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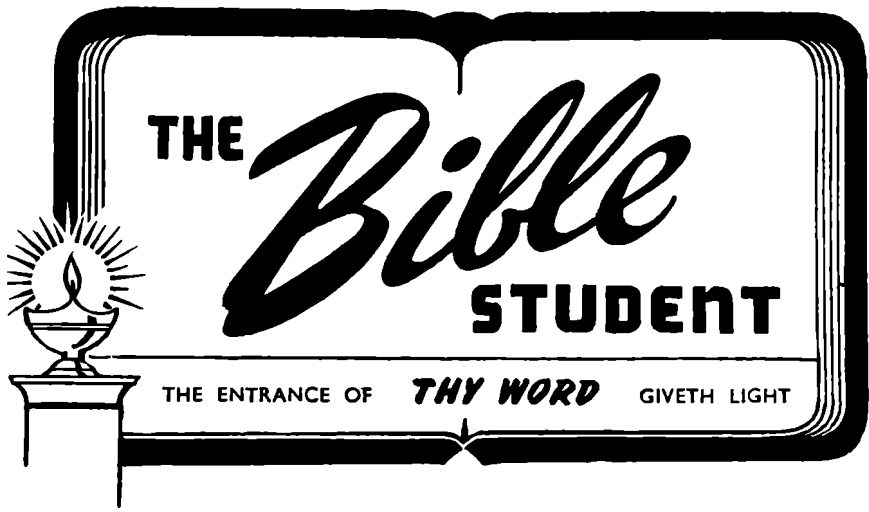
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*Editor:* A. McDONALD REDWOOD

# SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS

## A TYPOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEVITICUS 23

A. MCD. REDWOOD

### IV. The Subject Considered Analytically

#### 3. THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

[So far we have seen that typologically the Feast of Firstfruits pointed forward to the Resurrection of Christ. In summarising briefly this great and distinctive tenet of Christianity we began by viewing it first as an *historical Fact*. We proceed now to consider it as a *cardinal Doctrine*, and then as a *holy Dynamic* for the daily life and testimony of every true Christian.]

2. *The cardinal Doctrine* of Christianity. There are three principal aspects of the doctrine which deserve the closest study.

(a) Evidentially, it is the primary demonstration of the position of exaltation and Lordship which Christ occupies: 'To this end Christ both died and rose again, that He might be Lord' (Rom. 14:9). In an earlier chapter Paul the apostle states that Christ was 'declared to be Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. 1:4). As already seen, all through the book of Acts the apostles are found preaching the Resurrection. What is the reason? Principally because it revealed Christ in His true dignity, and as possessed of divine authority. Paul again states, 'The word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and thou shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'<sup>1</sup> The Lordship of Christ is not a mere question of the mental acceptance of a historical fact, its meaning is deeper. It affects the whole outlook of a Christian, governs his actions, permeates his personality. It is not strange, therefore, that it holds such a place in the apostolic teaching. 'As therefore ye received Christ Jesus *the Lord*, so walk in Him, rooted and builded up in Him, and stablished in your faith'.<sup>2</sup> This passage is on all fours structurally with the previous one in regard to Christ being Lord. So also is Peter's word: 'Sanctify in your hearts Christ as LORD.' Hence the implications of the Resurrection are that Jesus Christ becomes our Lord,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 10: 9.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 2: 6, 7. The force of '*the Lord*', is the same as in Rom. 10: 9 and 1 Pet. 3: 15; all in *R.V.*

and in that Lordship is the secret of everything worth knowing and having and enjoying in the Christian life. Hudson Taylor used to say, 'If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.'

As a doctrine, it stands as the divine vindication of the character, the teaching, and the work of Christ on earth. 'In this connection it is particularly significant to notice the emphasis placed on the fact that the Resurrection was the act of God rather than of Christ Himself. After the actual Resurrection there does not appear to be a single text which attributes the Resurrection to Christ Himself. Even those passages which seem doubtful in the English are quite clear in the Greek, teaching that He *was raised* from the dead.'<sup>1</sup> (Griffith Thomas). It may be added also that in 1 Cor. 15 where it says Christ 'rose' from the dead, every verse is in the passive, Christ '*was raised*'. It was the act of God the Father as a testimony to the Son.

(b) It is further, a *pivotal doctrine* of the Faith. As already quoted, 1 Cor. 15:3-4 is Paul's great affirmation of a basic doctrine: 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that He appeared. . . .' Paul received it, not by tradition only, but direct from His Lord, by revelation. This is clearly proved by noting that the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of verses 3 and 4 form the essential content of the Gospel of verses 1 and 2. Then by reference to Gal. 1:11-12, where Paul asserts that this Gospel 'is not of man', nor did he receive it from man, 'but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.' This doctrine is 'first' in respect of any other, not merely in order of time, but in priority of importance.<sup>2</sup> But for the Resurrection we should not have known that the death of Christ was other than the death of an ordinary man. It is God's seal on the Atoning work of Christ. It bears final testimony to its adequacy for man's salvation; had it not taken place our faith

<sup>1</sup> Acts 2: 32; Rom. 4: 24, 25; 1 Cor. 6: 14; 1 Thess. 1: 10.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek word translated 'first of all' can also be rendered 'before all', or at the forefront of all truth. The same phrase is used in the Septuagint where Jacob places the two maid servants and their children in the *first* rank (Gen.33: 2), and where David promises a high reward (2 Sam. 5: 8) to 'whosoever' smiteth the Jebusites '*first*'.

would indeed be 'in vain,' we should 'still be in our sins.'<sup>1</sup> Not only so, but the apostle goes on to say, 'they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.'<sup>2</sup> In fact, the whole doctrine of the future state (Eschatology, as it is technically called) would be radically affected.

In this same connection we should note also that Christ's own veracity is involved, for He predicted plainly His Resurrection whenever, towards the end of His ministry, He mentioned His death.<sup>3</sup> These statements form an integral part of His teaching: and the centre of *all doctrine* is Himself; His person, His teaching, and His work. Had He proved faulty, how sustain the *doctrine*?

(c) It is the sure and certain *promise of the future*. The Resurrection is the guarantee and model of the believer's resurrection—which really is the main theme of Paul's earlier exposition in 1 Corinthians 15. Numerous other passages bear out this specially glorious aspect of the Resurrection. 'If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.'<sup>4</sup> The believer, therefore, has the divine promise that, like as Christ was raised from the dead, so shall he be raised, with the mighty power of the same blessed Spirit, for, 'if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you.'<sup>5</sup> The writer elsewhere reminds us that the Lord Jesus Christ 'shall fashion anew the body of our *humiliation*, that it may be conformed to the *body of His glory*'.<sup>6</sup> 'He completed a human experience which prepared Him to be the Saviour of the world, the Head of the Church, and provided Him with a Resurrection body which was the type of what ours will be.' The prospect for the future is therefore, for the believer, full of blessed assurance and brightness, full of comfort and glory.

The Resurrection is also the guarantee of *another prospect* which Paul found it necessary to bring before the Athenians as he preached to them in the midst of the Areopagus: Said Paul to his hearers, 'God hath appointed a day, in the which *He will*

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 17.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 18.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Matt. 12: 38-40; 16: 21; Mark 8: 31; 10: 34; Luke 9: 22; 18: 33; John 2: 19-21.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess. 4: 14.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 8: 11.

<sup>6</sup> Phil. 3: 21.

*judge the world* in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained; wherefore He hath given assurance unto all men, in that *He hath raised Him from the dead.*<sup>1</sup> This is a feature of the Resurrection as solemn as the other is glorious. It is not too much to say that the Gospel preached without such warning is lacking in one of its vital points, for it is essentially related to the Resurrection.

3. *Considered as a Holy Dynamic.* This touches the experimental and practical aspects of the Resurrection.

(a) It is the *pledge of our Salvation* and acceptance before God. All experience must begin here, with the knowledge of sins forgiven and put away. Paul speaks of those 'who *believe* on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.'<sup>2</sup> The sinner is 'dead in trespasses and sins,' but the moment saving faith comes into operation and he lays hold upon the finished work of Christ he becomes a saved sinner. 'Even when we were dead through our trespasses, (God) quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and *raised us up with Him.*'<sup>3</sup> 'God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory' says Peter, 'that your faith and hope might be in God.'<sup>4</sup> Hence the Resurrection is God's explanation and exhibition to all men not only of what He thinks about His Son, but of what He thinks of that Son's atoning death for man's salvation and recovery from sin's thralldom. This is also proof not only of His love for the Son but for the sinner: for 'God commendeth *His love toward us*, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,' and all the connected verses in Romans should be read at the same time.<sup>5</sup>

(b) It is, finally, *the power, the holy dynamic*, for a holy life. In Rom. 1:16 the Gospel is said to be the 'power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' The Gospel, as we have seen, is what it is because of the Resurrection. It is not wrong theology to say, its source of power lies in the Resurrection (though not, of course, exclusively); and the power that saves is the same power that keeps and makes holiness possible in daily life.

But it is to the first chapter of Ephesians we must turn specially to see how the Resurrection becomes this power to and for us. Verses 15 to the end of the chapter are devoted to the subject,

<sup>1</sup> Acts 17: 31; see also v. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 4: 25.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. 2: 5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 21.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 5: 8-11.

but all we can do now is to note three brief points: *Firstly*, in vv. 19-20, the apostle states that when God raised His beloved Son from amongst the dead He put forth the whole resources of the Godhead. In other words, the Resurrection was the display of 'the *exceeding greatness* of His (God's) power,' an expression intended to convey the idea of 'super-abundance' in every sense. This is further detailed in the words that follow, as if to enlarge upon the wonder of its display: 'according to the working (*energeia*) of the strength (*kratos*) of His might (*ischus*) which he wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead' (R.V.). Four different words are employed in the attempt to express what, after all, is inexpressible—its true *character*. Each conveys a different shade of meaning; *ischus* is power in possession; *kratos* is power as the result of grasping or of coming into contact with the source of power; *energeia* is power in expression or manifestation; whilst *dunamis* (power, the word first used) stresses absolute efficiency in action. Such was the power put forth in raising Christ from the dead. How this display of divine power dwarfs into infinitesimal 'nothingness' the boasted greatness of man's powers!

What this divine display of power accomplished was to exalt the glorious Redeemer far beyond every object which has any relation to Him in any sphere. This exaltation is seen in, (i) His supremacy above all created intelligences (v. 21); (ii) His Sovereignty in the material and moral Universe (v. 22); and (iii) His Headship and Lordship in the Church which is His Body. We must not pause even to glance at these; but it needs to be carefully noted that, this exaltation does not remove Him far away and beyond us; indeed quite the contrary; for in ch. 2:6 it is made abundantly and gloriously clear that, God 'raised *us* up with Christ, and made *us* to sit with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.' This is our *present* position as believers; hence we are actually in living touch with our blessed and adorable Head and Lord! That cannot be without sharing with Him what He has for us—viz., His POWER!

*Thirdly*, the apostle reveals the 'direction' in which this divine power torrents forth in ever-available supply: 'His power to *us-ward* who believe.' The outflow of this heavenly Dynamic is *toward* us and *for* us. We are not merely to gaze upon it in wonderment, we are to experience it in our every need, within ourselves. In fact, not merely the power, but the hope and the

glory previously mentioned. 'His calling' reminds us of the past when we turned to Him for forgiveness and salvation, and became possessed of a hope beyond compare: 'His inheritance' directs our eyes to 'the vision glorious' of the future; 'His power' is the *present* guarantee of victory and fruitfulness, of 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' The 'secret' of its realization lies in that little word 'believe.' Faith relies and receives: it makes real our contact with the Source of blessing: we are in *union with Him*. (Read specially Rom. 6:1-11 meditatively and prayerfully). So, 'like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, *we also might walk in newness of life.*' 'If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind (affections) on things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For your life is hid with Christ in God.'<sup>1</sup>

Let us therefore enter, by the Spirit's help, into the full knowledge and joyful experience of the typical teaching of this Feast of Firstfruits.

## WHO WAS TIMOTHY?

EUGENE STOCK

While Titus was a Gentile, Timothy was neither a Gentile nor a Jew in the full sense. His father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess (Acts 16:1). We have the names of both his mother and his grandmother in 2 Tim. 1:5, Eunice and Lois; and the mention of these in this way suggests that his father had died early. Although, no doubt, his Gentile paternity was the cause of his not being circumcised as a child, the mother and grandmother brought him up to know the God of the Hebrews, and he was taught the 'sacred Writings' of the Old Testament from infancy, as the Greek word for 'child' in 2 Tim. 3:15 indicates, meaning literally 'babe'. It is a beautiful picture that is thus presented to our view: the widowed 'daughter of Abraham' with her one young boy, living with her old mother in the far-off heathen city of Lystra, in the heart of the great territory we now know as Asia Minor; the child denied the much-prized sign of God's covenant with

<sup>1</sup> 1 Col. 3:1-2.