

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Israel 51: The Feasts of Unleavened Bread & First Fruits (Updated)**

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#### **Part 1**

**Tim Moore:** Hello, and welcome once again to Christ in Prophecy!

Last we shared insights into the Feast of Passover—on the very weekend in 2024 when Jews around the world commemorated that first feast ordained by God.

This week we are going to combine the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and First Fruits—two other Spring feasts that reflect on God’s providence past and His planned future. Not only do they overlap seamlessly, they also point prophetically to the Messiah, Jesus Christ—the Bread of Life that came down from heaven to give life to the world

I'm joined today by a good friend of Lamb & Lion Ministries who has been on our program before and has become a fairly regular contributor to our Lamplighter magazine, David Bowen. David is a pastor in Phoenix, Arizona. And for a number of years he's also been a professor at a local college and a passionate student and teacher of Bible prophecy. Welcome back, David, to Christ in Prophecy.

**David Bowen:** I always say thank you, and welcome, but this time I just want to say shalom.

**Tim Moore:** Shalom, y'all, yeah, well, you're in Texas, of course. And we also have another guest with us today, that is my good friend, Richard Hill, a gifted Jewish preacher, and teacher, a Messianic Jew. And so, Richard, welcome back as our guest expert on Christ and prophecy.

**Richard Hill:** And I got to say shalom as well.

**Tim Moore:** Well, we'll teach you all to say Shalom, y'all. So first thing we want to start out with as we're talking about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, let's define what we mean when we say leaven.

**Richard Hill:** Well, leaven actually means sin in the Bible. And so this is an interesting feast because you are bringing sin into the situation here, or you're actually you're taking it out.

**Tim Moore:** So when we say unleavened bread, it's bread that was made without leaven, representing removing the sin from your life. And quite literally, Jewish tradition is to look for all the yeast or the leaven in your home and remove it, kind of symbolic of that effort to remove sin from our life.

**Richard Hill:** That's exactly what the Jewish people do on the first day of the feast, you're pulling out all products that have leaven in it. So anything that has bread, well bread has leaven in it, and anything else needs to be taken out of the house. You have to clean out the house it is very symbolic of getting the sin out of your house as well.

**Tim Moore:** So for a Gentile reference, we might think of eating saltines for unleavened bread, but really it's a matzah bread, and yet this particular feast also points backward to a particular episode in Israel's history when they didn't have time to wait for the bread to rise. Right?

**David Bowen:** It's interesting, too, because when Moses went to the mountaintop, we all think he's just got the Ten Commandments. But really the question was, how can a sinful man go before a holy God and worship? And up there he got the priesthood, and he got the sacrifice system, and he got the festival time, so God told Moses, this is how, where, when, you're going to worship me. And we need to understand how and when we can come before the Lord being sinful as we are.

**Tim Moore:** So on that note, Richard, tell us about the scriptural roots to the Feast of Unleavened Bread and really what God was trying to instill in His people.

**Richard Hill:** Well, it found in the Book of Exodus 12:15-20, specifically talking about this feast of Unleavened Bread. "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel." Now you can understand God is very serious about this feast, and of course all the feast. But He says, cut off from Israel, that means they're going to die. The Hebrew word there is "karath" "karat". And if you did not follow what God said, well He was going to take you. And that's a serious situation, isn't it?

**Tim Moore:** You think that they were actually successful in removing the leaven? I'm sure they were very determined. But how applying this can we be truly successful on our own to remove sin? I mean, it seems like a hopeless task. There's always some microscopic element of leaven left in the home, and obviously we can't complete that task. It's just the symbolic effort that He's instilling.

**Richard Hill:** Well, you know, even the Orthodox today, they go to such extremes to get all the leaven out. Like rice. You know, rice has just a tiny microscopic aspect of leaven in it but they get it all out. You don't necessarily have to do that.

**David Bowen:** But it does show how important sin is. We get so casual about how we live and it's just it's no big deal, God's a loving God. And it's important to understand.

**Tim Moore:** He'll wink at our sins, right? That's what people think.

**David Bowen:** How does God look upon it? That's what we need to remember.

**Tim Moore:** Oh, that's a good point.

**Richard Hill:** And in verse 16, "On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and *another* holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you." And so this day is actually not a Shabbat day as many proclaim it to be. But it is a holy day, it's a holy day of worship. And also a day of sacrifice in the temple and in the tabernacle once they get to that place, because they didn't have the tabernacle or they didn't have the temple at this point. And so but they are allowed to do a little bit of work, they are allowed a bit to prepare and eat the food.

Verse 17 "You shall also observe the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance." There are a couple of things in this verse, Tim.

**Tim Moore:** Yes.

**Richard Hill:** On the very day I brought your host out of Egypt. So on this day celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but they are escaping. They're getting out of the land of sin, out of the land of slavery.

**Tim Moore:** But I think it's important to note in this chapter, they are still in Egypt. They have not yet departed when God instituted this particular feast. So He's telling them, I want you to start celebrating this every year while you're still in bondage, if you will, or still in Egypt. And they have to take on faith that what He says is going to come to pass. And yet there's also an urgency to their expectation, which is one of the reasons also, I think, that they weren't even supposed to wait for the bread to rise. And that points to me to the urgency we should sense God said it, it's going to happen. It's as good as done, even though it hasn't happened yet. The Rapture is coming. Period. Dot. And so I need to be urgent about my expectancy.

**Richard Hill:** And urgency, urgency about our sin in our lives as well. Getting rid of it immediately.

**Tim Moore:** Yes.

**David Bowen:** And the key point, too, is it's faith you're talking about. So even in the Old Testament, faith and urgency, which everything in the Old Testament, which I enjoy, points us to the Lord Jesus Christ, eventually. Even the festival times and the feasts. I mean, this is the resurrection of Christ and the burial of Christ, as we get into the festival.

**Tim Moore:** It certainly is.

**Richard Hill:** We're getting to that. Give us a minute.

**Tim Moore:** So carry on.

**Richard Hill:** We're not done here yet. Verse 18, "In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening." Now, you notice on the 14th day of the month, what was the feast that we said started on the 14th day?

**Tim Moore:** That was Passover.

**Richard Hill:** That was Passover. So that night is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So they are connected, they're intertwined, connected. And so we're supposed to be eating matzah as well as the Passover meal. We eat matzah with that meal.

**Tim Moore:** So tell us a little bit about matzah in particular. I mean, this bland little cracker. My daughter loves them. She eats them because she just thinks they're a great snack. But they are somewhat tasteless if you don't have other things to go with them. And yet even that humble cracker, I think, is terribly symbolic, or tremendously, terrifically not terribly symbolic of our Messiah. Tell us a little bit about the cracker.

**Richard Hill:** And I like to joke during our Passover and just tell everybody kind of tastes like cardboard. So and it does, you know. But let's turn to Isaiah chapter 53, and we'll see the connection with the matzah piece, and, of course, our Messiah.

**Tim Moore:** Very good.

**Richard Hill:** And I like to say Yeshua.

**Tim Moore:** Yes.

**Richard Hill:** Using the Hebrew name for Jesus. In verse five, it speaks of the Messiah, what's going to happen to the Messiah. "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our (peace or) well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging (or by His stripes) we are healed." And so we see what happens with the Messiah. He was pierced through. He was stripped for our sins. And the matzah bread it's pierced through. It has holes in it. The matzah bread has been striped. You see the stripes as we put a piece on the screen for you to view. There are stripes on it. There are in the cooking process, there are holes. And so this is the bread that was symbolic of Jesus' body to be broken for us, to be striped, to be pierced through so that He could be the sacrifice for our sins.

**Tim Moore:** It's amazing to me, Richard, and I want you to touch on this, because the symbology is so obvious to me that the bread itself. And if you read the rabbinical requirements, it has to be pierced, it has to be striped. There are certain specifications even for this cracker.

**Richard Hill:** Right.

**Tim Moore:** And yet so many are blinded to the symbolic reference it has to Yeshua who was pierced, and who was striped on our behalf. Why are those blinders on so many hearts even today?

**Richard Hill:** Well, actually, guys, many Jewish people and the rabbis, even in Israel are starting to believe. And so the blinders are coming off.

**Tim Moore:** Praise the Lord.

**Richard Hill:** But what it takes is faith. It takes faith. And you really got to trust Jesus. And for Jewish people, there are a lot of road blocks, unfortunately. And number one is persecution. You'll get persecuted by your own family members, your own congregations. We had a rabbi at CJF Ministries and he got thrown out of Israel because of his faith in Jesus.

**Tim Moore:** Well, I mentioned earlier how the feast was instituted in Exodus chapter 12 as they were preparing to leave Egypt. And so this feast harkens all the way back to that great deliverance, which is such a tradition and cultural marker for the Jewish people to this day celebrated by oftentimes even the secular Jews, especially Passover. And so the feast itself, if I wasn't clear before, was instituted while they were in Egypt, getting ready to depart. But I think you touch on something very important, and this is where we turn to First Fruits. And so what was meant for the Jewish people has now extended beyond. So let's transition to a conversation about the First Fruits and how these two feasts blend together. So where does that bring us in passages that you'll hearken to in the historic record?

**Richard Hill:** First Fruits. Now let's go to Leviticus, chapter 23.

**Tim Moore:** Alright now to Leviticus.

**Richard Hill:** Now, this is interesting because First Fruits comes the next day on the Jewish calendar. Rabbis have decided that that's the third day of Passover week. So you have Passover, then you have Unleavened Bread, which goes on for seven days total, and then you have the next day is going to be Feast of First Fruits. And Leviticus chapter 23 that is the summary chapter of all seven feasts that God gave to Israel, plus the Sabbath or the Sabbath. And you have to note the Sabbath is the most important out of all of them, and the rabbis will tell

you this as well, because it comes first in this chapter. Sabbath is the most important, so all Sabbaths need to be kept. And then all the feasts as well. So in Leviticus chapter 23:9-11, and I'm just going to go over 9-11 and 14.

**Tim Moore:** Okay.

**Richard Hill:** "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.'" And the sheaf is the omer, and it's cut grain. That's what it means. So and later on we're going to see the counting of the omer, counting of the days that come to the next feast. But Omer is cut grain. And we're talking about the barley harvest. It's the barley harvest. And that's the poor man's wheat, as they call it.

**Tim Moore:** Right.

**Richard Hill:** Yeah, it still tastes good. Not as good as wheat, though. Okay, next verse. So they're bringing in the first fruits. Now the first fruits is a section off of to the east of the temple. And they would actually tie them up, tie up the barley, and they would cut it they would go out and cut it. And so what are you going to do? You have to parch it. You've got to heat it up. You've got to cook it. Then you've got to mill it down into fine flour, and then present it before the Lord. And that's what they're doing on the Feast of First Fruits in the Temple and Tabernacle Times. So the priest is taking that bowl of fine flour and lifting it up and praising the Lord. It's a wave offering. So it's a Thanksgiving offering onto God, and they're thanking God for Him being what? Sovereign.

**Tim Moore:** Yes.

**Richard Hill:** And for providing for all their needs. So he lifts it up to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west, and saying, "Lord, you are providing for our needs. Thank you so much."

**Tim Moore:** And they would even say, "Blessed are you O Lord, King of the universe who has provided for us." And list all various things, but in this case, grain from the earth.

**Richard Hill:** And what are they looking for?

**David Bowen:** It is important to see effort made to that too, when you explain that, I mean, that took a lot of effort to be able to bring that to God. When you say I'm bringing the first fruit, I'm bringing my best, but it's going to take me some time or some effort to do it.

**Richard Hill:** And it's the same for us too isn't it? As believers of Yeshua Jesus, were to bring the first fruits of everything of not only our tithe, but also our lives as well.

**David Bowen:** Yes.

**Richard Hill:** Give Him the best.

**David Bowen:** And we're really good at bringing God leftovers. You know, it takes a different heart and a different mind to really say, God, you get my best, you get the first of everything. And that's important to understand this.

**Richard Hill:** But what are the Jewish people looking forward to? This is the first harvest looking for all the blessing for the rest of the harvest of the year as well.

**David Bowen:** Yes.

**Richard Hill:** And that's exactly what the priest is doing, Lord, we're looking forward to the future as well. The future harvests.

**Tim Moore:** So really, it's a statement of faith that we're going to take the first, and instead of hoarding it or gobbling it down, we're going to present it to God as a demonstration of our faith that You will continue to provide for us through this year.

**Richard Hill:** Amen.

**Tim Moore:** I mean, this is an agrarian society. So if there's a drought, or a plague on the crops, it's devastating. Most of our folks in the modern society are not living on a farm. They are not as connected to the harvest as these people would have been. But to give God that very first and, to say, "Alright, God here it is, and I trust you." It almost harkens back to Abraham, who God said give me your first, and Abraham did, trusting that He would provide. That He would, you know, resurrect his son, Isaac, or provide and giving over as an act of absolute faith.

**Richard Hill:** Amen.

**David Bowen:** And Paul, who's the ultimate Jew in 1 Corinthians, says, "Jesus Christ is our first fruit."

**Tim Moore:** There you go. So how did He fulfill this role of first fruits?

**Richard Hill:** Well, he just took the Scripture right out of my mouth, 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

**David Bowen:** Absolutely.

**Tim Moore:** Okay

**Richard Hill:** Verse 20. And that's really the main scripture. "But now Messiah has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep." The first fruits of the resurrection. So when that priest is waving that bowl of flour before the Lord, this is the resurrection, the rising up of Jesus as our Messiah, rising up He's being resurrected.

**Tim Moore:** Presented before the Lord as an offering to the Lord. But really as a demonstration, those who put our faith in Him, for God's provision that is now going to flow into our lives. It comes full circle.

**Richard Hill:** Amen. And then you go down to verse 23 in the same chapter, "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming." Oh, so Jesus is the promise of the resurrection, but the future resurrection is going to come for all of us, as we are being resurrected in the Rapture.

**David Bowen:** Isn't it amazing how you started in Exodus and you have taken us to 1 Corinthians. Through all Scripture God has it all planned out and worked out, but everything is pointing and looking towards the coming of Christ.

**Tim Moore:** Now, I got to also ask this, when we talk about First Fruits, because it harkens to another first that God says He has ordained, and that is that the message, the good news is for the Jew first, but also for the Gentile. And so here I got a Jew and a Gentile, and so this good

news came to the Jew first, but God's plan was for it to be extended to the Gentiles, to all be grafted in. So how does this particular feast hearken to that glorious good news?

**Richard Hill:** Oh, my. In the Passover and Unleavened Bread and the Feast of First Fruits, the Gentiles were included. Did you know that the Egyptians actually, some of them left with the Jewish people?

**David Bowen:** Yes.

**Richard Hill:** They actually got in their houses, they blood was put over their door posts and then they were actually able to leave with them.

**David Bowen:** Yes.

**Richard Hill:** And so I believe God has always grafted the Gentiles in even from the beginning. And we're going to see that as we go through all these other feasts as well.

**David Bowen:** That's correct.

**Richard Hill:** The Gentiles, God's heart is always for the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.

**Tim Moore:** Well, David, from a Gentile pastor perspective, we got a Messianic pastor, but from a Gentile pastor perspective, wow glorious is that good news as you share it with your flock and with people as you teach and preach?

**David Bowen:** I might have the opposite side because it's harder for the Gentile pastors to teach the Old Testament to their congregation because we want to be New Testament. But when God made the Covenant with Abraham, the Gentiles were included because Israel were to be a blessing to the entire world. And that hasn't been completely fulfilled yet. But it will be, God isn't done with Israel yet. But yeah, so from the Gentile side, it's wonderful to see how God started from the very beginning and He's going to finish what He started.

**Tim Moore:** So this begs the question really, if a Jewish person is watching, we would proclaim this message is for you because you are the first fruit, if you will, in a sense, in that the Gospel came to the Jew first. And we want to bring in many sheaves and many believers.

**David Bowen:** Yes.

**Tim Moore:** But if you're a Gentile believer, God also has the same promise of opportunity and blessing for you. So the question is this: Does God play favorites, if it is for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.

**Richard Hill:** God does not play favorites. No.

**Tim Moore:** Okay.

**Richard Hill:** We're all equal before the Lord.

**Tim Moore:** We are all equal before the Lord.

**Richard Hill:** He is impartial as Romans chapter two tells us.

**Tim Moore:** So what would you say to a Gentile viewer as a Jew when we declare that God does not play favorites and the Gospel is for all?

**Richard Hill:** Well, I would just say, hey, you need to believe. You need to believe in Jesus, just like the Jewish people do as well, and place your trust in Him and get saved.

**Tim Moore:** Amen. Amen. So how did the rabbis determine, I mean, between the Sadducees and the Pharisaic just to tee you up, that this would fall on the third day of the sequence of Feast of Unleavened Bread?

**Richard Hill:** Well, the Pharisaic understanding is what's taken over today, and this is what you see in the calendar, so it's on the third day. But the Sadducean understanding was the day after the Shabbat, meaning the Shabbat was a Saturday, Saturday, Shabbat, and that they would then celebrate this feast on a Sunday. Okay. But the Pharisaic was just on the third day. So Passover can land any time during the week, the 14th of Nissan can be any day, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

**Tim Moore:** It's not just a Saturday. When you read in Scripture about a Sabbath day or a high Sabbath as the New Testament refers, that can be any day of the week. But this particular day we know is on one day of the week and which is that?

**Richard Hill:** Saturday, yes, verse 11, "And he shall wave the sheaf before," oh, this is Leviticus chapter 23, verse 11, "He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted;" So this is the priest, right, in the temple or in the tabernacle, "to be accepted on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." So it's the day after the Saturday Sabbath. That's what I believe as the Sadduceans believe. But the Pharisaics are the ones that won out over time.

**David Bowen:** It's fascinating that you say it's the third day, because that third day does have a day of significance. That third day is a day of climax and divine activity. I often looking forward, again, being a Gentile, I look forward and I ask the question: Why was Jesus in the tomb three days? Why not an hour? Why not a week? He's going to resurrect, that's the key. But why three days? It's because going back to the Old Testament in the festival times, the third day is a day of significance.

**Tim Moore:** I think it's also instructive. You just mentioned Sadducean versus the Pharisaic view. And let's just say that these various rabbis in Jesus day and age all the way down to today they've studied, they try to discern, but sometimes they don't get everything right. Dare say, gentlemen, we don't get everything right. The only thing that is most important is that we get one thing right, and that is that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. Yes, I want to learn. I want to discern. I want to gain understanding, which is why we're here today talking about the feasts of Israel. But we may not fully understand until we stand before the throne of God, and He gives us complete understanding. We're just in awe of how He wove everything together.

**David Bowen:** Perfectly.

**Tim Moore:** But we have to get that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. All these symbols and references are pointing to, and He's come on our behalf to be that first fruit sacrifice to God.

**Richard Hill:** And you wonder why the Jewish people didn't see it, why the rabbis didn't see it when Jesus came?



**Tim Moore:** You do to this day. And so you mentioned already that the blinders seem to be lifting. And that's the reason for us to rejoice. Give us some other testimony about how Jewish people are coming to realize that Jesus is the fulfillment, Yeshua, of the ancient prophecy.

**Richard Hill:** Even at our ministry in Las Vegas, my wife and I, we have led 12 Jewish people to the Lord this past year.

**Tim Moore:** Praise the Lord.

**Richard Hill:** Now praise the Lord, but one of about ten of them are actually got saved at a funeral. I did a Messianic Jewish funeral and, you know, Jewish people were there that came in from California, came in from, well, from Las Vegas, and heard the Good News message presented to them at a funeral. Can you imagine that?

**Tim Moore:** At a funeral.

**Richard Hill:** And many received Jesus as their Lord and Savior at that time.

**Tim Moore:** Well, you know what? It was Jesus' funeral that led to the life giving blood, if you will, that has now grafted Gentiles like David and me into the righteous branch, but also with our Jewish brothers in Christ.

## **Part 2:**

**Tim Moore:** The Feast of Unleavened Bread clearly points to our sinless Savior whose body was broken like a piece of matzah bread. The Feast of First Fruits also points to Him the first fruit of the resurrection. But others have been grafted into the life giving righteous branch foretold in Jeremiah 23:5. They are also bearing fruit for the kingdom as they await the resurrection that God has promised will come.

Let's hear the testimony of Meg Price, a Kentucky native who, along with her husband Dan, answered God's call to live in Israel and proclaim Good News to the Jews and the Druze—a challenging task made even more perilous since October 7th, 2023.

### **Insights on the Feast of First Fruits with Meg Price**

**Meg Price:** Tim asked Dan and me to share a little bit about what it's like living as Gentiles in the land of Israel, the land of Jesus birth. And then also with regard to the biblical feast, maybe, which one of those or one of those have particular significance for us?

There is a feast that for me carries quite a bit of significance as we talk about the Feast of First Fruits. Now we, there are a lot of farmers here. So whether we're talking about as farmers bringing in that first crop, the first fruits in the early part of the year, or whether we're talking about as believers because Dan and I are working, sharing the Gospel with the Druze who live in the Golan Heights of northern Israel. They are as equally hard-hearted as the Jews here in the land.

So at times the work is very slow and seems unfruitful. So the Feast of First Fruits is significant for me because as we toil, as we labor among in the hard soil of the Druze hearts, I'm reminded of what it says on a note about the Feast of First Fruits in the complete Jewish Study Bible that we have.

And it says the Feast of First Fruits in that feast God's faithfulness providing the early wheat harvest increases faith for an abundant fall harvest. Giving thanks for present provision leads to faith for future fruit. So as we look at Jesus, who was the first fruit of the resurrection, we have that hope as believers. And as we work, the current provision, God's faithfulness and provision increases our faith for the future fruit to come among the Druze.

## **Closing**

**Tim Moore:** You know, Dan and Meg Price are such an exemplar to me, both of them because of an age when most people are hunkering down to enjoy their grandchildren, they pulled up roots to follow Jesus Christ to the land of Israel, to share the Good News. And I enjoy taking all of our pilgrimage groups to meet them when we go to Israel.

**David Bowen:** It gets exciting. I mean, I'm excited now about the first fruits and just scattering more seeds and watching other fruit bearers rise up.

**Tim Moore:** Amen. Amen. Well, Richard, I want to thank you, too, for joining us today for this episode on both the Feast of Unleavened Bread and First Fruits and for opening our eyes to the depth and richness of what God had planned even in these feasts.

**Richard Hill:** What a blessing it was for me to be able to teach about Jesus being found in these feasts.

**Tim Moore:** Amen. Well, folks, that's our show for today. Until next week, we pray that you will join us in looking up and being watchful for the bread that has come down from heaven, the perfect first fruit of the resurrection is coming again soon.

## **End of Program**