

Firstfruits, Resurrection, and the Coming Harvest

Opening

Shabbat shalom.

Today I want to speak about a subject that is deeply rooted in the Torah, richly prophetic, and profoundly hopeful for every believer in Messiah.

That subject is **Firstfruits**.

When many who study scripture hear the word *firstfruits*, they think of farming. They think of grain, barley, baskets, and offerings. And all of that is true. But in Scripture, **firstfruits is never only about agriculture.**

Firstfruits is about **priority**.

It is about **holiness**.

It is about **trust**.

It is about **ownership**.

And ultimately, it is about **resurrection**.

The offering of firstfruits in the Torah points us forward to something much greater than a sheaf of barley. It points us to **Messiah Yeshua**, who was raised from the dead as **the Firstfruits of those who sleep**.

And when we understand that, we begin to see that Yom HaBikkurim is not just an agricultural observance in ancient Israel. It is a **prophetic appointment** that declares hope to every generation.

So, today I want us to walk through this in several steps:

- What “firstfruits” means in Hebrew and Greek
- What the Torah teaches about firstfruits offerings
- Why the barley wave sheaf matters

- Why “the morrow after the Shabbat” points to the **weekly Shabbat**
- How Yeshua fulfills the pattern as **Firstfruits**
- And finally, what all of this means for **our walk of faith today**

Let us begin with the language of Scripture itself.

1. What Does “Firstfruits” Mean?

There are a few key biblical words behind this idea.

A. The Hebrew: Bikkurim

One of the main Hebrew words is **בִּכּוּרִים** — *bikkurim*.

This word refers to the **first ripe produce** of the harvest—the earliest portion that ripens and is brought to Adonai. It is connected to the same root family as **בְּכוֹר** — *bekhor*, meaning **firstborn**. So, even in the language itself, there is an idea of **first in order**, **first in priority**, and **belonging to God**.

So, *bikkurim* is not merely “some produce.” It is the **first ripe produce**.

That is important.

It is not the leftovers.

It is not the extra.

It is not what is convenient.

It is the **first**.

B. The Hebrew: Reishit

Another important Hebrew word is **רֵאשִׁית** — *reishit*.

This word can mean **beginning**, **first**, **chief**, or **the first part**. It carries the sense not only of what comes first in sequence, but often what is **chief**, **best**, or **set apart**.

So, when Scripture speaks of the “first” or “firstfruits,” it often carries this idea:

What is first belongs to Adonai.

That is a deeply biblical principle.

C. The Greek: *Aparchē*

When we come into the Greek Scriptures, the key word is *ἀπαρχή* — *aparchē*.

This is the Greek word for **firstfruits**. It means the **first portion of a harvest or offering dedicated to God**, and it is the very word used in the Apostolic Writings when speaking about Messiah’s resurrection.

So, when Paul says that Messiah is the **firstfruits**, he is not speaking poetically in some vague sense. He is using the language of **Torah**, of **Temple imagery**, of **harvest theology**, and of **covenant hope**.

That brings us to our next point.

2. Firstfruits in the Torah Is About More Than Farming

The principle of firstfruits appears throughout the Torah.

We see it in passages like:

- **Exodus 23**
- **Exodus 34**
- **Leviticus 2**
- **Numbers 18**
- **Deuteronomy 26**

Again and again, Adonai tells Israel to bring the **first and best** of the produce of the land to Him.

Why?

Because firstfruits teaches several foundational truths.

A. Firstfruits Declares That the Land and Harvest Belong to God

Israel was not to act as though the harvest was theirs by right. They were to remember:

“This did not come from my strength.

This did not come from my wisdom.

This did not come from my labor alone.

This came from the hand of Adonai.”

And that is still true for us.

Every blessing we have—

every paycheck,

every answered prayer,

every meal,

every opportunity,

every victory—

comes from Him.

Firstfruits says:

“Father, I remember where this came from.”

B. Firstfruits Teaches Trust

Think about the logic of firstfruits.

A farmer does not wait until the entire field is harvested and then decide what he can spare.

He gives **the first sheaf**.

That means he gives to God **before he sees the full outcome**.

That is faith.

That is trust.

That says:

“I have not yet gathered the whole field, but I trust the One who gave me the beginning to also provide the rest.”

That is exactly how covenant life works.

Often, God calls us to obey Him **before we can see the full harvest**.

He asks for faith **before the evidence is complete**.

He asks for trust **before the field is gathered in**.

C. Firstfruits Sanctifies the Rest

There is also a biblical principle that what is first and consecrated affects what follows.

When the first is set apart to Adonai, it declares that the whole belongs to Him.

This is one of the great spiritual meanings of firstfruits:

The first offered to God sanctifies the rest.

That principle is going to become very important when we talk about Messiah’s resurrection.

But before we go there, we need to look closely at **Leviticus 23**.

3. Yom HaBikkurim in Leviticus 23

Please turn with me to **Leviticus 23:9–14**.

This is the central Torah passage for what many of us refer to as **Yom HaBikkurim**—the day of firstfruits during Chag HaMatzot.

The text says:

“When you come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:

And he shall wave the sheaf before Adonai, to be accepted for you: **on the morrow after the Shabbat** the priest shall wave it.”

— **Leviticus 23:10–11**

This is the **wave sheaf offering**.

The first sheaf of the **barley harvest** was brought before Adonai and waved before Him.

And notice the purpose:

“to be accepted for you.”

That language matters.

This was not random ritual. This was covenant presentation before God.

Why Barley?

Because barley is the **earliest grain harvest** in the Land of Israel. It is the beginning of the grain harvest season.

So, the barley sheaf is not just first in a symbolic sense—it is literally **the beginning of the harvest**.

And Leviticus 23:14 says that Israel was **not to eat of the new grain** until this offering had been made.

In other words:

Before you enjoy the harvest,
you acknowledge the Giver of the harvest.

That is a beautiful principle.

And honestly, that principle confronts us.

Because too often people want the blessings of God without the acknowledgment of God.

Too often people want the harvest without the altar.

Too often people want provision without submission.

But firstfruits teaches us:

Before I partake, I pause.

Before I enjoy, I honor.

Before I consume, I consecrate.

That is a holy pattern.

4. “The Morrow After the Shabbat” — Which Shabbat?

Now we come to one of the most important questions in this discussion.

Leviticus says that the wave sheaf is to be offered:

“On the morrow after the Shabbat.”

So, the obvious question is:

Which Shabbat?

There are two major views.

A. The Rabbinic View

The later Rabbinic tradition interprets this as the **festival sabbath** of the first day of Unleavened Bread, which would make the wave sheaf fall on **the 16th of Aviv/Nisan**, regardless of the day of the week.

B. The Weekly Shabbat View

The other view—and I believe the stronger biblical view—is that this refers to the **weekly seventh-day Shabbat** that occurs during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

That would mean the wave sheaf is offered **the next day**, on the **first day of the week**.

And I believe this reading fits the text better for several reasons.

5. Why the Weekly Shabbat View Makes the Best Sense

A. The Most Natural Reading of the Text

Leviticus 23 has already distinguished between the **weekly Shabbat** and the **appointed times**.

Verse 3 clearly establishes the weekly Shabbat. Then the chapter proceeds into the mo'edim—the appointed feast days.

So when we come to verse 11 and read “**the morrow after the Shabbat**,” the plain reading points us most naturally to an actual **Shabbat**, not merely to a fixed calendar date.

B. The Counting to Shavuot Also Supports This

Leviticus 23:15 says:

“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Shabbat... seven Shabbatot shall be complete.”

That wording is very important.

Seven Shabbatot shall be complete.

That sounds like **seven complete weeks**.

And then verse 16 says:

“Even unto the morrow after the seventh Shabbat shall ye number fifty days...”

That means:

- Start on **the day after the Shabbat**
- Count **seven complete Sabbaths**
- And arrive on **the day after the seventh Shabbat**

That fits naturally if the count begins on the **first day of the week** and ends on the **first day of the week**.

That is the plainest reading of the flow of the text.

C. It Fits the Prophetic Pattern of Messiah Beautifully

And this is where the teaching becomes especially powerful.

Because the Torah pattern is not random.

The moedim are not just memorials of the past. They are also **prophetic rehearsals**.

And when we look at Messiah’s death, burial, and resurrection, the pattern becomes incredibly clear.

6. Messiah Fulfilled the Pattern of the First Month Appointments

Let us think about the order of the moedim.

A. Pesach — Passover

Messiah dies in connection with **Passover**.

He symbolizes our **Pesach Lamb**.

His blood speaks of deliverance, redemption, and covenant rescue.

B. Chag HaMatzot — Unleavened Bread

He is buried during **Unleavened Bread**.

Leaven in Scripture is often associated with corruption, sin, and decay. Yet Messiah was **without sin**.

He is the **sinless One**, laid in the earth.

C. Yom HaBikkurim — Firstfruits

And then He rises as **Firstfruits**.

Do you see the pattern?

- **Passover** — His death
- **Unleavened Bread** — His burial
- **Firstfruits** — His resurrection

That is not accidental.

That is not theological creativity.

That is divine design.

7. Paul Says It Plainly: Messiah Is the Firstfruits

1 Corinthians 15.

This is one of the clearest resurrection passages in all of Scripture.

Paul says:

“But now Messiah is risen from the dead, and become **the firstfruits of them that slept.**”

— **1 Corinthians 15:20**

And then again:

“But every man in his own order: **Messiah the firstfruits**; afterward they that are Messiah’s at his coming.”

— **1 Corinthians 15:23**

This is huge.

Paul does not say merely that Messiah rose.

He says Messiah rose as **the Firstfruits**.

That means His resurrection is not just a miracle. It is a **covenantal sign**.

It means that Yeshua’s resurrection functions like the **wave sheaf offering** in Leviticus 23.

Think about what that means.

The wave sheaf was:

- the **first of the harvest**
- presented before God
- **accepted on behalf of the people**
- and a guarantee that **more harvest was coming**

That is exactly what Messiah’s resurrection is.

He is:

- the **first of the resurrection harvest**
- presented and accepted before the Father
- and the guarantee that **those who belong to Him will also be raised**

That is why the resurrection is so much more than “He came back to life.”

The resurrection says:

The harvest has begun.

That is glorious.

8. The Resurrection Supports the Weekly Shabbat Reading

Now I want to lean into something that is especially important for this teaching.

If Messiah rose as **Firstfruits**, then His resurrection should align with the day of the **wave sheaf offering**.

And if the wave sheaf is offered “**on the morrow after the Shabbat**,” then Messiah’s resurrection will fit this perfectly.

This matters because it strengthens the case that the “Shabbat” in Leviticus 23 is not merely the first annual sabbath of the feast, but the **weekly Shabbat** during Unleavened Bread.

Because the resurrection is not just near the feast.

It is not just “around Passover season.”

It aligns with the **very day that prophetically pictures Him**.

That is too exact and too beautiful to ignore.

9. What About the “Three Days and Three Nights”?

And this brings us to another important point.

Yeshua Himself said:

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

— **Matthew 12:40**

That statement deserves to be taken seriously.

Now I know there are various attempts to explain this in different traditions. But at minimum, we should say this:

We should not force the chronology into a simplistic framework that weakens Yeshua's own sign.

If we allow the text to speak for itself, then the timeline surrounding His death and resurrection fits far more naturally with a reading that preserves both:

- the integrity of the **three days and three nights**
- and the prophetic alignment of His resurrection with **Firstfruits**

That means His resurrection is not merely a proof that He is alive.

It is also a **calendar sign**.

It is a **Torah sign**.

It is a **mo'ed sign**.

It says:

Yeshua rose on the very day that pictures Him.

And that is powerful.

Because it means the Torah was not abolished in Him.

The Torah was **testifying of Him**.

10. What Does Firstfruits Mean for Us Today?

Now I want to bring this home.

Because if we leave this only as chronology, only as language study, or only as prophetic symbolism, we will miss part of its purpose.

Firstfruits is not just something to admire.

It is something to **live**.

So, what does Firstfruits mean for us as disciples of Yeshua?

A. Firstfruits Means God Deserves First Place

This is the first and simplest application.

If the first belongs to Adonai, then He should not get our leftovers.

Not our leftover time.

Not our leftover attention.

Not our leftover energy.

Not our leftover worship.

He should get the **first/best**.

That means we should ask ourselves:

- Does Adonai get the **first/best of my day**?
- Does He get the **first/best of my thoughts**?
- Does He get the **first/best of my priorities**?
- Does He get the **first/best of my obedience**?

Because it is easy to say, “God is important.”

But firstfruits asks a more honest question:

“Is He first/most important?”

There is a difference between believing that God matters and actually arranging your life as though He is first.

A firstfruits life says:

“Father, before I do anything else, I acknowledge You.”

That is worship.

B. Firstfruits Means We Walk by Faith Before the Full Harvest Appears

This is one of my favorite parts of this whole teaching.

The farmer who offers firstfruits does not yet have the full harvest in the barn.

He has only the beginning.

But that beginning is enough to act in faith.

And that is where many of us live spiritually.

We do not yet see the full harvest.

We do not yet see:

- the full redemption of creation
- the resurrection of the dead
- the fullness of the Kingdom
- the final restoration of all things

We are still waiting.

We are still groaning.

We are still hoping.

But we have seen **the Firstfruits**.

Messiah has already risen.

And because He has risen, we know the rest is coming.

That means when life is hard, we do not despair.

When our bodies grow weaker, we do not despair.

When we bury the righteous, we do not despair.

When the world grows darker, we do not despair.

Why?

Because the first sheaf has already been waved before the Father.

And if the Firstfruits has been accepted, then the rest of the harvest is guaranteed.

That is resurrection hope.

That is covenant hope.

That is why the resurrection matters so deeply.

C. Firstfruits Means We Are Called to Holiness

What is offered as firstfruits is **set apart**.

It is holy unto Adonai.

So, if we belong to the risen Messiah, then we too should live as a **set-apart people**.

A firstfruits people should not look like Egypt.

A firstfruits people should not think like Babylon.

A firstfruits people should not walk in compromise.

If we belong to the risen Messiah, then our lives should be marked by:

- holiness
- obedience
- humility
- faithfulness
- gratitude
- covenant loyalty

We are not called merely to admire biblical truth.

We are called to **embody** it.

The resurrection is not only something we believe happened to Him.

It is something that should begin changing how we live **now**.

D. Firstfruits Means Our Resurrection Is Coming Too

And this may be the greatest comfort of all.

Because when Paul says Messiah is the **Firstfruits**, he is saying something very specific.

He is saying:

Messiah's resurrection is not the end of the story.

It is the beginning of the resurrection harvest.

Let that settle in your heart.

His resurrection means **our resurrection is coming**.

That means death is not the end.

The grave is not the end.

Decay is not the end.

Loss is not the end.

Messiah rose first.

And those who belong to Him will follow.

As Paul says:

“Messiah the firstfruits; afterward they that are Messiah’s at his coming.”

So, Yom HaBikkurim is not just about barley.

It is about **hope**.

It is about the promise that what began in Messiah will one day be completed in all who belong to Him.

That is glorious.

That is comforting.

That is worth rejoicing over.

11. Final Exhortation

So, what should we take with us from this day?

Let me summarize it this way:

Firstfruits teaches us that:

- The **first** belongs to Adonai
- The **best** belongs to Adonai
- The **first** sanctifies the rest
- The **first** is a sign that more is coming

And all of this finds its fulfillment in Yeshua.

He died on **Pesach as the lambs were being slain**.

He was buried during **Chag HaMatzot**.

He rose as the **Firstfruits**.

And because He rose, the harvest is guaranteed.

So, today, do not merely celebrate that Messiah lives.

Celebrate what His resurrection means.

It means:

- the Kingdom is coming
- the dead in Messiah will rise
- the promises of God will stand
- and the harvest is not over

It has only begun.

Closing

- I want to leave you with this thought:
- **The wave sheaf declared that more grain was coming.**
The empty tomb declares that more resurrection is coming.
- That is the hope of Firstfruits.
- That is the hope of Yom HaBikkurim.
- And that is the hope of all who follow Yeshua the Messiah.

Chag sameach.

Closing Prayer

Avinu Malkeinu, our Father and our King, we thank You for Your appointed times, for Your Torah, and for the beauty of the patterns You placed in Your Word.

We thank You that Messiah Yeshua is the Firstfruits of those who sleep.

We thank You that His resurrection is our hope.

We thank You that because He lives, we have the assurance that the harvest is coming.

Teach us to give You the first and best of our lives.

Teach us to trust You before we see the full field gathered in.

Teach us to walk as a holy and set-apart people.

And strengthen our hope in the day of resurrection and the restoration of all things.

We ask it in the name of Yeshua our Messiah.

Amein.

HaSof

The End