

FIRSTFRUITS TO A PROPHET?

We are resuming our study of the life of Elisha after a month of Christmas messages.

You may recall that we divided the life of Elisha into two series of studies entitled,

- Pastor-prophet
- Political-prophet.

We are currently studying the eight lessons of the series entitled, Pastor-prophet of the Life of Elisha.

In our last lesson, Elisha was ministering during a time of famine in the North Kingdom (2 Kg.4:38; 8:1). This famine was the 2nd cycle of divine discipline of the priest-nation (Lev.26:18-20).

Our lesson text occurred during the yearly national Firstfruits celebration of shadow Christology (2 Kg.4:42).

We will examine our lesson text by the following four homiletical points.

Faithful followers	2 Kg.4:42a	Baal-shalishah
Firstfruits offering	2 Kg.4:42b	Barley bread
Feeding a crowd	2 Kg.4:42c-43a	Blessing of shadow Christology
Faith in the word of God	2 Kg.4:43b-44	Bread left over

This lesson will study four aspects of why the Firstfruits offering was brought to a prophet rather than to a priest.

- 1. The Firstfruits festival was a time of national celebration of God's grace provisions in the Land of Promise (Lev.23:9-14; Num.13:20, 27-28; 14:9, 24) [Caleb].**

The feast of Firstfruits was the beginning of the harvest and Pentecost was the ending of it (Lev.23:10, 15, 16, and 22).

Because it was 1 of 7 shadow Christology festivals of the Old Covenant, it is very important to the First and Second comings of Jesus Christ (Lev.23).

- 2. The Firstfruits festival of shadow Christology was part of the Old Covenant gospel of Christ (Gen.3:15; Gal.3:8) [Abraham].**

Outline of Lev.23:

Sabbath	(Lev.23:1-3)
Passover, Unleavened bread and Firstfruits	(Lev.23:4-14)
Pentecost (Weeks)	(Lev.23:15-22)
Trumpets	(Lev.23:23-25)
Atonement	(Lev.23:26-32)
Tabernacles	(Lev.23:33-44).

Jesus Christ fulfilled the first five of the things mentioned in Lev.23 during His **First Coming**, the last two relate to His **Second Coming**. (Atonement and Tabernacles)

Sabbath	(Mark 2:27-28; Col.2:16-17)
Passover	(14 th of Nisan / Wednesday, death of Jesus) (1 Cor.5:7)
Unleavened bread	(15 th – 21 st of Nisan) (15th, 16th, 17th / the burial of Jesus)
Weekly Sabbath	(17 th of Nisan – Saturday)
Firstfruits	(Next day, Sunday / 18 th of Nisan / resurrection of Jesus) (1 Cor.15:20-23; Col.1:18; Rev.1:5; Acts 26:23)
[50 days from Firstfruits]	
Weeks or Pentecost	(Acts 1:3; 11; 2:1, 22-24, 31-33) [Church age].

3. The fact that the spiritually mature believers brought their Firstfruits offerings to a prophet rather than a priest showed their recognition of the apostate conditions of the priesthood of the North Kingdom.

- (Ahab and Jezebel) (1 Sam.16:29-22:40) [Elijah].

“Instead of bringing the Firstfruits of the new harvest (Lev.2:14; 23:15-17; Deut.18:3-5) to the apostate priest of Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:28-31) godly people in the northern kingdom may have contributed their offering for the sustenance of Elisha and those associated with him (see notes on v.23). Thus they looked upon Elisha rather than the apostate king and priests as the true representatives of their covenant Lord.” (NIV, 2 Kg.4:42; pg.530)

4. This reminds spiritually mature believers today of the importance of faithful obedience to the Word of God no matter what the conditions of the nation or religious climate may be.

- Jeremiah Jer.14:7-9, 20-21
- Church Acts 5:29; 1 John 5:3

The Spiritually mature believer's who reach and hold onto their spiritual maturity are the true salt and light to both their nation and to the world (Matt.5:13-14).

They will recognize the biblical difference between apostasy and true religion. In our lesson text period, the spiritually mature believers of the Old Covenant had Deut.18 to guide them.

- Deut.18:1-8 Role of a true priest Sacrifice and offerings (Matt.5,13)
- Deut.18:14-22 Role of a true prophet Scriptures and teaching truth (Matt.15, 18-19).

In the **prophet part** there was an important messianic prophecy (Deut.18:15-18) quoted in John 1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40; Matt.21:11 and Acts 3:22.