

JANUARY – "THE SEASON OF BEGINNINGS:"

PART B. From "Putting **GOD** First" (PART A) to:" Another 'Bent/Viewpoint' on Firstfruits"

PART C. "Reaping the Results of your Firstfruits"

PART B: January 25 – 27:

"ANOTHER 'BENT/VIEWPOINT' ON 'FIRSTFRUITS'"

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What do we mean by another "Bent/Viewpoint on "Firstfruits?" Answer: Many sayings and writings have been done on this topic. This writing purports to another bent, angle/facts/viewpoint. Usually "The **Feast of Firstfruits** – a Jewish Feast - is celebrated in the spring of the year with a wave offering. In this writing, we are commemorating "Firstfruits" (first) in January – the first month of this year – "Putting God First in All Things in the '20's:"

(1) Firstly, our bodies as Temples, including our hearts and souls; (2) Secondly, our "Firstfruits" through our first earnings of the year [whether by day, week, or month]; (3) Thirdly, our Tithes and Offerings; Fourthly, our Time, Gifts and Talents. .

***Note date for your readings. Post Questions/Scriptures into your Smart Device.**

A. INTRODUCTION: (Jan. 25)

1) Question: What is meant by "Firstfruits"? [What definition did you find?]

At the beginning of a new year, one will note religious persons on television, radio, various forms of media, as well as in their local church settings speak on "Firstfruits." Pastor Paula White – on her television show on December 6, 2015 – stated "Firstfruits" as being

(1) the first in place, order, or rank; (2) the first of agricultural produce, especially when giving as an offering to God; (3) also, payment given to a superior." She further stated that we should offer our best to God (via our bodies and via our finances, since we are not an agricultural society).

Note: For us – as Christians – "Putting God FIRST in All Things"- in this month sets the tone/atmosphere for Christian Living for the remainder of the year.

- 1) the giving of our bodies will include praying, preparing ourselves for, then fasting - for ourselves, our families, our Church, our communities, state, nation, and world;
- 2) the giving of our wages will come through presenting our tithes and the giving of our offerings to support the Kingdom of God in various manners;
- 3) the giving of our Time, Gifts and Talents to the Things that will glorify God during this year.

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A FEW SELECTED OLD and NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES REGARDING TITHES AND OFFERINGS:

Genesis: 2:8:Matthew:

Exodus:.....Mark:

Leviticus:.....Luke:

Numbers:.....Acts:

Deuteronomy:.....I Corinthians

II Chronicles.....II Corinthians:

Psalms:.....Philippians:

Proverbs:.....Hebrews:

Amos:

Haggai:

Malachi:

[Today, most often the term, "***Firstfruit***," is used in connection with monies earned some kind of earnings, as from employment. During January (specifically the first week(s) of January), persons are usually asked to give to their church finances from their earnings – from a day, the first week, or the first month.]

2) **Study Guide.** (*Jan. 1*) How will this be used in this study? Your Study Guide will be used to provide you with additional information to the topic. You may be asked to do research, answer questions [some rhetorical], or just be given extra expansional knowledge, and/or you may acquire a desire to obtain additional information on your own.

Note: With this particular topic, research, information, questions, etc. will be interspersed within the body of information being presented. (*Jan. 1*)

B. BACKGROUND: [Read these 4 Scriptures to know the

Background topic.] (*Jan. 25*)

In the Bible, because of the kind of work done to make provision for the priests, as well as the family – "***Firstfruits***" came from the first of harvested agricultural products – a major part of their livelihoods. (Later also, selected of animals were grown/bred for use.)

Ex. 23:19 – *The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God....*

II Chronicles 31:5-6 – (5) *And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of the increase of the field; and the tithe [tenth] of all things brought they in abundantly.* (6) *And concerning the children of Israel and Judah...they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid them by heaps.*

The term referred to God requiring the people to present the first fruits of the first harvest to the Levitical Priesthood – Deut. 26:2 – "***That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee....***" Known as the Feast of Unleavened bread, the early Priests would "wave" barley loaves before God. Leviticus 23:9-12, 20: (9) *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,* (10) *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye 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.* (11) *And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you;...* (12) *And he shall offer that day when ye shall wave the sheaf of an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering unto the LORD.* (20) *And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave-offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest."*

(Note: All Scriptures, herewith, are from the KJV of the Holy Bible.)

“Waving” can be symbolized by 6 things; what are these?

(Jan. 25)

Today – during the first month of the year - January - the symbol of “waving” would be symbolized through our gratitude to God for His bountiful Blessings to us - through

- 1) Our worship of **HIM**
 - * through the singing of songs, hymns
 - * through the playing of musical instruments (
- 2) Our praying to **HIM** - constantly
- 3) Our fasting before **HIM** [whether 1, 3, 7, 21, 31, or 40 days, etc.]
- 4) Our meditating upon **GOD’S WORD**
- 5) Our coming before **HIS** presence with thanksgiving and into **HIS** courts with praise
- 6) Our being thankful to **HIM** and Blessing **HIS** Name
(Read I Chronicles 16:23; Psalm 99; Psalm 100)

C. RELEVANCY of the “FIRSTFRUITS” CONCEPT FOR US TODAY:

(Jan. 26)

For purposes of this writing, we understand the above, but specifically want to dwell on the fact that God **wants** to be **first** in our lives; thus we can be reminded of this through our recognition of Him at the first month of each year (January), as above. A key verse for us would be to

“Present our bodies as a living sacrifice..” (Romans 12:1,2. Also, I Corinthians 3:16)

Your Body is the highest degree of seed that can ever be sown.

“First, in God’s eyesight - we believe - is to **love Him with all of our hearts and bodies...**; this is the **ultimate of self-sacrifice** – culminating in the love of people, even as we love[deny] our own bodies. This then, make us “**God’s Firstfruits**”.

(Read Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Rom. 6:15-16; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5-17.)

1. Before we reap a harvest, we must sow/plant seeds.

(Assignment: What is a seed? Relate the natural seed to the spiritual seed.)

Today, we plant seeds **[What 5 things must we do to sow/plant seeds?]**

- 1) By Reading and Meditating on God’s Word
- 2) By Accepting God’s Word into our hearts, according to
Acts 2:38: **Then Peter said unto them, (1) REPENT, and (2) be Baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and (3) YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.**
- 3) by Applying God’s Words into our hearts, soul, and body
- 4) By living God’s Word – daily
- 5) By loving our neighbors, as ourselves.
(Read Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:28-34.)

2. The Question: Why do We Sow Seeds? *(Jan. 26)*

Answer: To reap an everlasting harvest (eternal life with Jesus Christ).

3. The Question: How do We Sow Seeds? *(Jan. 26)*

[List 5 ways we can sow seeds. Also, Read from Deuteronomy and Isaiah]

Answers:

- 1) through growing in God's Word
 - a) to help ourselves – spiritually, naturally, emotionally, mentally/psychologically
 - b) to help others – modeling a Christian lifestyle, presenting/teaching them the Gospel of Jesus Christ so they will be Saved (*everlastingly*)
- 2) through our minds, souls, strength
- 3) through the saving of the Souls of others
- 4) through presenting our bodies as a “living sacrifice” – through the giving of our time, talent, finances, etc. that will promote the Kingdom of God.

Deut. 26:1-2 – (1) *And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessed it, and dwellest therein; (2) That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy GOD giveth thee...*

(The environment, temperature, and season are always appropriate for sowing/planting seeds Isaiah 60:21 - *Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.* Isaiah 61:3 - *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified.*)
- 5) through inheriting eternal life/everlasting life with Jesus Christ

BUT, as we sow and water our Seeds, let us not forget these 4 Scriptures:

(Jan. 26).. **First Day of 21-Day?? Fast Begins.**

Proverbs 3:5-7,10, 13 – (5) *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.* (6) *In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.* (7) *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.* (10) *So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst with out with new wine.* (13) *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.*

[Note: Read this entire chapter.]

Jeremiah 2:3 – *Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase; all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.*

Jeremiah 29:11-13 – (11) *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* (12) *Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.* (13) *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.* (14) *And I will be found of you, saith the LORD; and I will turn away your captivity....*

Malachi 3:8-10 – (8) *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.* (9) *Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.* (10) *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, there they may be meet in mine house, and prove me now herewith, said the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

[What additional Scriptures can you locate?]

4. In Order to have a Harvest, we must “water” our Seeds.

[How do we water our seeds?] (Jan. 27)

(Assignment: Locate your own Scriptures for items 1-3 below.)

- 1) Firstly, we sow our seed by sacrificing our bodies.
- 2) Secondly, we must receive/ then maintain the Holy Ghost in our lives.
- 3) Thirdly, we must “water” our seeds. This is done
 - a) By reading and meditating upon God’s Word.
 - b) By applying God’s Words to our lives – on a daily basis (die daily).

Finally, my brethen, be strong in the Lord, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins gird about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherein ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the word of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.
 - c) By worshipping God.
 - d) By praying.
 - e) By fasting.

5. After all said and done, let us also know these Scriptures: (Jan. 27)

Romans 8:23, 29- – (23) *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body,* (29) *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he be the firstborn among many brethren.*

I Corinthians 3:16 – *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is Holy, which temple ye are....*

I Corinthians 10:13 – *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common in man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape; that you may be able to bear it.*

I Corinthians 15:20, 23 – (20) *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.* (23) *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.*

Ephesians 4:28 – *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

Ephesians 6:14 – *Stand therefore, having your loins gird about you.*

Colossians 2:20 – *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world., are you subject to ordinances...?*

II Thessalonians 2:13 – *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;...*

I Timothy 2:4 – *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come into the knowledge of the truth.*

Hebrews 12:1 – *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

James 1:18 – *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

II Peter 3:9 - *The LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

I John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, And to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Revelation 14:4 – *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

Also, read these Scriptures: (Jan. 27)

- Psalm 71:21
- Psalm 73:26, 28
- Ecclesiastes 5:11
- Zechariah 8:12
- Zechariah 10:8
- Proverbs 3:1-35
- Psalm 115:1-18
- I Thessalonians 4:10

PART C: January 28 – 31:

“REAPING THE RESULTS OF YOUR FIRSTFRUITS”

1) An Inspirational Reading and

2) Sequel to our readings on

“Another ‘Bent/Viewpoint’ on Firstfruits”

Study Guide and Scripture Readings:

Instructions: Do a careful reading of the information below.

PART A - INTRODUCTION: *(Jan. 28)*

Did you begin sowing your “Firstfruits” for this New Year?

If your answer is “NO,” please begin your sowing today, as we are at the end of January.

If your answer is “YES,” today’s reading should begin the reaping of your harvest. Your harvest should begin your INCREASE for the New Year. (Your increase might have already begun!! Think back – have you noticed a blessing/increase already? What Blessings have you already received during this New Year? Based upon your sowing, expect more/greater.

To begin this reading, you may need to re-read the pages in “Another ‘Bent...on Firstfruits.’”

PART B: *(Jan. 29)*

Scriptures to Read:

Psalms 71:21

Psalms 73:26, 28

Ecclesiastes 5:11

Zechariah 8:12

Zechariah 19:8

Proverbs 3:1-35

Psalms 115:1-18 *(Jan. 30)*

PART C: *(Jan. 30 - 31)*

In Culmination: *(Jan. 30 - 31):*

Proverbs 3:9-10, Psalm 115:14, and I Thessalonians 4:10 are reminders that your INCREASE/BLESSINGS should be made **MORE** AND **MORE**—not just **MORE**, but **DOUBLE**, **TRIPLE**, **ETC.** the **MORE!!!**

Proverbs 3:9-10: **“Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the Firstfruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and the presses shalt burst out with new wine.”**

Psalm 115:14: **“The LORD shall increase you MORE AND MORE, you and your children.”**

I Thessalonians 4:10: **“And indeed you do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase MORE AND MORE.**

THE CONSEQUENCE: *(Jan 31)*

Being a **TRUE CHRISTIAN** will make us a **“FIRSTFRUIT,”** enabling us to be **HARVESTED by GOD Himself** when **HE** catches us up (**raptures us**) into an everlasting/eternal life to live with **HIM** forever!!!

Let this month of January set the **Spiritual Tone** for the remainder of 2017, as well as the years to come!!!!

PART D: (Jan. 31)

WHAT ARE YOUR REFLECTIONS ON THIS SUB-THEME?

MAY BLESSINGS AND MORE AND MORE INCREASES BE UNTO YOU!

May GOD Richly Bless You for your Participation in these Readings (and Studies)!!!!