

YAHSHUA, THE FIRST BORN OF THE DEAD

And He died for all, so that all those who live might live no longer to and for themselves, but to and for Him Who died and was raised again for their sake (II Corinthians 5:15).

The ministry of reconciliation between God and men cost the life of YAHSHUA, for it was done by the shedding of His own blood. Reconciled with God, men are forgiven and given the position of God's sons and daughters. We became God's firstborn and part of the harvest of souls. But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead, and He became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep; for since through a man that death [came into the world, it is] also through a Man that the resurrection of the dead [has come]. Therefore, if any person is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come! But all things are from God, who through YAHSHUA Messiah reconciled us to Himself and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation. It was God [personally present] in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself, not counting up and holding against their trespasses and committing to us the message of reconciliation (I Cor. 5:17-19).

YAHSHUA died and was raised for the sake of those who live for Him. That is, who had been born again. His resurrection foreshadows the resurrection of believers at the time when He calls us up to heaven. The Prophet Isaiah prophesized saying, "Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for Your dew is as the dew of the dawn; and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits" (Isa. 26:19). The redemptive work of YAHSHUA would be incomplete without His resurrection. Had He remained in the grave, we would be without hope and doomed to hell. Paul said, "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not risen; and if Christ has not risen, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is devoid of truth and is fruitless; and further, those who have died in Christ have perished; if we who are [abiding] in Christ have hope only in this life and that is all, then we are of all people most miserable and to pitied. But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead, and He became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep [in death]. For since through a man that death [came into the world, it is] also through a Man that the resurrection of the dead [has come]. For just as in Adam all people die, so also shall all in Christ be made alive But each in his own rank and turn: Christ is the first fruits, then those who are Christ's at His coming" (I Cor. 15:13-14;16-23)

Jesus Christ is the perfect type of the *waving* of the wave sheaf. Histories of the time show that the sheaf was waved about the same time as the daily morning sacrifice—about the third hour of the day or 9 AM by our reckoning. This particular day was Sunday morning, the day after the Sabbath that falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The priests of the Temple would have been conducting the wave sheaf ceremony on the day of Christ's resurrection. It is quite evident that Christ ascended to heaven about the same time as the wave sheaf was being waved before God. (John W. Ritenbaugh) Connecting this to the believer being YAHSHUA'S first

fruit, we die, we will be resurrected and we will ascend to heaven when God's trumpet calls us up to heaven. The wave sheaf offering constitutes the foreshadowing of salvation in an amazing act of our Lord YAHSHUA'S when He gave His life as a ransom to save us from eternal death. This is a Jewish ceremony described in Leviticus 23:20-24. The waving of the first sheaf of grain represented a thankful acknowledgment to God as a giver; it also represents the Risen Lord and the redemptive work He was to do. It looks beyond the sheafs to the time when the incarnate God would come down to earth to redeem humankind. In this action, our Lord showed His ultimate love. His resurrection was the act of Him being the first of the dead to be brought back to life, leading His saints to life at the time of the rapture. The sheaf of first fruits is the type of Christianity. YAHSHUA'S church symbolizes God's harvest of souls. Through His Son's redemptive work we became God's first born, holy to the Lord and part of the harvest of souls (Jer. 2:3; I Cor. 15: 20-23).

The first fruits mean the first fruits of the harvest. This term used by Paul denotes that YAHSHUA was first of many other faithful servants God will bring to life (I Cor. 15:20-23). The 144 thousand Israelites minus Dan's tribes is called the first fruits of God and of the Lamb. We read this in Revelation 14:4: "These are they who have not defiled themselves by relations with women, for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These are they who have been ransomed from among men as the first fruits for God and the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4).

In John 1:35-36 John the Baptist presents YAHSHUA as the Lamb of God Who takes the sin of the world. This was declared between 8 and 9, of the next morning, the hour when the sheaf of first fruits was waved before the Lord. By saying this, John sees YAHSHUA now as a Lamb risen from the dead (The Restored Vision A.E Ware). Leviticus. 23:11 reads: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, that you may be accepted; on the next day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it [before the Lord] (resurrection). The death and resurrection of our Lord YAHSHUA happened on Passover time in a symbolic and prophetic way, most accurate and convincing, as it fulfilled the prophet's utterances about His death. The most significant time in the History of Christianity and the world in the fact that He arose from the dead as the first fruit, first to be brought back to life. "He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days and the will and pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand; He shall see [the fruit] of travail of His soul and be satisfied..." (Isaiah 53). We His people – His first born are His first fruit at the resurrection of the last days.

YAHSHUA didn't come to earth only to die for us. God's plan was complete in that our salvation will include life eternal with Him. He made us His family; He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together in the heavenly sphere in Christ YAHSHUA; He did this that He might clearly demonstrate through the ages to come the immeasurable riches of His free grace in kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ YAHSHUA. Therefore, we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ YAHSHUA Himself the chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:6,7,20). "But now, if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how is it that some of

you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if Christ has not risen, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is devoid of truth and is fruitless; we are even discovered to be misrepresenting God, for we testified of Him that He raised Christ Whom He did not raise in case it is true that the dead are not raised; for if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is mere delusion and you are still in your sins and further those who have died in Christ have perished.” (I Cor. 15:12-18). But death could not hold Him dead. He fulfilled in full what His Father planned, setting us free for eternity through the first resurrection of those who have died. This is our blessed hope we have been waiting for. Dead with Him; live for Him and will arise with Him.