

Spring Holy Days

Part Two

Preparing to Count Fifty

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2/2/2013

Now there has been much controversy in the COG concerning not only the count to Pentecost, but the Passover itself, and its timing.

I feel that we have been led astray by the influence & teachings of men, and have ignored, yes ignored some plane, simple, and clear Scripture that pertain to these matters.

It's my intention today to continue addressing the spring feasts, in hope of getting a better & clearer understand of the timing of the Passover, and the counting to Pentecost.

Last time we were discussing the resurrection of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, and whether He ascended to the Father's Throne the morning of His resurrection, fulfilling the symbolism of the wave sheaf offering.

We noted from the Scriptures that contrary to the popular belief & teachings of many of the COG pulpits, Mary Magdalene (and others) did touch and embrace our Lord, early, on the morning of His resurrection.

Now that may seem like a trivial thing, but this is too important of a subject to allow assumptions to influence our thinking.

In that message, I questioned whether or not the wave sheaf offering actually represented Christ in the first place, or if the offering of the *wave sheaf* could possibly represent something else.

We were discussing how the Hebrew word translated "sheaf" is "Omer" and that Hebrew word "Omer" doesn't describe anything singular (denoting one person or thing) but the word actually means: **"a heap" or "a handful."**

We also discussed how the ingredients of the "Omer" or "Sheaf" that was waved, came from a previously selected plot of Barley that was cut down, and put through a rather lengthily process.

We read about that process from a book titled: **"The Temple - Its Ministry & Service"**, written by an "Alfred Ed-er-sheim" (considered the greatest Jewish-Christian Scholar of the 19th Century.)

In Ed-er-sheim's book, He elaborates on the ingredients of the "wave sheaf" the "omer" and how it was prepared.

Stating that the ears of grain (after being cut down) were first brought into the court of the Temple, and thrashed out with canes & stalks, as not to injure the corn.

Then the grain was parched on a pan that was perforated with holes, so that each grain might be touched by the fire, and finally exposed to the wind.

He went on to tell how the corn was then ground in a barley-mill, which left the hulls whole. Then he states that the flour was sifted through thirteen sieves, each closer than the other.

(Yes, the grain went through quite a lengthily process.)

(And there is something quite interesting to note here:)

Although one ephah, or ten omers of barley was originally cut down and began the process, only ONE "Omer" actually completed the process, and was offered as the wave sheaf offering.

And it's important to realize, that the one "Omer" that was waved, didn't consist of only "one" grain, or the grain from only "one" plant, but the "wave sheaf omer" that was "waved" consisted of many plants, many grains.

Yes, there were multiple thousands of grains that "qualified" (if you will) and made up the "Wave Sheaf" or "Omer" that was waved.

We then noted what a grain symbolizes according to the Scriptures.

We read in Amos 9:9 where it says: "*For low, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among the Nations, like a corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth*".

The "grain" represents Israel! This "wave sheaf" (or omer) represents the firstfruits of Israel.

(The Israel of God, that is, which according to Gal 6:16 - is the church.)

And Rev 14 tells us: *And, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth, having His Father's name written in their foreheads.*

These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the lamb.

Brethren, I believe the “wave sheaf” represents the church, the firstfruits.

God's “little flock” the ones that Christ said: *“I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

Yes, His “very elect”, “Pre selected” – “Called” by the Father Himself, and then put through a lengthily process of “cleaned up” & “scrubbed down” and repeatedly sifted (just like fine flour is sifted) until all the lumps & all the imperfections are removed.

Yes, purified. How “Pure”? According to the Scriptures, as pure as He is pure.”

Now today, I want to continue on this subject, I want to continue on what we could call: preparing for the count to Pentecost.

The title to today's message is: “Preparing to Count Fifty.”

The counting to day 50 (our feast) “Pentecost” is not something to take lightly, but like any other important event, we have to be prepared.

Part of that preparation, is for us to clarify a couple of very important “controversial” issues that need to be contemplated very seriously, in order to be properly understood.

I hope today's message will generate some “musing” because we need to “ponder” on this important subject...

Today, I want to take a look at what we call “Passover.” For one thing, we need to be sure we have the timing of the Passover Sacrifice correct, because the Passover Sacrifice is what triggers (if you will) the spring feasts.

Talk about a Milestone in the plan of God, what could be more of a milestone, than when our Lord and Savior, while hanging on a stake, after being brutally beaten, scourged and crucified open up His mouth and stated: **“It is finished”, bowed His head, and gave up the spirit?**

No wonder there was such a Huge Earthquake when the true Passover Lamb was sacrificed. As soon as Christ died, all kinds of things began to happened, the curtain tor from top to bottom – The Massive doors to the “Holy of Holies” swung open (giving disciples’ direct access to God) – Graves opening, and dead saints rose back to life, and walking into town.

Christ’s death, that Passover sacrifice not only fulfilled much prophesy, but also began the journey towards another “milestone” in God’s plan, “Pentecost” the day His first-fruits will become glorified spirit beings in the Kingdom of God .

So I want to continue addressing these important issues, and I want us to consider some plane, simple, and (I believe) clear Scriptures that are rarely contemplated when examining this important subject.

(But first, I want to go to the book of Hosea.) Because what I have to say today, rocks the boat “Big Time” (for many) concerning some of the teachings that we have had “cemented” (if you will) into our brains by many pulpits of the COG, concerning the Passover and its timing.

I going to be a bit redundant here, but I thinks it’s important to do so.

We mentioned last time how “Jude” (the half brother to Christ,) exhorts us very strongly, to get back to the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

The Greek word translated *faith* that Jude used, comes from the Word “PEITHO” meaning: to persuade – to be persuaded – conviction to the truthfulness of God – the Greek word is even defined as: Truth itself.

Jude exhorts us brethren, to get back to the Truth, to get back to the “Faith” that was once delivered to the saints.

Now Paul states in his letter to the Romans, that: *“faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

(The Word of God is the Holy Scriptures.)

The point that I’m trying to make here, is that in order for us to get back to the faith once delivered, our “persuasion” our “beliefs” our “faith” needs to come from the Word of God, from the “Holy Scriptures” not from the words of men.

All too often, the members of the church have allowed themselves to be persuaded by the words & teachings of men.

(A persuasion that is not easy to escape from.)

So today, let’s try and break through a little concrete, we can do it. And we need not worry about disturbing any real truth, because real Truth (The Word of God) has rebar in it, and will prevail under any and all examinations.

(Hosea 4:6 please) (I want to point something out here, before we move on.)

(And we need to remember, that God means what He says, and says what He means!)

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

I want to note here that this verse does not say that the people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (because they have no **access** to knowledge) but because they **reject** knowledge.

(God has freely given us access to knowledge; we have it at our disposal.)

He tells us in another place that we don’t have to find someone who can travel across the ocean (or journey to its depths) to find His instructions or His Truth, because He has given it to us in our mouth, in our tongue, in our language.

(I don’t know (or remember) exactly where that’s stated in the Scriptures.)

But I do know this: We have the *Word of God*; we have the *Holy Scriptures*,

But it's our choice whether we want to accept His Word, or reject His Word, by allowing ourselves to be influenced & persuaded by men.

Springs feasts begin at "Passover" and don't end until "Pentecost"

But when we use the word "Passover" we have to qualify what we are saying, because the word "Passover" can mean many things, not only the sacrifice of the lamb.

(Lk 22:1 fore instance) (Let's go there please) (A verse that I'm sure we have all read many times.)

Lk 22:1 *"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.*

(This verse tells us that the entire feast of Unleavened Bread is also called the "Passover".)

(Let's take a look at Ezekiel 45:21) (A verse that is not read too often.)

Ez 45:21 *"In the first month, in the 14th day of the month ye shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten."*

The NIV says it like this:

'In the first month on the fourteenth day you are to observe the Passover, a feast lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast.

I looked up seventeen different translations of that verse, and every one says you shall have, or keep, or observe the Passover, for seven days; and that unleavened bread shall be eaten.

(The teachings that I have always heard coming from the pulpits was that the "Passover" and "Feast of Unleavened Bread" are two totally separate things, and that they total eight days, not seven days.

I used to go to Passover service (eat unleaded bread at the service.) and then see brethren head over to Dunkin Donuts for a "leavened" snack, on their way home.

(Many in the COG will still be doing that again this year.)

Brethren, something is seriously wrong with that picture!

And one doesn't have to be a brain surgeon or a rocket scientist to comprehend the problem, but one does have to read & believe the Word of God.

In another places we read where it says they “*killed the Passover*”. Now that was a single event, but that single even is part of the entire seven day Passover feast.

(Ex 12 please.)

I want to point something out concerning a very important word that is used in verse 6 of Ex 12. (The word “even” or “evening.”)

Much of the contraversary over the Passover hinges on the meaning of that one word.

Ex:12:6: (speaking of the lamb here, we read this:) *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

That word “evening” is Strong’s # 6153

It’s the same word used in Gen 1 where it’s reckoned as the beginning of the new day -- biblical days begin and end at sunset.

(And the evening and the morning were the 1st day, 2nd day, 3rd day etc.)

But does the timing of the Passover sacrifice follow this same biblical day reckoning?

(No, not necessarily) (Let’s go to Numbers 28:3-4 please) (These two verses concern the daily sacrifice, and use that same Hebrew word.)

(Numbers 28: 3) We could go many places that will demonstrate that the Hebrew word translated “Evening” or “Even” is often reckoned differently then it is in Gen 1.

Nbr 28:3: *And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot **day by day**, for a continual burnt offering.*

4: The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even or in the evening.

Day by day here is from the Hebrew word *yowm* (Strong's 3117) which means 'day' or 'daytime' -- from sunrise to sunset.

Note that here the order of the biblical day here is reckoned differently -- the morning sacrifice and the evening sacrifice constitute one day's sacrifices –

Both sacrifices occur within the *same* day. So this passage places evening as nearing the end of a day, not as the beginning of the following day.

(1st sacrifice in the morning - 2nd sacrifice in the evening of the same day) If “evening” here meant after sunset, then the 2nd sacrifice would take place on a different day.

(Lv 23:27 please) (I feel these are very important points to consider, when contemplating the correct timing of the Passover Sacrifice.)

(The timing of the Passover Sacrifice is very important, because it will affect the timing of the entire seven day feast.

(In Lev 23:27 we are speaking about the feast of “Atonement” (The fast we do on the **10** day of the 7th month) No contraversary there that I know of, we all believe that we are to fast on the 10 day of the 7th month, right?

And it’s a very important fast, so important that we are instructed to begin the fast on the “evening” of the 9th day.

Lv 23:27: Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

28: And ye shall do no work in that same day (10th day right?) for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.

29: For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, (10th day right) he shall be cut off from among his people.

30: And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

31: Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Now, verse 32: *It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.*

Here, we are instructed to start our fast for Atonement on the evening of the 9th day.

Brethren, that’s the same exact Hebrew word used in Ex 12:6 where we are instructed to kill the Passover lamb on the evening on the 14th day.

If we treat that word “evening” here concerning atonement, like we’ve been incorrectly taught to treat that same exact word “evening” in Ex 12 concerning Passover, **we would be fasting for the entire ninth day of the seventh Month.**

(It would turn a one day fast, into a 2 day fast.)

(Just like it turned a 7 day feast into an 8 day feast.)

Many men in PULPITS insist that the Passover lamb of Ex 12 was killed immediately after sunset, at the beginning of the 14th day.

One man (Who is a scholar and a very seasoned & persuasive minister in a COG) has written a 482 page book supporting a beginning of the 14th Passover sacrifice, titled: “The Christian Passover.”

His teachings (concerning that subject) go pretty much “status quo” as WW taught and as all the big splinters still teach today, an 8 day feast.

I requested a copy and received a full dozen copies of the 482 page book that was written to teach us what the Scriptures say concerning the Passover.

The book is chuck full of scholarly terms and powerful words that will entice you and persuade you to believe that the Israelites killed the unblemished Passover lamb after sunset at the beginning of the 14th day of the 1st month.

But scholarly terms and powerful words don't measures up to many plain & simple Scriptures that teach so much that is contrary.

(Not to digress) But, this is the same man that paid another man in God “church” \$10,000 of God's Tithes & Offering money to research the “calendar issue” With Its “Postponements.”

The \$10,000 produced a “Study Paper” that was offered free of charge to everyone, upon request, and it came with choice, yes choice? You could order the short 300 page version, or you could order the long 600 page one.

(I'm not trying to ridicule or bash anyone here, but I would like to drive a point home, concerning a particular verse in the book of Revelations.) And sometimes it takes a *sledge hammer* to get through hard surfaces.

He tried to tackle the calendar issue himself, in a sermon, trying to prove to us that the “Calculated Hebrew Calendar” (along with its “Postponements”) is not only the correct Biblical Calendar that God gave us to follow, but that our “salvation” hinges on the observance of it.

At first he thought he could cover the calendar in “one” sermon, he started his teaching by telling us that the biblical calendar is quite a simple thing to comprehend. But he ended

his message by saying the calendar issue is a bit complicated, so we'll conclude next week.

The following week's teaching even deepened the confusion, so the sermon ended with another postponement stating that it was going to take a 3rd (1 ½ hour) sermon the following week, to finally reach conclusion.

After the 3rd sermon, he did finally conclude, with everyone's head rapidly spinning from the mass of confusion, he ended by stating that the calendar issue is much too complicated for the average Joe to comprehend, that you have to be a scholar to understand it, and he said (and I quote) "*trust us on this one!*"

It was quite obvious from his first sermon that he had never studied the issue before, but Wow, was he good at stirring up the confusion, especially now that he was the authority on the complicated confusing subject.

About the only thing more complicated & confusing than those 3 sermons, was that \$10,000 *Study Paper* on the "Postponements."

(Let's end my digressing with the instruction found in Rev 18: 4 concerning the fall of "confusion") (The fall of Babylon.)

Rev 18: 4 And I heard another voice in heaven saying, come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins,(of her transgressions) and that you receive not of her plagues.

Let us not think that teachings from pulpits in the "church of God" can't be part of the "Babylon" that we need to come out of.

We are told that there is simplicity in Christ Jesus, and thank God for that, because He is our teacher.

Deut 16:6. (Let' look at another example that teaches a 7 day feast.)

(Speaking of the timing of the Passover Sacrifice we read this :)

Deut:16:6: (King James Version) But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.

Some translations say "Twilight" And Twilight today is considered to be the time between "Sunset" and "Dark"

But in Jewish history there were two "Evenings" the 1st evening (from 12 noon to sunset) and the 2nd evening (from sunset to dark.)

(But there distinguishable from one another by things like "context" "Logic" "reason.")

It's the same old thing, "square pegs" don't fit in "round holes" You can force them all you want, but they will never fit.

The unspotted, unblemished Passover lamb of Ex 12, represented the unspotted, unblemished Christ, who was sacrificed at the same exact time that the Israelites previously sacrificed their lamb (which symbolized Christ) at the end of the 14 day, as the sun was going down.

Gill's commentary says this: "at even, at the going down of the sun; between the two evenings it was killed, before the sun was set, and afterwards at night it was eaten, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt; the time of the beginning of your redemption out of Egypt;" which was when Pharaoh rose at midnight, and gave them leave to go; from thence their redemption commenced, though they did not actually set out until the morning.

In Leviticus 23, God tells us that "When ye be 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: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: ON THE MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH the priest shall wave it" (vs.10-11).

"And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, UNTEL THE SELFSAME DAY that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute FOREVER throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (v.14).

Notice! God said His people were not to eat of the new harvest UNTIL AFTER they had performed the wave sheaf offering on the "morrow after the sabbath."

What "sabbath" was this? The annual or weekly Sabbath?

Turn over to Joshua, chapter 5. Notice! "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and KEPT THE PASSOVER on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plain of Jericho. AND THEY DID EAT OF THE OLD CORN OF THE LAND ON THE MORROW AFTER THE PASSOVER, unleavened cakes, and parched corn IN THE SELFSAME DAY. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Josh.5:10-12).

Now notice carefully! God had commanded them to NEVER eat of the harvest of the land until AFTER the wave sheaf offering, on the "morrow after the sabbath" (Lev.23:10-11,14). This was a statute FOR EVER (verse 14).

But notice! When they entered the Promised Land, they ate of the harvest "ON THE MORROW AFTER THE PASSOVER!" In other words, the morrow after the First Day of Unleavened Bread! Remember, Passover was celebrated at the END of the 14th of Nisan, at evening, and was actually eaten on the 15th day of Nisan, after sunset. Thus it led right into the First Day of Unleavened Bread (see Exodus 12:13-16). This is why there were "seven" days of unleavened bread, including Passover, and not "eight" days.

Therefore, as this mysterious verse in Joshua 5 shows, it was the "MORROW AFTER THE PASSOVER" -- or the day after the First Holy Day of Unleavened Bread -- when the Israelites ate of the "old corn of the land, unleavened cakes, and parched corn IN THE SELFSAME DAY" (Joshua 5:11). This verse indicates that they ate of the harvest of the land that year, after wandering 40 years in the wilderness and eating manna, on NISAN 16 -- the day of the wave sheaf offering, the day after the first holy day of Unleavened Bread! What could be clearer?

Clearly, then, the "morrow after the sabbath" of Leviticus 23:11 and the "morrow after the Passover" of Joshua 5:11 are the SAME DAY -- the day after the ANNUAL SABBATH --NOT THE WEEKLY SABBATH! This verse PROVES it beyond doubt.

The great Jewish historian Josephus who lived during the first century joined the Pharisees at the age of 19 and remained a member for the rest of his life. He was a great Jewish general, leader, and was a member of the priestly family.

In his description of the festival of Pentecost Josephus writes:

"But ON THE SECOND DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, WHICH IS THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them . . .

"When a week of weeks has passed over after this sacrifice (which weeks contain forty and nine days,) on the FIFTIETH DAY, which is called Pentecost . . . (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, 10, 5-6).

Clarke's says this:

Ye shall count unto you - seven Sabbaths - That is, from the sixteenth of the first month to the sixth of the third month. These seven weeks, called here Sabbaths, were to be complete, i. e., the forty-nine days must be finished, and the next day, the fiftieth, is what, from the Septuagint, we call pentecost. See the note on Lk 6:1

Gill's:

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath,... Not the seventh day sabbath in the passover week, nor the whole feast of unleavened bread, but the first day of it, which was an holy convocation, a sabbath in which no servile work was to be done, and it was from the day after this, even the sixteenth of Nisan, that the following count was to be made; so the Targum of Jonathan, after the

first feast day of the passover: and Josephus (s) is very clear in it, that Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, was the fiftieth day from the sixteenth of Nisan, when the above offerings were made:

from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; which plainly points out the express day from whence the count was to begin, even on the day when the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest was offered:

PENTECOST: SUNDAY, MONDAY, OR SIVAN 6?

Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks (Heb. *Chag Shavuot*), the Feast of Harvest (Heb. *Chag haQatzir*), and the Day of Firstfruits (Heb. *Yom haBikurim*) in the Old Testament, is the only Holy Day which wasn't designated to fall on a particular day of the month. Pentecost, which means "count fifty" in Greek, was to be determined by counting 50 days from the time the wave sheaf was offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That sounds simple enough, but the difficulty that arises is **when** to start and end the count.

Almost all will agree that the 50-day count to Pentecost begins within the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, also known as the Feast of Passover (Exo. 34:25; Eze. 45:21). The controversial passage which explains how to derive the date of Pentecost is found in Leviticus 23:

LEVITICUS 23:9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on **the day after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it. . . . 15 And you shall count for yourselves from **the day after the Sabbath**, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: **seven Sabbaths** shall be completed. 16 Count fifty days to **the day after the seventh Sabbath**; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.' " (*NKJV*)

Since before the ministry of Messiah Yeshua, a debate has raged regarding the proper time to observe Pentecost. One of the primary sticking points has been the meaning of "Sabbath" in Leviticus 23:11, 15 & 16. Some claim that the "Sabbath" referred to in verses 11 & 15 is the weekly Sabbath which falls within the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and that the "Sabbath" mentioned in verse 16 is the seventh weekly Sabbath from the Feast. Others believe that the "Sabbath" referred to in verses 11 & 15 is the first day of Unleavened Bread (a high Sabbath upon which no customary work was to be done and a holy convocation held-Lev. 23:7), while "Sabbath" in verse 16 should actually be understood as "week."

A.S. Van Der Woude explains where these different beliefs originated:

After the time of the Old Testament there are different ideas among the Jews as to the day constituting the *terminus a quo* of the seven weeks (Van Goudoever, pp. 18, 29). It concerns here the exegesis of Leviticus 23:11, 15, which speaks of "the day after the sabbath." The Sadducees (and also the Samaritans) took the text as literally as possible. They understood the sabbath mentioned there as being the seventh day of the week . . . In that case the Feast of Weeks was always on the first day (Sunday). The Council of Nicea more or less went along with this and put Pentecost (even as Easter) on a Sunday. The Pharisees counted differently. Their calculation became officially accepted in Jewish orthodoxy from the second century A.D. According to them the "sabbath" in these texts refers to the first feast day of the Passover. On the following day the sheaf was to be brought and the fiftieth day was to be calculated from that. (p. 389, *The World of the Bible*)

For more detailed information regarding this and other doctrinal differences between these two historical groups, see my article

The question of whether Pentecost falls on Sunday, Monday, or *Sivan* 6 has historically been a divisive one for messianic groups and those Churches of God which keep the weekly and annual Sabbaths. Those who believe that Pentecost always falls on a Sunday or Monday interpret the "Sabbath" specified in Leviticus 23:11 & 15 to be the weekly Sabbath which occurs within the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. These two related views are held by most of the groups which split off from the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), with the Sunday Pentecost belief being the most prominent. In fact, Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of WCG, taught all three (a *Sivan* 6, Monday, and Sunday Pentecost) during his tenure as leader. Many messianic groups also celebrate *Shavu'ot* on a Sunday every year, contrary to the traditional Jewish practice. Both Sunday and Monday observances of Pentecost are derived from the doctrine promoted by the Sadducees and the Samaritans.

However, this understanding occasionally causes a problem when the weekly Sabbath of Passover falls on the last day of the Feast. It then becomes impossible to start the count to Pentecost **during** the days of Unleavened Bread. In most cases, those who follow the Sadducean method compensate by beginning the count on the day after the weekly Sabbath which comes **before** the Feast starts. This way, the count to Pentecost can begin within the days of Unleavened Bread as required.

The difference between those who think that Pentecost always falls on a Sunday and those who believe it is on Monday results from the question of whether the count is inclusive or exclusive of the 50th day. Both groups generally count the Sunday within the Days of Unleavened Bread as "day one"; therefore, 50 days later always ends up being a Sunday also. The Sunday Pentecost faction observes this 50th day as Pentecost, while the much smaller Monday group counts 50 days to the same Sunday, and then keeps Pentecost on Monday, the 51st day.

Those who believe that the count to Pentecost begins on the day after the first **annual** Sabbath of the year (the First Day of Unleavened Bread) follow the traditional Jewish method of deriving the proper date. With the current structure of the Hillel II Jewish calendar, this holy day now always falls on *Sivan* 6.

Although the literal Hebrew text of verse 16 states that Israel was to "count 50 days to the day after the seventh Sabbath," there is much ancient support for the view that "Sabbath" here is NOT referring to the weekly Sabbath. The 3rd-century BCE translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek called the *Septuagint* provides the oldest example of how this passage was understood anciently by the majority of Jews:

LEVITICUS 23:15 And ye shall number to yourselves from the day after **the Sabbath** [ton sabbaton], from the day on which ye shall offer the sheaf of the heave-offering, **seven full weeks** [hepta hebdomadas holoklerous]: 16 until the morrow after the **last week** [eschates hebdomados] ye shall number fifty days, and shall bring a new meat-offering to the Lord. (*Brenton's LXX*)

Clearly the Jewish sages who translated the *Septuagint* understood that "after the seventh Sabbath" in Leviticus 23:16 meant "after seven weeks." This is by no means the only ancient evidence showing that particular understanding of the instruction found in Leviticus 23. Two very old Aramaic translations of the Hebrew text also support this view:

LEVITICUS 23:15 And number to you after the first feast day of Pascha, from the day when you brought the sheaf for the elevation, **seven weeks**; complete they shall be. 16 Until the day after the **seventh week** you shall number fifty days, and shall offer a mincha of the new bread unto the Name of the Lord. (*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*)

LEVITICUS 23:15 And count to you, after the festival day, from the day that you brought the omera of the elevation, **seven weeks**, complete shall they be. 16 Until the (day) after the **seventh week** number fifty days, and (then) offer a new mincha before the Lord. (*Targum Onkelos*)

Those who accept this evidence and follow the traditional Jewish view of when to observe *Shavu'ot* generally do so because they believe that *YHVH* gave His oracles to the Jews, and therefore the preservation of the calendar and Holy Days is under their authority:

ROMANS 3:1 What advantage then has **the Jew**, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because **to them were committed the oracles of God**. 3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? 4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged." (*NKJV*)

A look at Jacob's deathbed prophecy to his children shows why Paul lauded the position of the Jews in God's plan. The tribe of Judah is prophesied to continue to be the guardians of the oracles of *YHVH* until the Messiah comes to reign:

GENESIS 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from **Judah**, nor a **lawgiver** [mechoqeq] from between his feet, until Shiloh shall come; and to him shall be the obedience of the people. (*RWB*)

The root of the Hebrew word translated "lawgiver" in Gen. 49:10 (as well as Psa. 60:7 & Psa. 108:8) is *chaqaq*. It literally means "to engrave"; by extension, it means "to be a scribe." Judah was the one who was given the authority to document, record and transmit the oracles of God down through the ages.

Many theologians focus on the phrase "to him shall be the obedience of the people," making "Shiloh" (which is commonly understood to be the Messiah) the focus of this prophecy. However, we must remember that the primary thrust of the prophecies given by Jacob to his sons in Genesis 49 was to tell them "what shall befall you in the last days" (Gen. 49:1). Therefore, the true intent of this prophecy is to show that Judah and his descendants would be the preservers of God's oracles until the coming of the Messiah to establish the kingdom of heaven here on the earth.

Two of the Psalms echo the fact that *YHVH* gave the tribe of Judah the responsibility for preserving His oracles:

PSALM 60:7 Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet for My head; **Judah is My lawgiver** [mechoqqi]. (*NKJV*)

PSALM 108:8 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; **Judah is my lawgiver** [mechoqqi]; (*KJV*)

Three times (cf. Deu. 19:15, Matt. 18:16; II Cor. 13:1) the Hebrew Scriptures clearly confirm Paul's statement that the Jews as a whole are responsible for preserving and transmitting God's Word from generation to generation. Going back to the days of Yeshua, the majority of Jews have considered "the Sabbath" mentioned in Leviticus 23:11 and 15 to be the first high Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15), which is the first day of the Feast (Exo. 12:16; Lev. 23:6-7).

The historical works of Josephus, a Jewish Pharisee who wrote late in the 1st century CE, confirm this:

In the month of Xanthicus, which is by us called *Nisan*, and is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the sun is in Aries, (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians,) the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice which I before told you we slew when we came out of Egypt, and which was called the *Passover*; and so we do celebrate this passover in companies, leaving nothing of what we sacrifice till the day following. The feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread; on every one of which days two bulls are killed, and one ram, and seven lambs. Now these lambs are entirely burnt, besides the kid of the goats which is added to all the rest, for sins; for it is intended as a feast for the priest on every one of those days.

But **on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month**, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them. And while they suppose it

proper to honor God, from whom they obtain this plentiful provision, in the first place, they offer the first-fruits of their barley, and that in the manner following: They take a handful of the ears, and dry them, then beat them small, and purge the barley from the bran; they then bring one tenth deal to the altar, to God; and, casting one handful of it upon the fire, they leave the rest for the use of the priest. And after this it is that they may publicly or privately reap their harvest. They also at this participation of the first-fruits of the earth, sacrifice a lamb, as a burnt-offering to God. When a week of weeks has passed over after this sacrifice, (which weeks contain forty and nine days,) on the fiftieth day, which is Pentecost, but is called by the Hebrews *Asartha*, which signifies *Pentecost*, they bring to God a loaf, made of wheat flour, of two tenth deals, with leaven; and for sacrifices they bring two lambs; and when they have only presented them to God, they are made ready for supper for the priests; nor is it permitted to leave any thing of them till the day following. (p. 96, 3.10.5-6, *Antiquities of the Jews*)

The Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh* reflects this same understanding in its translation of Leviticus 23:9-11, 15-16:

LEVITICUS 23:9 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 10 Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall elevate the sheaf before the LORD for acceptance in your behalf; the priest shall elevate it **on the day after the sabbath**. . . . 15 And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering - **the day after the sabbath** - you shall count off **seven weeks**. They must be complete: 16 you must **count until the day after the seventh week** - fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD. (*JPS Tanakh*)

In their commentary on this passage, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown concur with the traditional Jewish viewpoint. They write:

11. the morrow after the sabbath - *i.e.*, the day after the Sabbath, not the weekly Sabbath, but the first day of unleavened bread, which was to be kept as a Sabbath; for upon it there was to be a holy convocation . . . **15. ye shall count . . . from the morrow after the sabbath** - *i.e.*, after the first day of the passover week, which was observed as a Sabbath." (p. 497, vol. I, *A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical*)

At the time of Yeshua's ministry, the Pharisees believed that the second occurrence of the word "sabbath" in verse 15 and "sabbath" in verse 16 referred to a period of seven days, **not** the weekly Sabbath. This is the way the *JPS Tanakh* translates this passage above, and it is the common understanding of most Jews today.

A parallel passage in Deuteronomy 16 seems to substantiate the common Jewish understanding of "sabbath" in this passage:

DEUTERONOMY 16:9 "You shall count off **seven weeks** [shiv'ah shavu'ot], computing them from the day when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. 10 You shall then keep the **Feast of Weeks** [chag shavu'ot] in honor of the LORD, your God . . . (*NAB*)

In this Scripture, the word "week" is a translation of the Hebrew root word *shavua'*, which literally means "a period of seven," or "a week." The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)* says this about the use of *shavua'* in Deuteronomy 16:

In Deut 16:9, *shabu'a* represents a period of seven days (literally "seven seven-periods you shall-number-to-you"). . . .

shabua' is also used as a technical term in Deut 16:10, 16 where it denotes the Feast of Weeks (*hag shabu'ot*), *i.e.* the Feast of Seven-Periods. . . . It was so named because it was to be celebrated "on the morrow after" the seventh sabbath after the day of firstfruits (Lev 23:15-16)! Hence it was the feast of the day following the seven seven-periods, or the feast of *hamishim yom*, fifty days - "Pentecost" from

the Greek. This feast marked the early wheat harvest at about the sixth of Sivan, at the end of our own month of May. (p. 899, vol. II)

At the time of Yeshua, the Hebrew calendar was still being determined by the Sanhedrin every month by visual observation of the new moon. Because of this, *Shavu'ot* could fall on either Sivan 5, 6, or 7 (Rosh Hashana 6b, *Talmud*). This was possible because the total number of days in the months of *Nisan* and *Iyar* could be either 29 or 30. Now, because the standardized rules for the Hebrew calendar compiled by Hillel II in 358 CE call for *Nisan* and *Iyar* to always have 30 and 29 days, respectively, Pentecost consistently falls on *Sivan* 6 of the Hebrew calendar.

As John Lightfoot explains, there are two passages of Scripture the Pharisees used to determine that the Sabbath in Leviticus 23:11 & 15 was referring to the First Day of Unleavened Bread (*Nisan* 15):

"But the scribes, very differently [from the Sadducees], keep strictly to the **sixteenth day of the month of Nisan for offering the firstfruits** without any dispensation, **after the sabbatical day or the first day of the feast is over**. And amongst other by which they strengthen their opinion, those two different places of Scripture, **Exod. xii. 15, "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread,"** and **Deut. xvi. 8, "Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread,"** they, according to the sense they have, do thus reconcile, 'seven days, indeed, you shall eat unleavened bread;' that is, unleavened bread of the old wheat, on the first day of the feast, the sheaf being not yet offered; and unleavened bread of the new wheat, the remaining six days, after you have offered the firstfruits." (pp. 23-24, vol. 4, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*)

There is another passage of Scripture found in the book of Joshua that confirms that *Nisan* 16 is the proper time to begin the 50-day count to Pentecost:

JOSHUA 5:10 While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, **they kept** [ya'asu] **the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening** on the plains of Jericho. 11 **And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land**, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. (*ESV*)

God told Moses that when the Israelites came into the Promised Land, they were NOT to eat of the new produce of the land until they had offered a sheaf of the firstfruits of the land as an offering to *YHVH* (Lev. 23:9-14). This offering, which was to take place AFTER a Sabbath, was then the beginning point for the count to Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-16).

The only way that the Israelites could have eaten the produce of Canaan on "the day after the Passover" is if Passover was "the Sabbath" referred to in Leviticus 23:11 & 15. This would of necessity mean that the term "Passover" sometimes is used to refer to the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

The seeming combination of Passover with the beginning day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread has been a cause for some confusion. Regarding the word *ya'asu*, translated "kept" in Joshua 5:10, *TWOT* states that the root word *'asa* "is often used in specialized expressions such as . . . "offer sacrifice" (Exo 10:25), "keep the Passover" (Exo 12:48) . . . , and many more." The meaning of "kept" here is that the Israelites sacrificed the Passover lamb on the afternoon of *Nisan* 14, which was the time commanded by God (Exo. 12:6). They then would have cooked the Passover late on the afternoon of *Nisan* 14, and eaten the Passover meal after sunset, as *Nisan* 15 (the First Day of Unleavened Bread) was beginning.

Although some have tried to separate the sacrifice of the Passover lamb and the Passover meal from the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the ancient Israelites considered them to be intricately tied together. In fact, Ezekiel 45:21 states that "in the first month, on the 14th day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days." Compare this Scripture with the original command for the observance of Passover:

EXODUS 12:17 "So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your

generations as an everlasting ordinance. 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.**" (NKJV)

In the "Holy Day" chapter of the Law (Lev. 23), we see that the Feast of Unleavened Bread was commanded to be a seven-day feast, beginning on *Nisan* 15 (Lev. 23:6). The original command shows that the Passover lamb was sacrificed in mid-afternoon of *Nisan* 14, as the sun was setting. It was then cooked as the day waned and eaten after sundown on *Nisan* 15, as the Feast of Unleavened Bread started. Although slightly longer than seven 24-hour days, the entire period from mid-afternoon on *Nisan* 14 to the sunset that ended *Nisan* 21 was considered to be a period of seven days. Consequently, the period from the afternoon of *Nisan* 14 to the end of *Nisan* 15, even though it was longer than 24 hours, was considered to be **one** day (alternately called Passover or the First Day of Unleavened Bread).

Therefore, we see that Joshua's account of the eating of the new produce of Canaan shows that Passover (from the afternoon of *Nisan* 14 to the sunset that ended *Nisan* 15) was "the Sabbath" referred to in the command that determines the count to Pentecost.

Regarding the symbolism found in the Passover feast, theologians acknowledge that Yeshua was the "Lamb of God," the ultimate embodiment of the Passover lambs (I Cor. 5:7; I Pet. 1:19; John 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:6). He was the one represented by the Passover lambs for centuries. Indeed, he died on the cross on *Nisan* 14 at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the same time that the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple courtyard.

However, those who keep a Sunday or Monday Pentecost believe that Yeshua fulfilled another Old Testament symbol: the wave sheaf. While there is no Scripture that directly links Messiah to the wave sheaf offering, those who hold this view allege that two passages of Scripture (John 20:17-18 and I Cor. 15:20) prove that he was the fulfillment of the wave sheaf. We shall look at each in turn:

JOHN 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not **cling to** [haptou] Me, for **I have not yet ascended to my Father**; but go to my brethren and say to them, '**I am ascending to my Father** and your Father, and to my God and your God.' " 18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. (NKJV)

The offering of the wave sheaf (Heb. *omer*) was to be performed as part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, beginning when the Israelites first entered the Holy Land (Lev. 23:11). Leviticus 23:14 specifically says that no bread, roasted grain, or new grain was to be eaten until the wave sheaf had been offered to God.

Many of those who keep a Sunday or Monday Pentecost claim that this passage of Scripture is proof that Yeshua was the fulfillment of the wave sheaf. They maintain that the reason Mary wasn't supposed to "cling to" ("touch"-KJV) the resurrected Messiah on that Sunday morning was because he had not yet been "waved" before the Father. According to this theory, Yeshua ascended to the Father in heaven later that morning at about 9:00 a.m., the same time the Sadducees were supposedly offering the wave sheaf. After having his sacrifice accepted by God, he later returned to earth and was then able to be touched by his disciples (Matt. 28:9).

This theory has several fatal flaws.

The first comes about due to a misunderstanding of the Greek word *haptou* ("cling to"), a form of the verb *haptomai*. Friberg's *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* says that it literally means "to take hold of." Here it does **not** simply mean "touch," as the *KJV* implies. Rather, the connotation is of "embracing," clinging to one in an emotional way, seeking comfort from someone through physical contact.

Mary, understandably emotional when she recognized Yeshua, wanted to embrace him and be comforted and reassured that he was indeed alive and still with them. But Yeshua quickly sought to clarify her misconception of why he had returned. He did not tell Mary that she could not "touch" him;

rather, he was saying that their relationship has changed since his resurrection. He was no longer a physical man, but a glorified spirit being. He would not now physically comfort his disciples. Instead, after his ascension to claim the High Priesthood of the New Covenant, he would comfort them through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), which was to be sent on Pentecost.

In the passage above, Yeshua does say that he is ascending to his Father in heaven; however, he doesn't say **when** he will ascend. Does the Bible tell us when he ascended back to heaven to his Father? Yes, it clearly does. Acts 1:3, 9 tells us that **after** appearing to his disciples during a 40-day period, he ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives. Nowhere is any other ascension mentioned in the Bible. Those who believe Yeshua ascended to heaven on Sunday morning after his resurrection do so based on their own reasoning, not the Bible. (For information regarding when Yeshua was **actually** raised from the dead, see my article "[When Was Christ Resurrected?](#)")

Those who feel Yeshua is the wave sheaf believe that he had to ascend to heaven that morning to be accepted by God the Father, just as the wave sheaf had to be offered to God before the rest of the harvest could be used. But does the Bible support this view? No, it does not! In fact, it clearly shows through a symbolic event caused by God that Yeshua's sacrifice was accepted immediately upon his death:

MARK 15:37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed his last. 38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. (NKJV)

The veil of the temple was the divider between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (Exo. 26:33). The Holy of Holies represented God's throne in heaven. The ripping of the veil, starting at the top and going to the bottom, symbolically indicated that believers now had access to the very throne of God through the sacrifice of Yeshua (Heb. 10:19-20). Clearly, this miracle showed that Yeshua did not have to wait until after his resurrection to have his sacrifice accepted by the Father.

Finally, we must realize that even though the Sadducees controlled the high priesthood at the time of Yeshua, their power was severely restricted. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* states:

Although the spiritual power of the Pharisees had increased greatly, the Sadducean aristocracy was able to keep at the helm in politics. The price at which the Sadducees had to secure themselves power at this later period was indeed a high one, for they were in their official actions to accommodate themselves to Pharisaic views (p. 1112, "Sadducee").

Alfred Edersheim, a noted Jewish historian, recorded the practical effects of the Pharisees' power in relation to the keeping of Pentecost:

The Pharisees held, that the time between [Passover] and Pentecost should be counted from the second day of the feast; the Sadducees insisted that it should commence with the literal "Sabbath" after the festive day. But despite argument, the Sadducees had to join when the solemn procession went on the afternoon of the feast to cut down the "first sheaf," and to reckon Pentecost as did their opponents. (p. 220, ch. 15, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*)

It is almost certain that the Sadducean High Priest Caiaphas did **not** wave the sheaf offering on the Sunday morning after Yeshua first appeared to his disciples. History shows that, whatever his personal feelings about Pentecost might have been, the high priest was forced for political reasons to present the wave sheaf offering at the same time the majority of the nation thought it should be done: on the morning of Friday, *Nisan* 16.

Now let's look at I Corinthians 15:20, which Sunday/Monday Pentecost factions say also proves Messiah was the wave sheaf:

I CORINTHIANS 15:20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the **firstfruits** [aparche] of those who have fallen asleep. (NKJV)

The Greek word *aparche* translated "firstfruits" above is singular, not plural. Yeshua was the **"firstfruit,"** not the "firstfruits" as this translation of the verse implies. This distinction will become

important as we more fully understand the wave sheaf offering. Let's look at a detailed description of the *omer* offering as described by Alfred Edersheim:

. . . They [delegates from the Sanhedrin] cut down barley to the amount of one ephah, or ten omers, or three seahs, which is equal to about three pecks and three pints of our English measure. The ears were brought into the Court of the Temple, and thrashed out with canes or stalks, so as not to injure the corn; then 'parched' on a pan perforated with holes, so that each grain might be touched by the fire, and finally exposed to the wind. The corn thus prepared was ground in a barley mill, which left the hulls whole. According to some, the flour was always successfully passed through thirteen sieves, each closer than the other. The statement of a rival authority, however, seems more rational - that it was only done till the flour was sufficiently fine (*Men.* vi. 6, 7), which was ascertained by one of the 'Gizbarim' (treasurers) plunging his hands into it, the sifting process being continued so long as any of the flour adhered to the hands (*Men.* viii. 2). Though one ephah, or ten omers, or barley was cut down, only one omer of flour, or about 5.1 pints of our measure, was offered in the Temple on the second Paschal, or **16th day of Nisan**. The rest of the flour might be redeemed, and used for any purpose. The omer of flour was mixed with a 'log,' or very nearly three-fourths of a pint of oil, and a handful of frankincense put upon it, then waved before the Lord, and a handful taken out and burned on the altar. The remainder belonged to the priest. This was what is popularly, though not very correctly, called 'the presentation of the first or wave-sheaf' on the second day of the Passover-feast, or **the 16th of Nisan**. (pp. 204-205, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, updated edition)

Yeshua was the firstfruit (singular); however, the wave sheaf offering represented the firstfruits (plural). Who are those firstfruits? They are those called and chosen, the *ekklesia*, the Church of God. A look at the symbolism of the wave sheaf offering in conjunction with the details of how this offering was performed reveals the truth of this claim.

- The wave sheaf was initially made up of numerous heads of grain (plural), not just one (singular).
- These grains were parched by fire, just as believers in the body of Christ are tried and tested by fiery trials:

I PETER 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the **fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (*NKJV*)

- The grains which made up the wave sheaf offering were ground into a fine flour through the milling process, just as we are ground into powder by Yeshua during our refinement:

MATTHEW 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? 43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, **it will grind him to powder.**" (*NKJV*)

- Although ten omers of barley were cut down, only one omer of flour was eventually used in the offering:

MATTHEW 22:14 "For **many** are called, but **few** are chosen." (*NKJV*)

When you consider all aspects of the wave sheaf offering, it's clear that symbolically the wave sheaf represents the Church, not Yeshua.

However, the fact that some Sunday/Monday Pentecost adherents are mistaken about the symbolic identification of the wave sheaf in no way invalidates the duality present in *Yah's* plan. We constantly see antetypes and types throughout the Bible. We see the first man, Adam, and the second man, Yeshua (Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:47-49). As mentioned earlier, the original Passover lambs slain in Egypt were

types of Yeshua, the true Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7). We have the earthly Jerusalem and the new Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12; 21:2). I could cite more examples from the Scriptures, but clearly God's plan is dual in many, if not all, respects.

Conclusion

The entire nation of Judah, following the teaching of the Pharisees, was observing Pentecost on the correct day in the time of Yeshua. No wonder he told his disciples, as well as the people, that "the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do . . ." (Matt. 23:2-3).

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March 4, 1998

WHAT DOES "BETWEEN THE EVENINGS" MEAN?

A lot of disagreement exists in the end-time Church of God regarding the proper time to observe the Passover. Many, if not most, believe that the Passover lambs were originally slain on the 14th of Abib (later called Nisan) right after sunset, with the Passover meal being eaten later on the night of 14 Abib. They base this belief on Exodus 12:6:

EXODUS 12:6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **in the evening** [beyn ha'arbayim]. (*KJV*)

The Hebrew phrase *beyn ha'arbayim* (בֵּין הָעֶרְבַּיִם) is translated as "in the evening" above. However, the literal translation of this expression is "between the evenings," as Jay Green's English rendering of the Old Testament, entitled *A Literal Translation of the Bible (LTB)*, shows:

EXODUS 12:6 And it shall be for you to keep until the fourteenth day of this month. And all the assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **between the evenings** [beyn ha'arbayim]. (*LTB*)

Most modern versions of the Bible render *beyn ha'arbayim* either as "at twilight" or "at dusk." This phrase occurs 11 times in the Old Testament (Exo. 12:6; 16:12; 29:39; 29:41; 30:8; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3, 5, 11; 28:4, 8). The first occurrence, Exodus 12:6, is in reference to the time God commanded the Passover lambs to be slain. Those who believe that the Passover lambs were killed on 14 Abib between sunset and total darkness reckon the first evening as sunset and the second evening as nightfall.

But is this interpretation correct? Does *beyn ha'arbayim* refer to this brief period of time? Is there any way to clearly define "between the evenings" from the Bible?

In reality, the debate over the timing of the original Passover sacrifice and meal boils down to one very basic question: What is meant by the Hebrew phrase *beyn ha'arbayim*? What time period does "between the evenings" cover?

Anciently, the Samaritans believed that "between the evenings" was the time from sunset to dark. Because of this belief, they sacrificed the Passover just after sunset, as 14 Abib was starting. They then ate the Passover meal later on the night of the 14th. Allegedly, the Sadducees held the same views on Passover as did the Samaritans.

On the other hand, most Jews have always reckoned "between the evenings" as the afternoon, literally the time between the decline of the sun after noon (the first evening) until the setting of the sun to end the day (the second evening). Therefore, until the destruction of the Second Temple, the vast majority of observant Jews killed the Passover on the afternoon of the 14 Abib, and ate the Passover meal later in the night, at the start of 15 Abib.

There is really no need to debate this issue, for the Bible clearly tells us when "between the evenings" is. In Exodus 29:38-41, God gives Israel instructions regarding the daily sacrifice:

EXODUS 29:38 And this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs daily, sons of a year; **39** the one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and **the second** [hasheni] lamb you shall offer **between the evenings** [beyn ha'arbayim]. **40** And a tenth of fine flour anointed with beaten oil, a fourth of a hin, and a drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine, for the one lamb. **41** And you shall offer **the second** [hasheni] lamb **between the evenings** [beyn ha'arbayim]; you shall do it like the morning food offering and its drink offering, for a soothing fragrance, a fire offering to Jehovah. (*LTB*)

Although many English translations render *hasheni* as "the other" in verses 39 and 41, any good Hebrew concordance will show you that it literally means "the" (*ha*) "second" (*sheni*). Most Church of God members accept that the Eternal reckons days from sunset to sunset (cf. Lev. 23:27, 32). The divine instructions shown above make it clear that the priests were to offer two lambs every day. God told Moses that the first lamb was to be sacrificed in the morning, and the second lamb was to be sacrificed "between the evenings." To be the **second** offering of the day, the lamb sacrificed "between the evenings" had to be slain **before** sunset!

If "between the evenings" occurs anytime **after** sunset, then this command could **not** have been properly carried out by the Israelites. At sunset, the old day has ended and the new day has begun. So under the Samaritan definition of "between the evenings," the evening sacrifice would be **first** and the morning sacrifice **second**!

The Jews, however, correctly understood what God meant by *beyn ha'arbayim*. According to noted Jewish historian Alfred Edersheim, "Ordinarily it [the evening sacrifice] was slain at 2.30 P.M., and offered at about 3.30" (p. 174, updated ed., *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*).

The preceding passage of Scripture alone should define "between the evenings" for us. Yet God also inspired another event to be recorded in the eighteenth chapter of I Kings to help His end-time people correctly understand when "between the evenings" occurs.

To recap the story, the prophet Elijah had King Ahab of Israel assemble the people of Israel on Mount Carmel. He challenged the people, saying, "If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Elijah then proposed a test to identify the true God. The prophets of Baal were to

sacrifice a bull for a burnt offering and call on their god to consume the offering with fire. Let's pick up the story in I Kings 18:26:

I KINGS 18:26 So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal **from morning even till noon**, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. 27 And so it was, **at noon**, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28 So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29 And **when midday was past**, they prophesied **until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice**. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. (*NKJV*)

Notice the time element distinctly laid out in the Scriptures above. The prophets of Baal spent from morning until the time of the evening sacrifice trying to get an answer from their god. From Exodus 29:38-41, as well as Numbers 28:1-8, we know that the evening sacrifice was to be offered "between the evenings." So, at a minimum, this passage shows that "between the evenings" is sometime past noon.

Having given the prophets of Baal plenty of time, Elijah took his turn at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. He repaired God's altar, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the altar. He then had the people pour water in a trench around the altar and drench the sacrifice three times. Let's pick the story up again in verse 36:

I KINGS 18:36 And it came to pass, **at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice**, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" 40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. (*NKJV*)

The Bible specifies that this mighty miracle occurred "at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice" (i.e., between the evenings). Now let's examine the rest of the story to see if we can determine when this time was:

I KINGS 18:41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." **42** So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, **43** and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And **seven times** he said, "Go again." **44** Then it came to pass the **seventh time**, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" **45** Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. **46** Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. (**NKJV**)

Generally, there is about 30-45 minutes from the time the sun goes down until total darkness. If the Samaritan definition of *beyn ha'arbayim* is correct, all the following events detailed in I Kings 18 had to have occurred "between the evenings" at the time of the evening sacrifice, a period of declining visibility:

- The repair of God's altar by Elijah (I Kings 18:30-32).
- The digging of a trench around the altar which would hold approximately 5½ gallons (2 "seahs") of water (I Kings 18:32).
- The piling of wood on the altar (I Kings 18:33).
- The cutting of the sacrificial bull in pieces and the placement of it upon the altar (I Kings 18:33).
- The pouring of four pots full of water on the sacrifice and wood **three** separate times (I Kings 18:33-35).
- Elijah's prayer to God, resulting in fire which consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the altar, and the water in the trench around the altar (I Kings 18:36-38).
- The capture of the prophets of Baal by the people of Israel (I Kings 18:40).
- The execution of the **450** prophets of Baal by the Brook Kishon (I Kings 18:40).
- Elijah's message to King Ahab to eat and drink because rain was coming (I Kings 18:41).

- Elijah's **climb** to the top of the **1,600+ ft.** Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:42).
- Elijah sending his servant to look toward the sea **seven** different times (I Kings 18:43).
- The **sighting** by his servant on the seventh look of "**a cloud as small as a man's hand rising out of the sea**" (I Kings 18:44).
- The **blackening** of the sky due to **clouds (not night!)** as heavy rains began to fall (I Kings 18:45).

Even if we conservatively assume that Elijah made all the preparations for the sacrifice (I Kings 18:30-35) **before** the time of the evening sacrifice, common sense should tell us that there is no way the remaining events (I Kings 18:36-45) could have taken place between sunset and total darkness. The facts of the above story just don't support the Samaritan interpretation of "between the evenings."

Conclusion

Clearly, the Samaritan definition of *beyn ha'arbayim* contradicts the Bible and must be rejected. Yeshua told the Samaritan woman at the well that the Samaritans did not know what they worshiped (John 4:22). However, in the same verse, he stated that the Jews did know the God they worshiped. Should we follow the Samaritans in this matter, or should we follow the example of the Jews, who were entrusted with the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2)? The answer should be clear to those humble enough to cast aside their preconceived beliefs and take God at His word.

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April 21, 1997