leaven, their works must be tried by fire. The good works (done by faith in obedience to hearing God's voice) will abide; the rest will be burned. The bread must be baked in order to stop the leavening action. This is judgment, but the purpose of the fire is not to destroy the carnal believer, but to purify him.

The Church in general will be raised in the second resurrection. Jesus calls them "the just" who receive Life at the same time the "the unjust" are judged at the beginning of

that final age in "the lake of fire." In either case, the fire that judges is the same fire poured out on Pentecost. God's judgment is designed to "*thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn*" (Matthew 3:12).

The baptism of fire upon the wheat (Church) is both good and bad. It represents a purification process, which is judgment upon sin in order to bless the individual. When God works to refine or purify someone, it is not a pleasant experience. No judgment is. But those who understand the mind and purpose of God will readily submit to His "fire," knowing that God is working all things out for their good.

The Significance of Grapes in the Bible

Finally, a Biblical study of the grape harvest, with the treading of the grapes in the winepresses, tells us the fate of the unbelievers. The winepress depicts God's wrath, judgment, and the lake of fire.

The purpose of the grain harvests of spring (barley and wheat) is to provide bread for God's great communion table. The purpose of the feast of Tabernacles with its celebration of the winepress is to provide the wine for God's table. Without this wine, His communion table would have only bread and would be incomplete. God will have His wine, but it must come by means of the winepress, which speaks of the judgments of God.

God harvests His barley, wheat, and grapes in different manners, even as nature teaches us. The chaff from the barley falls away very easily, so barley is said to be *winnowed*. That is, the action of the wind itself (by means of fans) are sufficient to get rid of the chaff. This speaks of the barley company, who so quickly respond to the wind of the Spirit.

To remove the chaff from the wheat requires threshing. This is a more severe action, but it does the job. It depicts the fact that the Church will be harvested by means of judgment, or tribulation. The Latin word, *tribulum*, is a threshing instrument.

Finally, to obtain the juice the grapes must be trodden under foot. Grapes do not have chaff, but they do have "flesh" that must be pressed severely in order to obtain the wine. This represents the most severe form of judgment upon the unbelievers. Yet the result is that God obtains wine for His communion table.

Three Levels of Fulfillment

The feast days of Israel prophesy on three levels. **Level One** is the individual personal level. On this level, the Feast of Passover is fulfilled in us by **our justification** by faith in the blood of the Lamb. Passover was the feast where the people killed a lamb and put its

blood on the door posts and lintel. As Christians, we know that Jesus is the true Lamb of God who fulfilled the type and shadow in His crucifixion at Passover. When we put our faith in His shed blood, we are justified by faith.

The Feast of Pentecost is the next step in our walk with God. This is the feast where God begins to write His law upon our hearts, for it was on this day that He first spoke the Ten Commandments to Israel in Exodus 20. Acts 2 gives us the manner of its fulfillment, as the Spirit came upon the disciples in the upper room, and they all heard the voice of God speaking in their own language. Pentecost does not deal with our justification, but with **our sanctification**. It is the feast wherein we begin to learn obedience and learn how to be led by the Spirit during our sojourn in the wilderness.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the final step in our walk with God. This feast gives us the fullness of the Spirit and brings us fully into the promise of perfection in our relationship with Him. These are the three main steps in our spiritual growth and maturity as we grow up into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Level Two is the corporate fulfillment in the Church, or the Kingdom of God. On this level we see God's dealings with three Churches, or three stages of the Kingdom on earth. The Passover-level Church, or Kingdom, began with Moses at that first Passover, when Israel came out of Egypt. This first Church is called in Acts 7:38, "*the church in the wilderness*." This Passover-Age Church ended with Jesus' death on the Cross at Passover about 1,500 years later. It was an era where the Holy Spirit was WITH the people, but not IN them.

The second Church is the Pentecostal-Age Church, which began seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, when the Spirit of God was sent on the day of Pentecost. On this day God renewed the Kingdom by giving it greater power and placing the Holy Spirit within the people. No longer was the temple an external house made of wood and stone. **Now the people themselves were the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16).**

The Pentecostal Age should have been a time when the Church learned the law of God and how to be led by the voice of the Spirit. Too often, however, the leadership in the various Church factions put away the law and removed from Christians the right to hear God's voice for themselves. In this they followed the example of King Saul, who stood ready to kill his own son, Jonathan, for tasting the sweet honey of the word in the heat of battle. That story is found in 1 Samuel 14.

²⁹ Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey."

That chapter is a historical allegory of the Church and well illustrates the problem during many centuries of the **Pentecostal Age**, when the Church forbade the people to read the

Bible or to hear from God any voice that should go contrary to established orthodoxy of the Church.

The Kingdom of God in the Pentecostal Age did not bring righteousness to the earth, nor could it, because the Church was given only an earnest of the Spirit. Pentecost itself was a feast wherein God mandated that the firstfruits of the wheat should be baked with leaven. The lesson is clear: Pentecost cannot bring perfection to any individual, nor can its Church bring righteousness into the earth. That promise awaits the third and final feast and its Church, or Kingdom.

Level Three: The third Church is **the Tabernacles Age Church**. At the beginning of this age God will pour out the fullness of His Spirit upon the overcomers. They will rule with power in the earth and bring all things under the feet of Jesus Christ. Their ministry will bring righteousness and the fullness of truth into the earth. It will signal the greatest revival the world has ever seen, as the prophets foretell so often. This age, I believe, will last a thousand years, during which time the Kingdom of God will spread until it fills the whole earth. Habakkuk 2:14 tells us,

¹⁴ For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

The waters cover 100% of the sea. So also will the knowledge of the God's glory cover the earth. **This is the restoration of all things.** This is the ultimate plan of God.

Even so, this is only the second level of fulfillment for the feast days. The highest level is the creation level. On this level we focus upon the feasts as harvest festivals, wherein God brings three harvests of souls into His "barn." The first harvest is that of the barley company, the overcomers. This occurs at the first resurrection, which John dates at the beginning of the seventh thousand-year period.

The wheat harvest, which is the Church in general, will be harvested in the second great appointed time at the Great White Throne judgment. This will occur at the end of the thousand years, or the beginning of the eighth thousand-year period.

At this time the unbelievers (grape harvest) will begin to be trodden down in order to cleanse and purify them, so that they too will be fit for the Master's use. The grape harvest will then be harvested at the end of time at the Creation Jubilee.

Paul's Teachings on the Three Harvests

Paul is the only one who actually deals with the three harvests in a single passage. It is found in the great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15. In the first 21 verses, Paul deals with the importance of believing that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. He makes it

clear that if Jesus was not raised from the dead, then our faith is all in vain, for His resurrection proves that the Spirit of God can indeed raise the dead. On this historic fact our faith hinges.

Then from verses 22 through 28 Paul deals with our own resurrections and tells us that there are three classes of people, three "squadrons," who shall be raised at different times in history. These three categories correspond specifically to the three main feast days of Israel. Paul makes this quite clear, as we will see.

1. Barley and Wheat Harvests

Paul begins his discussion of the resurrections by a general statement that lets us know where Paul is taking us. He says in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.*" This plainly tells us that all are going to be raised in Christ, even as all died in Adam. Next, he tells us HOW this is to be accomplished, and we will see that not all are going to be raised at the same time.

²³**But each in his own order** [*tagma*, or "squadron"]: **Christ the first fruits** [or, "anointed firstfruits"], **after that those who are** [the] **Christ's at His coming** [*parousia*, "presence"].

Most people are agreed that Paul is here talking about two different resurrections. However, most also assume that the first resurrection is that of Jesus, who is the Christ, "The Anointed One." That is why we see it usually translated, "*Christ the first fruits.*" The second resurrection is then taken to refer to all the believers, and no distinction is made between overcomers and the Church in general. We, however, have good reason to differ with this view.

Remember, Paul had already concluded his section dealing with the resurrection of Jesus. In verse 22 he turned his attention to OUR OWN resurrections, saying that all of us will be made alive, but each in his own order, or *squadron*. The Greek word translated "order" in the King James Version is *tagma*, which is actually a military term, referring to a body of soldiers. Paul is saying that we will be raised in three squadrons.

The first squadron is NOT "Christ the firstfruits," as most translators have mistakenly assumed. There are three squadrons, and **Jesus is not a squadron, but an individual**. It should read the "anointed firstfruits." The Greek word *christos* means "anointed." Jesus is, of course, THE Christ-that is, "THE Anointed One." But the word *christos* does not always refer to Jesus. In fact, the word can be applied to anyone or any thing that has been anointed.

When the word *christos* is preceded by the definite article *the*, it usually refers to THE Christ-that is, to Jesus, who is "the Anointed One." However, when *christos* is used

WITHOUT the definite article, it is indefinite and could refer to people or things that have been anointed and set apart for God's use. Prophets, priests, and kings throughout the Bible were all anointed, or "christened." The vessels of the temple and even Jacob's pillow (Gen. 28:18) were anointed

In 1 Cor. 15:22 the definite article is used in the original Greek, where Paul is talking about Jesus "the Christ," in whom all shall be made alive. Then in verse 23, *the* is used in the latter part of the verse, but not in the first part. This implies that the verse should have been understood as follows:

"But every man in his own squadron: (1) the anointed firstfruits; (2) afterward they that are the Christ's at His presence."

Once we realize that Paul was using the theme of Israel's three harvest festivals, his meaning is clear. Paul is here referring to Passover and Pentecost, the harvest of the barley and the wheat. The first "squadron" to be raised from the dead are the *barley* Overcomers; the second is the Church in general, the *wheat* harvest.

It is important to know that the firstfruits of the barley harvest were to be anointed with oil. Paul is referring to this fact here when he says, "*anointed* firstfruits." We read of this in Leviticus 23:13. Speaking of the barley firstfruits as distinct from the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, Moses says:

¹³Its 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 libation, a fourth of a hin of wine.

And so, when Paul lists the first squadron of people who will be raised from the dead, he calls them the "anointed firstfruits." He had in mind the firstfruits of the barley harvest. These will rule and reign with Christ on the earth (Rev. 5:10; 20:6).

Those who belong to Christ, the Church in general, will inherit the second resurrection. These are portrayed in temple ceremony where the two loaves offered to God were first *baked with leaven* (Lev. 23:17). While oil signifies the Holy Spirit, leaven signifies sin (Exodus 12:15; Mark 8:15). This is the main difference between the barley and wheat, and it is obvious that Paul picks up on that difference in his discussion of the first two resurrections. The first is the anointed firstfruits; the second is leavened company, the Church in general.

2. The Grape Harvest

Paul does not stop with the second squadron of people raised to Life. He goes on to the third squadron, and, in fact, he spends more time on this squadron than the other two

combined. It is the squadron signified by the grape harvest at the end of the growing season, which was **the focal point of the Feast of Tabernacles**. So note how Paul carries this theme into his dissertation on the third resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

²⁴Then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death. ²⁷ For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says [in Psalm 8:6], "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He [the Father] is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. ²⁸ And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

Note how often Paul says these people are to be put "*under His feet*" or "subjected." There can be no doubt that Paul had the grape harvest in mind, for treading the grapes under foot was universally known to indicate judgment. This is absolutely consistent with the rest of Paul's writings, where he reveals how all things (*ta panta*, "the all") will be reconciled to God. Since reconciliation is a term indicating peace between ENEMIES, Paul is obviously referring to the rebellious nations of the earth who are enemies of God in this present age. Paul says that the purpose of creation is for all these nations to be subdued unto Christ.

Then when He has eliminated all His enemies (by turning them into friends), He will finally destroy that last enemy-death. One can only destroy death by giving Life. That is why we refer to this as a resurrection. Only when death itself is banished from the created universe will God be all in all.