# ALL ABOUT FIRSTFRUITS

**When we come to God through Christ - we are *New Creations***

* **2 Cor. 5:17 = All things New!**
* **Everything changes!**
	+ **Eternal issues**
	+ **Temporal Issues**
	+ **God-accountability**
	+ **Our security**
	+ **Interests**
	+ **Values, ethics**
	+ **+ Economics!**

**We enter the Upside-down Kingdom!**

* **1st = Last**
* **Greatest is least**
* **Leaders = servants**
* ***Give and you'll receive***
* ***If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also***
* ***Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you.***
* ***If someone takes your coat, do not stop him from taking your shirt.***

# God wants you to have abundance/wealth!

* *Despite what you’ve heard before!*

# God’s Words for Your Prosperity

Psalm 68:19 – blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits

3 John 1:2 – I wish above all things you prosper and be in health as your souls prospers

Psalm 24:1 – The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof

Psalm 115:15 – The Lord shall increase you more and more – you and your children

Psalm 145:16 – You open your hand and satisfies every living thing

Deut 8:18 – Remember the Lord your God – he gives you power to get wealth – to establish His covenant...

Deut 28:6 – Blessed you shall you be when you come in – and when you go out......

Prov. 10:22 – the blessing of the Lord makes rich and adds no sorrow with it

Prov. 22 :4 – by humility and fear of Lord are riches and honour and life

Deut 29:29 – keep words of this covenant that you may prosper in all you do

#### The Church is not God’s prosperity Shop! How to get Rich Quick! Grow Rich and Prosper etc.

# God wants you to have abundance/wealth! (so you can be generous!)

If money was evil then the devil would back up a truck and load it on to you

God is looking for generous people – so He can trust you to bless the work of the Kingdom

A generous Christian who can give to God’s work will hurt the Devil badly!

Wealth is God’s way of equipping you to facilitate His work

Two basic types of thought:

1. Budget mentality – learning to live according to your income. Everything has to be squeezed into the budget. We have to live according to how much we make. How many coupons, savings stamps, bargains? How can we make things stretch to go round? How much can I give according to my income? Must go to the sales etc
2. Vision Mentality – what do you want to accomplish? Don’t start with income but what you want to accomplish? What do you want? Yes you want to help the needy BUT I want to bring God’s kingdom to the world. How much do you want to give? If you can do what you want to do, what would you do? Paying your bills is a foregone conclusion! Aim for what you feel God wants you to do – God will lead you – you’re the type of person God is looking for!

## Jesus often taught on money

* Warned against mammon, love of money, priorities, covetousness,
* Encouraged generosity, compassion, eternal values

## Jesus said " beware of covetousness" Luke 12:15-23

* Covetousness is part of the old nature it creates 'economic hostages'
* Covetousness makes you greedy, carnal, deaf to God, insensitive to His Spirit AND POOR!
* Provide. 11:23 ..*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty*.

# 4 Types of Giving in Scripture – each for a Different Purpose

1. **Tithes – 10th of all our income – of everything that comes into your hand, you’re not really giving anything to God when tithing – it all belongs to God anyway. It just proves you’re not a thief! You’re giving God’s money back to Him!**
	1. **Promise is: Devourer rebuked,**
	2. **heaven opened to over-flowing blessings upon the tither**
2. **Firstfruits – a natural gift of gratitude – the first and best of everything. You’re giving God’s money back to Him**
	1. **Promise is full barns overflowing**
	2. **Every increase in wage or pay or government benefit**
3. **Alms – what we give to the needy – a gift of compassion. You’re giving your money to others/the poor. Tsunami’s, disaster relief etc. God promises “He who gives to the poor lendeth to God – He will repay you!**
4. **Seed - your money being giving to God! The largest return of all four! How many apples in a seed? Motivated by faith (not obedience or sympathy for others) – a true investment!**

## What is FirstFruits?

Firstfruits was a Jewish feast instituted by God held in the early spring at the beginning of the grain harvest. It was observed on Nissan 16, which was the third day after Passover and the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Firstfruits was a time of thanksgiving for God’s provision.

No grain was to be harvested at all until the firstfruits offering was brought to the Lord ([Leviticus 23:14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Leviticus%2023.14)). The offering was made in remembrance of Israel’s sojourn in Egypt, the Lord’s deliverance from slavery, and their possession of “a land that floweth with milk and honey.” The day of the firstfruits offering was also used to calculate the proper time of the Feast of Weeks ([Leviticus 23:15-16](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Leviticus%2023.15-16)).

# SCRIPTURES ON FIRSTFRUITS

# Old Testament –

#  God’s General Commands to Israel

[**Exodus 22:29**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+22%3A29&version=ESV)

*“You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me.*

* *29 “Give me the offerings from your corn, your wine, and your olive oil when they are due.“Give me your firstborn sons. 30Give me the firstborn of your cattle and your sheep. Let the firstborn male stay with its mother for seven days, and on the eighth day offer it to me.*

[**Leviticus 23:10-14**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A10-14&version=ESV),

# *“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord. And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin. And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings*

* [**Leviticus 23:20**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A20&version=ESV) *And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest.*
* [**Leviticus 23:17**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus+23%3A17&version=ESV) *You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the Lord*.

[**Numbers 18:12**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+18%3A12&version=ESV)

* *All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the firstfruits of what they give to the Lord, I give to you*.

[**Deuteronomy 26:2-4**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+26%3A2-4&version=ESV)

* *You shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our fathers to give us.’ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God.*

## Summary

**God is instituting the principle of Firstfruits as an act of Trust and faith toward God to secure His ownership over the nation, to put His mark upon them, and raise them up as a testimony of His glory to the world – that the rest of the world by become His harvest. Israel failed to realise this, and fell into disobedience and God’s harvest was hardly forthcoming**

# At Times of Re-dedication

## In Solomon’s Day - [2 Chronicles 31:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+31%3A5&version=ESV)

*As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.*

## In Nehemiah’s Day [Nehemiah 10:35](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah+10%3A35&version=ESV)

*We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the Lord;*

*33 We will provide for the temple worship the following: the sacred bread, the daily grain offering, the animals to be burnt each day as sacrifices, the sacred offerings for Sabbaths, New Moon Festivals, and other festivals, the other sacred offerings, the offerings to take away the sins of Israel, and anything else needed for the Temple.34 We, the people, priests, and Levites, will draw lots each year to determine which clans are to provide wood to burn the sacrifices offered to the Lord our God, according to the requirements of the Law.35 We will take to the Temple each year an offering of the* ***first*** *corn we harvest and of the* ***first*** *fruit that ripens on our trees.36 The* ***first*** *son born to each of us we will take to the priests in the Temple and there, as required by the Law, dedicate him to God. We will also dedicate the* ***first*** *calf born to each of our cows, and the* ***first*** *lamb or kid born to each of our sheep or goats.37 We will take to the priests in the Temple the dough made from the* ***first*** *corn harvested each year and our other offerings of wine, olive oil, and all kinds of fruit..****We will not neglect the house of our God.***

## In the Restored/New Jerusalem

[**Ezekiel 44:30**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel+44%3A30&version=ESV)

* *And the first of all the firstfruits of all kinds, and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings, shall belong to the priests. You shall also give to the priests the first of your dough, that a blessing may rest on your house.*

## Summary

God continued to emphasise the principle of Firstfruits throughout Israel’s history – it was second nature to the restored people of God to show their renewed dedication to God by bringing in the firtfruits – in order for the rest of the harvest to be secured, and God to be glorified

# A General ‘Summary Command’ (Solomon’s Advice)

# [Proverbs 3:9-10](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+3%3A9-10&version=ESV)

*Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the* ***firstfruits*** *of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine*.

* *5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. 6Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way. Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the Lord and refuse to do wrong. 8If you do, it will be like good medicine, healing your wounds and easing your pains. 9Honour the Lord by making him an offering from* ***the best*** *of all that your land produces. 10If you do, your barns will be filled with grain, and you will have too much wine to be able to store it all*

# New Testament Scriptures on Firstfruits

[**Romans 11:16**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+11%3A16&version=ESV)

If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

* *15 When Israel rejected God, the rest of the people in the world were able to turn to him. So when God makes friends with Israel, it will be like bringing the dead back to life. 16 If part of a batch of dough is made holy by being offered to God, then all of the dough is holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, the rest of the tree is holy too.****17*** *You Gentiles are like branches of a wild olive tree that were made to be part of a cultivated olive tree. You have taken the place of some branches that were cut away from it. And because of this, you enjoy the blessings that come from being part of that cultivated tree. 18 But don’t think you are better than the branches that were cut away. Just remember that you are not supporting the roots of that tree. Its roots are supporting you.*

**God emphasizes the principle of the need of the firstfruits/roots of anything need to be holy – lest the whole plant/harvest is unholy (unhealthy) – but if the firstfruit/root of something is holy, then the rest of the plant/harvest is holy also**

[**1 Corinthians 15:20**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+15%3A20&version=ESV)

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

* *20But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.*

**God is emphasising the fact that when Jesus rose from the dead, he became like a firstfruit of God’s harvest. Jesus presented Himself as a firstfruit of the great harvest from the earth that God was looking for – we and all saints since that day are the main harvest.**

[**James 1:18**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A18&version=ESV)

Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

* *16Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. 18Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

**James is emphasising that the *early church* was a kind of firstfruit to God representing the rest of the church who would follow as part of the great harvest God is expecting from the earth**

[**Romans 8:23**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A23&version=ESV)

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies

* *22For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth. But it is not just creation alone which groans; we who have the Spirit as the first of God’s gifts (****firtsfruits****) also groan within ourselves, as we wait for God to make us his children and set our whole being free. 24For it was by hope that we were saved; but if we see what we hope for, then it is not really hope. For which of us hopes for something we see? 25But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience*

The Holy Spirit is a firstfruit of God to us. The HS is like an endowment of God’s eternal harvest He has prepared for us. The greater majority of God’s inheritance to us is still to come. We yearn for the fullness that is ours one day

# God’s Protection is Upon His Harvest Preceded by Firstfruits Offering

[**Jeremiah 2:3**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+2%3A3&version=ESV)

* *Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest. All who ate of it incurred guilt; disaster came upon them, declares the Lord.”*

# SUMMARY OVERALL

## Old Testament

* **GOD INSTITUTED THE PRINCIPLE (COMMAND) OF FIRSTFRUITS TO HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL**
* **AS ISRAEL BACKSLID, THEY SEEMINGLY FIRST FORGOT TITHES AND FIRSTFRUITS!**
* **WHEN THEY REDEDICATED THEMSELVES – IT SEEMED THEIR FIRST RESPONSE WAS TO RESTORE TITHES FIRSTFRUITS OFFERINGS**
* **THE PURPOSE OF FIRSTFRUITS WAS TO SECURE HIS OWNERSHIP OF THEM AND SECURE HIS PROTECTION AND BLESSING OVER THEM**
* **THERE IS A DIRECT CORRELATION OF GOD’S PEOPLE HONOURING HIM WITH FIRSTFRUITS OFFERINGS AND HIS DESIRED BLESSINGS OF PROSPERITY UPON THEM. THE PEOPLE’S FAITHFULNESS IN THIS REGARD GUARANTEED THEIR BEST WELFARE**

## New Testament

* **JESUS IS NOW GOD’S FIRSTFRUIT (1 Cor. 15:20)**
* **THE EARLY CHURCH WAS A FIRSTFRUIT TO GOD (James 1:18)**
* **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD’S FIRSTFRUIT TO US WHO BELIEVE (Rom. 8:23)**
* **THE FIRSTFRUIT MUST BE HOLY – TO ENSURE A HOLY HARVEST (Rom. 11:16)**

## Honoring God means Honouring His House

* **God’s House was languishing**
	+ Note Hab. 1 *“consider your ways”*
* **God honors them who honor His house!**
	+ **Eli’s sons had backslidden –**

 **He lost God’s honour**

* + 1 Sam. 2:30

# Discussion Questions

* ***What do you think of the “Upside Down Kingdom”? What other upside-down principles can you think of?***
* ***Why are we poor sometimes even though we are serving God?***
* ***What are differences between “Budget Mentality” and “Vision Mentality”?***
* ***Why does God require a “First-fruit” offering?***
* ***What areas of our lives does a “First-fruits offering” bear upon?***
* ***How does a First-fruit offering affect our lives?***
* ***How does a First-fruit offering affect the local church?***
* ***How am I challenged over this message? What changes should I be making?***