

Do Little Things Not Count?

Wavesheaf (Conclusion)

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We're going to lay a foundation for this message in I Corinthians 5: 6.

I Corinthians 5:6-8 Your glorying is not good. Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened: For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

This sermon that I'm going to be giving today began as an offering sermonette, but as I began thinking on the subject in a more concentrated way it came to mind that I probably ought to consider to make it a sermon because so much information was flooding into my mind regarding this subject. The motivation for this subject grew out of the recent flap-over when Pentecost should be observed in these odd years when Passover falls on a weekly Sabbath, but the subject of this sermon only indirectly relates to counting to Pentecost.

To put it directly, this subject grew out of my sadness that so many are disregarding so many crystal-clear scriptures that touch on this issue, and I'm having a hard time trying to figure out exactly why they are doing this. But of this I am becoming ever more certain, that God is using this specific issue to test and to separate people in the church. I see something arising out of this issue that is ever more sharply defining where people stand in relation to their attitude and the truth contained in His word.

I want us to go to Deuteronomy 8:1-3, as I continue to lay the foundation here. Remember again that the book of Deuteronomy was written in the last month of their travelling through the wilderness. It was given to prepare them so that they would be ready to go into the land and take it, and set up whatever necessary structures of government and religion and everything that was going to be needed. Adjustments had to be made, considering that they were no longer going to be on a pilgrimage, but they were going to become settled. So what we see in Deuteronomy 8 is kind of an overall summary, a very brief review of the reason, the why, that journey lasted for forty years

Deuteronomy 8:1-3 All the commandments which I command you this day shall you observe to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. And you shall remember ALL the way which the LORD your God led you

these forty years in the wilderness, . . . [Now here's why it took forty years] . . . to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled you, and suffered you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you know not [that is, they weren't familiar with it], neither did your fathers know; *that* he might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.

There was the reason, . . . that they might learn that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Of course we all understand that we need physical food to keep our bodies going, but what He is saying is that there is an area of life that is dependent upon spiritual things, and being human we have access to more than one source in regard to spiritual things. What adds the qualities of life that really makes life worthwhile is to be tapped into the right source. Man does not live abundantly by bread alone, but by every word of God.

So here there are—urged to remember *all* the way—and they are to understand that it lasted forty years, as *we* too must understand the reason our conversion period lasts so long. It is because we need God's word to add this quality to life that is otherwise unavailable.

Some who wrote papers regarding this "counting to Pentecost" issue didn't include a number of very crystal-clear scriptures. Others mentioned some of these scriptures, but they argued their way around them as if they were unworthy of really thoughtful consideration to the end, that they might force the conclusion that they wanted to reach.

Every one of us knows that Israel did not go across the Sinai in a straight line. By the time they got into the Promised Land they had zigzagged all around the peninsula, and at each one of these zigs, and at each one of these zags, they experienced an event somewhat different from anything they had experienced before. It had its own subtlety to it that made it a little bit different.

This is pretty much the way life is lived. It doesn't go in a straight line either. It is frequently punctuated by events, many which are unexpected, and some of them anticipated with apprehension, to which we try everything in our power to avoid because we would rather not experience them. Then there are other experiences that we anticipate warmly because we expect pleasure from them. Regardless of what kind of events occur, they all add to the treasury of experiences that make us what we are, and provide us with the knowledge to use to live life as wisely as possible.

It doesn't say this in Deuteronomy 8, but God was writing a book in which some of those experiences of those people would be recorded for the benefit of future generations, because those generations would be living lives in which they could very much use the wisdom that is garnered from our ancestors' experiences. Perhaps the most beneficial statement here in what we have just read is the profound wisdom contained within the fact that man does not live by bread alone, but by *every word of God*. The quality of a converted person's life very largely

hinges on whether one takes heed of that truth.

I have learned through this Pentecost counting test that there are areas that people consider as "little," and therefore of no account, and thus they dismiss them as not really worthy of serious consideration. I am finding through this Pentecost issue two general areas of interpretation that people in the Church of God have real problems with. Number One is grasping the spirit or intent, and therefore the application of a principle, which was what Richard's sermon was about this morning. Number Two is a failure to understand the seriousness of holiness, and therefore an inability to separate the holy from the unholy.

God's word does not contain a specific rule that covers every specific circumstance that might arise in a person's life. However, He does provide us with principles from which one is able to extrapolate in order to provide correct guidance. But in order to use the spirit, or intent, the broad principle must first be *believed* in order to make a proper judgment.

I once heard Herbert Armstrong say, "Liberals almost always look for a specific verse to cover every situation. If they cannot find one, then they give themselves permission to do, or not to do, whatever is in question."

Ezekiel 22:24-26 Son of man, say unto her [Israel], You are the land that is not cleansed nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets [the preachers] in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, . . . [A better translation would be: They have done *violence* to My law] . . . and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shown difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

It's interesting that Pentecost is a Sabbath. If one cannot separate the holy from the unholy, judgment then takes on shades of gray, and sharp differences between right and wrong disappear.

Here are three examples of scriptures from the "Pentecost Flap," which I have taken to calling it. The first one is in Exodus 23:16. We'll just expound them very briefly. This particular verse is the one that is most obviously ignored.

Scripture Example number 1:

Exodus 23:16 And the feast of harvest; . . .

The Wavesheaf is part of the *feast of harvest*. That is the subject here. The first "feast of harvest" is Pentecost. Then Tabernacles is the next one.

Exodus 23:16 And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of your labours, which you have sown in the field.

We've got it zeroed in on Pentecost. Notice it is "the first fruits of *your* labors which *you* have sown in the field." What is so difficult to understand about "which *YOU* have sown in the field," . . . "you" meaning *Israelite*; "you" meaning *those who are circumcised*—those who are "in the New Testament sense" *converted*; those who have made the covenant with God? What is so difficult to understand about that rule?

This is what I mean about considering some of these scriptures as "*little*," as not counting, as though God wrote the book, and said, "Whoops! That one slipped in there. I didn't really mean to use the word 'sown' or '*you* have sown.'" No. He doesn't make mistakes like that. This is *very* specific, as it relates to the offerings. If the grain for the Wave sheaf offering comes from any other source than what *they*, the Israelites, the circumcised—those who have made the covenant with God—have sown, it is *unholy*. It's that simple.

Scripture Example number 2:

Leviticus 22:21 And whosoever offers a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves [beef] or sheep, it shall be *PERFECT* to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.

That picks up the subject pretty well. The offering has to be perfect, without blemish.

Leviticus 22:24-25 You shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall you make any offering thereof in your land. Neither from a *stranger's* hand shall you offer the bread of your God of any of these; because *their* corruption is in them, and blemishes be in them: they shall not be accepted for you.

The word "stranger" here literally means "one who is unknown." In its broadest sense it applies to the Gentile, but it also applies to those who are unconverted—those who have not made the covenant, those who, in the Old Testament circumstance, are not circumcised. So offerings are not to come from the unconverted one who does not know God, or is not known by God. Neither one. See, they are "unknown."

There is an addendum to this that is interesting. Turn back to Exodus 12: 48-49. The subject of this paragraph is the circumcision in relation to keeping Passover.

Exodus 12: 48-49 And when a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger that sojourns

among you.

That law in Leviticus 22 is nullified if the person, the stranger, becomes circumcised, because then he has made the covenant with God, and he is then *known* of God. He is no longer a stranger, and as long as the rest of his offering meets the qualification or requirements, then he can make an offering just like any Israelite. There is one law then. As long as that person, the stranger, has not made the covenant with God, he does not qualify to make an offering, because his corruption is *in* him.

Do you understand that in the New Testament sense? What it means in the New Testament sense is that this person has not come under the blood of Jesus Christ. The corruption of his sin is still in him, and therefore such a person is not qualified to take the Passover.

Here we have an Old Testament example of an unconverted person's offering to God that would not be accepted because he was symbolically not under the blood of Jesus Christ. His corruption and blemishes were still in him, and therefore he was not free.

People trip all over this particular one in Leviticus 22 because the general context is specifically addressing sacrifices offered on the brazen altar, and therefore they conclude that it doesn't apply to the Wavesheaf offering. They just dismiss it. But you see, they miss the whole principle there. They completely ignore the absolutely clear fact that God says that *every offering* has to be without blemish. It's not *only* the ones that go on the brazen altar, it is EVERY offering has to be without blemish. Now why? Because each and every one of these national offerings symbolizes the unblemished sinless Christ in some aspect of His work in behalf of mankind's salvation, or as mankind's Provider. Jesus, the *true Wavesheaf offering*, did not come from pagan, unconverted Gentiles. An offering from *them* would have been unholy.

Scripture Example number 3: (Again, this is another one that is so clear.)

Deuteronomy 12:4-12 You shall not do so unto the LORD your God. But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall you seek, and there you shall come: And *there* you shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all that you put your hand unto, you and your households, wherein the LORD your God has blessed you. You shall not do after all the things that we do here this day [meaning out in the wilderness], every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God gives you. But when you go over Jordan, . . . [Notice this contrast.] . . . and dwell in the land which the LORD your God gives you to inherit, and *when he gives you rest* from all your enemies round about, . . . [That is very important.], . . . so that you dwell in

safety; *Then* there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; *there* shall you bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and *the heave offering* [including the Wavesheaf] of your hand, and all your choice vows which you vow unto the LORD: And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he has no part nor inheritance with you.

This is another very direct command. All of the national offerings intended to be performed at the Tabernacle, including the Wavesheaf, were absolutely *forbidden* until those conditions could be met, which were: there had to be rest in the land (that they were no longer fighting any wars), they had to have their own crops coming out of the ground, and they had to have the Tabernacle set up in Shiloh. The brazen altar and everything had to be in place. I showed you, in other sermons, that it took *7 years* from the time they crossed the Jordan until those conditions existed.

These three scriptures are being ignored, blown off, or disrespected with almost contemptuous disregard, and argued around with convoluted reasoning usually centered on the argument that once Israel came into the land, the harvest was theirs. Yes, the harvest was theirs *to eat*, but not to offer to God. The requirements for making offerings are much more stringent than what you choose to eat yourself. But how important is it that one pay close attention to meeting those requirements that some might think are small trivial affairs? I'm going to give you some examples—examples that you are familiar with, but we're going to look at them in the light of the Pentecost Flap.

Leviticus 10:1-2 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered *strange* fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

All it took was a little leaven, and they died. Hold that thought in mind.

Among the commentators there is a small amount of disagreement as to precisely what their sin was. Now that they sinned is totally agreed upon, but most commentators believe that since "strange fire" is mentioned their sin involved using coals from a common fire rather than the brazen altar's coals. That is the interpretation that I have heard almost unanimously in the Church of God, although a couple of other suggestions have been made.

It is good to remember, as we begin to look into this, that this was after all "*only*" a ceremonial ritual—something that seemingly didn't involve something as big as breaking one of the commandments. Or did it? On the surface it appears as though they didn't do anything near as evil as Ananias and Sapphira there in Acts 5 when they lied to Peter, and yet God shockingly and suddenly struck Nadab and Abihu dead.

What they did seemed to them such a small thing. They neglected to follow *exactly* a seemingly insignificant operation involving a ritual offering. It clearly states in verse 1 that God had commanded them not to use common fire. It says "strange fire." Unfortunately, I didn't look up this word "strange," and I wonder if it is not "unknown" fire, just like the *stranger* in Leviticus 22. God had commanded them not to use common fire. The inference is that He *had* commanded them to use the *altar* fire.

Leviticus 16:11-12 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the [brazen] altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil.

Here are the instructions regarding the use of altar fire with the incense offering on the Day of Atonement. The commandment was the same for every day. The only difference was that on the Day of Atonement the high priest went right into the Holy of Holies, but the coals for the incense altar had to come from the brazen altar.

In Leviticus 9 are the first offerings that the priesthood made after the building of the Tabernacle and the installment of the priests in their office.

Leviticus 9:24 And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

It was fire that came out from God that consumed the offering on the altar, and it showed His acceptance not only of the offering but also of the entire proceedings involving these first offerings and the installation of the priesthood. *From that point on* the coals for the incense altar had to be taken from the brazen altar. That also was *holy*, and that *fire* was holy. The altar was the place of sacrifice, the place where the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering were made, and I might also add at this point that the offering also that was to accompany the Wavesheaf as well.

Fire represents something. It represents God's desire to destroy sin and to purify His people.

Isaiah 6:5-7 Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

Fire symbolizes God's desire to destroy sin, and to purify His people.

Malachi 3:1-2 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple [the church], even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, he shall come, says the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.

Hebrews 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Do you see what happens here? In the New Testament, in the symbolism of the Old Testament when it is carried into the New Testament, the fire becomes *Christ*. Now we're beginning to get close to why they were killed.

Now we're going to go to Hebrews 13:10. I won't be able to go into a long explanation, but Paul said here:

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar whereof *they* have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

You may remember as we were going through that series on food, on eating, that eventually the symbolism there gets around to the place where we have to "eat" Christ. Now what has happened? Christ is not only the fire, He is also the altar. They become converged into one.

Leviticus 10:3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, *I will be sanctified in them that come near me*, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

The failure to use the fire that God Himself required was actually a rejection of God Himself, "for our God is a consuming fire," and by using *common fire* they were impugning Him as being common and unholy, and He executed them for disparaging Him. He is not common. He is the *HOLY GOD!*

It was just a little thing though. They just didn't use the right coals, that's all. Do "little" things mean nothing to God? You had better believe they mean something to Him, and they had better mean something to us. Every one of us knows, especially those who might be familiar with cooking, that if you leave out one ingredient, the end result does not quite work out the way that it should, and it is deficient. God's whole plan includes a lot of things that human nature can very easily judge as being little things, and insignificant, but they are important in the long run, because every ingredient has to be part of the mix of what we become, because our God is a consuming fire. He is the altar, and we are going to be like Him.

In like manner, the use of any grain from a pagan source is to assign Jesus, who was the Wavesheaf, our God, our Savior, our High Priest, as common and profane and unknown, and

coming from the pagans—an abomination every bit as great as that which Nadab and Abihu were killed for.

Leviticus 10:8-11 And the LORD spoke unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest you die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations: And that you may put *difference* between the holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

The context in which this command appeared leads everybody to believe that the reason that Nadab and Abihu did what they did was because they were under the influence of a drug—alcohol—enough that they were not in as complete control as they normally would have been. Did you notice the mention *of holy* and *unholy* there?

Drunkenness also symbolizes something very serious in the spiritual realm.

Isaiah 12:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, ...

Are you familiar with Hebrew, how that God will make a statement, and then He will explain by giving a synonymous phrase right behind it? "The *drunkards* of Ephraim," and "the crown of *pride*."

Isaiah 12:3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, . . .

He just repeats it again. Brethren, drunkenness symbolizes being intoxicated by vanity, because the effects of "the vanity of pride" spiritually mimics the effects of alcohol imbibed in too great of an amount. Vanity motivates one to elevate the self into thinking that he is better, greater, stronger, quicker, and more intelligent than reality. Now spiritually, the reality is God Himself, and in practical application, God's word. As inhibitions against transgressing God's word decrease, the vanity of pride increases.

Pride deceived Satan to such an extent that he actually convinced himself that he could defeat his Creator in a war. Pride produces the same process in us, and we too go to war against God, on a minor scale compared to Satan, but the principle is the same. Enmity arises. Inhibitions, that would normally stop us from challenging the guidance of God (God's word) diminishes, we establish our own standard of righteousness, and *sin*. We sin because our standard is always lower than God's, just as Nadab and Abihu's standard regarding fire was lower than God's. We do it because our deceitful heart is looking for a way to somehow convince itself that it is obedient without having to make a full sacrifice, ...and we miss the mark.

That's enough on Nadab and Abihu. But let's go further back in the Bible all the way to Genesis 4:1-5. Here we have another sacrifice.

Genesis 4:1-5 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. In Genesis 1 and 2 we have the beginning of the formation of the earth to receive man as an inheritor of it. We have the creation of man. In Genesis 3 is the beginning of sin, of marriage, the first curse, and the first promise of the Savior. I think everyone of us would agree that all of them are very important to life. Now more important *firsts* occur in the fourth chapter. In Genesis 4 is the first insight to the actual worship of God, and the first mention of offerings in the Bible.

I think that there is a tendency among modern church members to relegate offerings as an interesting curiosity, but unimportant since we're not required to make them. Or are we? The tendency to discount their value is misleading them, because virtually every one of them symbolizes the sinless Messiah, and also the way that *we* are to live our lives, since Paul obviously called us "living sacrifices." So in both a symbolic and a practical sense we are directly involved in offerings.

The cause of God's rejection of Cain's offering is not immediately clear right from the context there. We would be reading something into the story to quickly assume that Cain's offering was not of the highest quality he could give. There are at least three possibilities why his offering was rejected. The most common thought is that he was supposed to bring a blood sacrifice as Abel did. The second is that the offering itself was fine, but that the problem lay in the attitude in which it was given. And third is that both of these conditions existed at the same time: a wrong offering combined with a bad attitude.

One thing more is that there is no indication in these offerings that they were the first offerings ever given. They're simply the first ones that are recorded. In the KJV, verse 3 says, "And in the process of time it came to pass." That's not a real good translation in the KJV. That phrase "process of time" literally means *at the end of days*, indicating that an appointed time had occurred. They waited until they got to the appointed time; therefore it was *at the end of days*. It was the appointed time that God commanded.

Incidentally, there are quite a few Protestant commentators who will say right there this was probably made on what became a Holy Day. That's just a speculation. We don't know, but that's where they get the idea from, because it literally means "an appointed time." It also seems to indicate that since God had appointed the time, He had also appointed or commanded the offering as well.

One thing in regard to this sermon is that regardless of which alternative that one chooses to

feel is the reason, it is very clear that the offering was rejected because it didn't meet God's requirement. It didn't meet it anymore than a Wavesheaf offering would have met the requirements in Joshua 5. So one of the first two offerings recorded in the Bible is rejected.

It is also to be noted that Cain was *very* unhappy about the rejection. This is undoubtedly because he clearly disagreed with God about the rejection and about the offering. We would have to then come to the conclusion, that by his estimation, the offering was just fine; otherwise, why be upset? He was upset because he thought it was that way. Maybe he even thought that God's judgment was too stringent, because whatever was unacceptable was such a little piddling thing to Cain.

Even if one is limited to what appears in Genesis 4, then I would have to say that God is most displeased with Cain's attitude in the giving more than anything else. But you see, we are not limited to Genesis 4, because we can go back to the book of Hebrews 11: 4 where it becomes much clearer.

Hebrews 11:4 By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please God.

Abel offered in faith. Cain did not. There was therefore an internal spiritual difference between the two. Cain may very well have believed in the existence, in the power, in the generosity of God as Giver, but there was not a humble submission to Him that responded to God's guidance in all areas of life. The difference between their offerings lies in a difference between their hearts.

The kind of offerings each gave seems to indicate the kind of faith each had. One gave a sacrifice of things without life. The other gave a sacrifice of things *with* life. Cain's expression of faith was limited to acknowledging God as only the *Giver* of life. Abel's expresses that not only is God the Giver of life, but also that life is forfeited by transgression, and that only by mercy—the killing of the lamb—can it be restored.

Abel's offering reveals a great deal more understanding and thoughtful meditation upon life and its purpose than Cain's, and then the anger Cain expressed indicates that he wanted his offering accepted on *his* terms rather than on whatever God's were. This is informative, because the very fact that he gave an offering indicates that he wanted to worship. He felt some level of compulsion to do so, and in doing so, he at least appeared to be religious. However, I John 3 has this to say:

I John 3.12 Not as Cain, who was of that *wicked one*, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

That verse tells us that all along Cain was not being obedient to God. Sure, he looked upon God as being the Giver of life, and the Provider of these things, but if he really looked upon God in

the right way, in faith, he would have been obeying God in every area of life. But it says right there that Cain was "of the wicked one," and "his brother's works were righteous."

I John 3:15 Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

So despite Cain's outward appearance of being religious, he was of the evil one. He was also angry with his brother, because his brother's offering was accepted, and his own offering was rejected, and eventually he killed Abel.

Kenneth Wuest, who is a commentator, described Cain in the following manner: "He is *the* type of a religious natural man who believes in a God, and in religion, but after his own will."

What we are seeing right off the bat in Genesis 4 is a lesson in "by their fruits you shall know them." These two men came before God, and God *read* Cain's heart. But we can only see the external action. Cain's heart was not right with either God or man, and so we can learn from this that acceptable worship of God begins with a pure heart. Now it becomes evident that Cain didn't think that was all that important, but you see, he couldn't hide it from God. God scrutinized him, and He saw it, and the offering was rejected.

Whether you are realizing it or not, what we are looking to here is the beginning of what Jude calls "the way of Cain." The *way of Cain* is religion on one's own terms even though one may be claiming loyalty to, and using the Bible as a source of one's religion.

Didn't it appear as though Cain was using the word of God as the source of his appearance before God, and the giving of the offering? Of course it did. He was even obeying a command. He came "at the end of days." But you see, God saw right through that hypocrisy, but it took Cain's anger against God and the murder of Abel to visibly expose that the real source of his religion was *the evil one* lurking in his heart.

Here is why the rejection of those three scriptures that I read earlier regarding the Wavesheaf offering really saddened me so. I received a mailing from somebody that gave a listing of eleven reasons for Sunday keeping, taken from a book titled "Sunday Facts and Sabbath Fiction" by one Russell K. Tardo. I don't know who he is. I don't know who he is with at all. The publication didn't have any identification on it in that regard. Now listen to these reasons:

- # 1. On this first day of the week Jesus rose from the dead.
- # 2. Christ first appeared to His disciples.
- # 3. Jesus met His disciples at different places, and repeatedly.
- # 4. Jesus blessed the disciples.
- # 5. Jesus imparted the Holy Spirit.
- # 6. Jesus' first commission them to preach the gospel to the entire world.
- # 7. Jesus gave the apostles authority to legislate for and guide the

church.

8. This day became a day of joy to the disciples.

9. The gospel of the risen Christ first preached by an angel.

10. Jesus set the example of preaching the gospel of His resurrection and

expounding the scriptures.

11. The purpose of our redemption was completed.

Did you notice something that was missing in that list? Even though it is entirely possible that every one of these things occurred on a Sunday, the man neglected to quote what is undoubtedly insignificant to him: a command to keep Sunday. God is not even mentioned in that list. God's will is not mentioned in that list.

Let's go back to Jude verse 11 just to pick up that scripture. God's will regarding those offerings is very clear. The Wavesheaf is not to come from an unconverted Gentile source.

Jude 11 Woe unto them [the false prophets]! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.

The false teachers walk the same path as Cain. The issue—the Pentecost Flap—is following the same path, the same line of reasoning, the same spirit that Cain followed in Genesis 4. It is also the same line of reasoning from which formed the Catholic Church, and then all of the daughter churches later on about a thousand years. These people are assuming that because these things occurred on a Sunday that it was authority enough for them to establish Sunday for worship, and so they proceeded to establish their own righteousness and to follow *it* rather than what God clearly shows in His word.

While I was following Richard's sermon this morning, I happened to look at one place where he had taken us in the scriptures, and down at the bottom of the page there in my Bible was a long comment about the Sabbath. The notes in my Bible come from Jerry Falwell's group. Those notes said that the Sabbath is *commanded* in the Bible to be kept, that it is incumbent upon all Israelites to keep it. Paul even calls the church "the Israel of God" in the New Testament. It is *spiritual* Israel, and the keeping of the Sabbath is incumbent upon the sons of God. They went on to say that in the future, when Christ returns, people are going to be keeping the Sabbath.

In this Pentecost Flap, these scriptures are being ignored in much the same way, as though they don't count, that they are negligible and insignificant. But brethren, counting to Pentecost is incredibly simple. Once one understands from Leviticus 23, that in order to count consistently and correctly year after year, one must use a weekly Sabbath *within* the Days of Unleavened Bread; otherwise irregularity and confusion will result. It's that simple.

They are using an *assumption* that Israel waved the sheaf there in Joshua 5:10-12 in order to establish authority to count from a weekly Sabbath *outside* the Days of Unleavened Bread. This is an assumption that absolutely cannot be biblically proved because no legitimate offering existed, and so they make Joshua look like an idiot. That's why I read those scriptures at the beginning of Joshua, where I could almost see God standing there shaking His finger and saying to Joshua, "You'd better be courageous, Joshua, and make sure that you don't turn to the left hand or to the right hand from what you learned through Moses." And then I read those other scriptures to show you that Joshua, even at the end of his life, said, "I didn't go to the left hand or to the right."

From that assumption they build an entire web of smooth-sounding reasoning to convince everybody that their assumption is true. Well to me, this is beginning to become convincing evidence of how deeply Laodiceanism has penetrated into the church. *Nowhere* in the Bible does it say that the Wavesheaf must occur within the Days of Unleavened Bread. The three very clear areas of scriptures refute the possibility of a Wavesheaf offering being made, and thus the rendering of the determination of the days involved in Joshua 5 is impossible.

What I just said is this. There is no way of telling from Joshua 5 whether Passover fell on a Monday, a Wednesday, a Friday, or a Saturday. There is no way to tell there, and they don't know the year that it occurred, and so it can't even be determined that way. They're holding on to a false standard of righteousness established by a decision made back in 1974.

We have seen in these two examples involving offerings—Nadab and Abihu, and Cain's case—that turned on seemingly insignificant things as judged by men, but God's reaction showed that these things were not insignificant to God. And so He gives us these examples so that we can understand how to judge what is important, and therefore what we can put our confidence in.

We will close on this scripture:

Luke 12:20-21 But God said unto him, You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? So is he that lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

This, to me, is a reference to the Laodicean whose judgment of himself is that "he is rich and is increased with goods, and has need of nothing." On the other hand, God's evaluation of them was that they were "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." That's what happens to those who are showing the evidence of Laodiceanism and are thinking of themselves well-off, and all the while they may be poor toward God.

Brethren, the Sadducees, who were mostly priests, back in Jesus' time had it right. So tomorrow [Sunday, April 15, 2001] is the day following the weekly Sabbath within the Days of Unleavened Bread. It is Wavesheaf Day—"Day 1" to the count of Pentecost.

Pentecost this year is on Sunday, June 3, 2001.