

## Pentecost, Consistency, And Honesty

### The Basics of Counting to Pentecost

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I am giving this message because there is much confusion within the Church of God regarding the subject of Pentecost. I do not know whether peoples' salvation hangs in the balance because of disobedience, but at the same time I know that the subject is not unimportant.

The year 2005 is a year in which Passover falls on a weekly Sabbath, and this always creates disputing because the Church of God is not unified as to the proper counting method for locating Pentecost. The result of this disagreement is that various groups will observe Pentecost one week apart.

This sermon is divided into two sections. Section one establishes the primary importance of the *weekly* Sabbath that falls within the Days of Unleavened Bread. When Wavesheaf Day occurs is entirely dependent upon when that particular Sabbath occurs.

We are going to begin in Exodus 31:13.

**Exodus 31:13** Speak you also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the LORD that does sanctify you.

First of all, God is the Speaker. It is His Sabbath. Secondly, it says "throughout your generations." This is not something that ended any time near two thousand years ago when Christ died because the generations of the Israelites continue, and so this command regarding the Sabbath continues.

In verse 15 God makes it very clear which Sabbath it is that He is speaking about. It is the weekly Sabbath.

**Exodus 31:15** Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD.

**Exodus 31:17** It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

The proper keeping of the Sabbath is a major sign giving direction. That is what a sign does. A sign gives direction by pointing to certain things. Most important in this case is that it points to the relationship between God and His people. In regard to Pentecost, the weekly Sabbath *points* to the proper day that the sheaf was to be waved, and thus to Pentecost—another Sabbath to be observed.

Leviticus 23:9-16 is the foundation of this particular doctrine.

**Leviticus 23:9-11** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you 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 day after the *Sabbath* the priest shall wave it.

I changed the word there from "morrow" to "day," because that is exactly what it means in modern English.

This waving, according to historical records, could be either of an actual cutting of grain (the sheaf), or the grain could be cut, with all of the berries shaken off it, and then an omer (a couple of quarts) was put in a bottle, and *it* was raised before God. That is all that was done. It was lifted up there as if it were being raised up for Him to see.

**Leviticus 23:12-13** And you shall offer that day when you wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meal offering whereof shall be two

tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin.

Those two verses show that the raising of the sheaf before God was to be accompanied by the burning of a lamb on the altar, as well as on top of that offering a grain offering.

**Leviticus 23:14** And you shall eat neither bread nor parched corn, nor green ears until the selfsame day that you have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

That verse simply says that once the field was ready to begin harvesting, and they cut the sheaf that was to be used for the offering, they were not allowed to eat of that harvest *until* the offering was made. They were able to cut it maybe even a week before the offering was actually made, but they could not eat of that particular harvest until after the sheaf was waved before God.

You might wonder why it could be cut as much as a week or so before the offering was made. Remember they only kept the feast in Jerusalem. If the farmer lived 50 or 75 miles north, he was still required to bring the offering. He cut the sheaf before he left, and then he brought it into Jerusalem. It may have taken him a couple of days travel to get to Jerusalem, and so he could cut it early. The exact time of cutting it was not something commanded by law. It was just that they could not eat of it until the offering was made.

**Leviticus 23:15-16** And you shall count unto you from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be complete. Even unto the day after the seventh Sabbath shall you number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal offering unto the LORD.

Notice in verse 15 it says, "And you shall **count**..." To **count** is commanded.

We are going to look at several other verses in Leviticus 23, beginning with verse 5.

**Leviticus 23:5** In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S PASSOVER.

Passover falls on a specific date—the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month.

**Leviticus 23:6** And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD:

The first day of Unleavened Bread falls on a specific date—the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month.

**Leviticus 23:24** Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall you have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

The Feast of Trumpets falls on a specific date—the first day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month.

**Leviticus 23:27** Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement:

Again, the Day of Atonement (another festival) has a specific date—the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month.

**Leviticus 23:39** Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath.

The Feast of Tabernacles has *two* specific dates—one for it, and one for the Last Great Day. All the other festivals given within this chapter have specific dates. Pentecost does *not* have a specific date assigned to it in Leviticus 23. It must be **counted**.

All of the festivals are also arranged within the chapter chronologically, beginning with the earliest one—Passover, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, and then continuing through the Feast of Tabernacles which falls within the

seventh month, beginning with the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month. The festivals are spread out over a seventh-month period, and in chronological order—number one through number seven.

**Leviticus 23:15** And you shall count unto you from the day after *the* Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete.

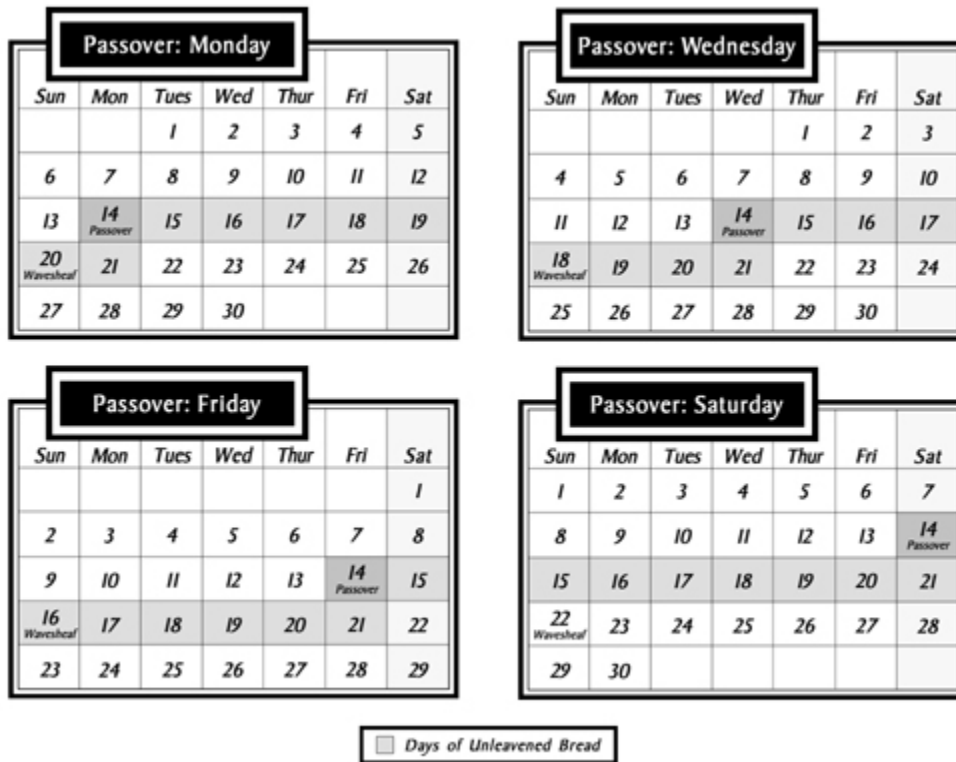
The count *begins* with the day after the Sabbath. Notice the specific definite article "*the*"—"the Sabbath." What Sabbath? If we consider this on a year's time, we might be dealing with more than 50 Sabbaths. This is why I had you notice that the festivals are listed chronologically throughout the year. The counting instruction's placement within Leviticus 23 narrows the time of that Sabbath to a *spring* harvest.

Those who count Pentecost (meaning the churches of God, the Jews, and any Protestant group that still observes Whitsunday) are in unanimous agreement that it is a Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread. This therefore narrows the choices to no more than **3** (three) Sabbaths: the *first* day of Unleavened Bread on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the *last* day of Unleavened Bread on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and the *weekly* Sabbath that *always* falls between those two holy days.

I will give you absolute proof that the weekly Sabbath which falls *between* the two holy days during the days of Unleavened Bread is *the* day. I want you to pay careful attention to the words "**date**" and "**day**." The dates of the first and last day of Unleavened Bread are set in stone (Leviticus 23:6), and they will never change. They are on the **15<sup>th</sup>** and the **21<sup>st</sup>** respectively. However, the date of the weekly Sabbath will change according to the *day* on which Passover falls. As we proceed, pay careful attention to "day" and "date."

We saw in verse 5 that the Passover date is always the **14<sup>th</sup>** of Nisan. However, it does not always fall on the same **day** of the week. Hebrew calendar rules **ALWAYS** set Passover on a Monday, a Wednesday, a Friday, or a Saturday. That will never vary. It will be on one of those four days every year.

Here are four calendars showing how the day Passover falls on affects the Wavesheaf day date, and thus Pentecost's date.



Remember that the count to Pentecost *always* begins the day after the weekly Sabbath that falls within the days of Unleavened Bread. The day that follows the weekly Sabbath within the days of Unleavened Bread will always be Wavesheaf day—the day the sheaf was waved. That is the rule arrived at from the information contained within Leviticus 23, and especially verses 15 and 16.

The first calendar above shows Passover occurring on a Monday, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. The next day, the 15<sup>th</sup>, will be the first day of Unleavened Bread, and the weekly Sabbath that falls between the two holy days will be the 19<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. The 20<sup>th</sup> will be Wavesheaf day. Pentecost in that arrangement will fall on Sivan 10 (the third month on the Hebrew calendar).

The second calendar shown below shows Passover falling on a Wednesday. When Passover falls on a Wednesday, the weekly Sabbath will fall on the 17

<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. The 18<sup>th</sup> will be Wavesheaf day, and Pentecost will fall on Sivan 8.

The third calendar shows Passover falling on a Friday. When Passover falls on a Friday (the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan), the weekly Sabbath (the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan) will be also the first day of Unleavened Bread. Wavesheaf day will be the 16<sup>th</sup>. Pentecost will fall on Sivan 6.

The fourth and last calendar places Passover on a Saturday—a weekly Sabbath. The next day, the 15<sup>th</sup>, is the first day of Unleavened Bread. The only weekly Sabbath within the days of Unleavened Bread is the 21<sup>st</sup>, which is also the last day of Unleavened Bread—a double Sabbath. Then the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Nisan will be Wavesheaf day, and Pentecost will be on Sivan 12.

There is nothing difficult at all about this. Any high school teenager should be able to understand it.

In 1974 the Worldwide Church of God made a correction in regard to Pentecost. Mr. Armstrong had this all figured out correctly except for one thing: He used the wrong counting method. He made a simple mistake that really anybody could make. He counted in English. Anybody would have done that. He should not have counted in English. He should have counted in Hebrew. There is a difference in the counting method. English is what is called "**exclusive**" counting. Hebrew is "**inclusive**" counting. It makes a difference of one day in any count.

If I tell you to meet me in 7 days from today, which is Saturday, and you count as an English-speaking person does, you will start counting with Sunday. Count it out: Sunday is the 1<sup>st</sup> day, Monday the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup>, Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup>, Friday the 6<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> day. You would meet me on Saturday.

In Hebrew, I say to you, "Meet me in seven days. We will get together again." In Hebrew you begin counting with the day you are *in*. We are in

Saturday, so you would begin counting with Saturday as the 1<sup>st</sup> day, Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Monday the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, the 6<sup>th</sup>, and Friday, the 7<sup>th</sup> day. There is a difference of one day.

In English we count *away from* (**exclusive**). In Hebrew they count beginning *with* the day you are in. It is *in clusive*. In the counting to Pentecost that is involved here, it makes a difference of one day, and so 50 days later, if you begin counting in English, Pentecost will always be a Monday. That is why we kept it on Monday. It was the 50<sup>th</sup> day. However, using the Hebrew method of counting (which *should* have been used, because the Bible is written in Hebrew), if you begin counting with a Sunday (Wavesheaf Day), you will always end on a Sunday. Sunday is the correct day. Pentecost will always be on a Sunday using the Hebrew method of counting.

The word "Pentecost" does not appear in the Old Testament because it is a Greek word. Pentecost means "fiftieth"—the 50<sup>th</sup> day—the one on which the count ends. In the Old Testament it is called the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of Firstfruits.

Here is another interesting fact that needs to be considered. This is part of the general understanding of this. If one begins counting after the first day of Unleavened Bread, which will always be the 15<sup>th</sup>, then you would begin counting with the 16<sup>th</sup>. You would have a Sabbath there, and the next day would be the 16<sup>th</sup>. But if you do that, then Pentecost will always end up on Sivan 6. Once you do that you have effectively removed the reason for counting, because, just like all the other holy days, it will be on a fixed date every year. This is the way that the Pharisees during Jesus' day counted and the way that modern Jews count. But as I said, following that practice effectively eliminates God's command that one count.

There are other Jewish groups that do not count the way the Pharisees did. There were the Essenes, who no longer exist, but we know the way that they counted. There were the Falashas. I do not know whether any of them still exist. They were Ethiopian Jews. Then there were the Karaites, who were never really an organized group. They were more or less independent. Those three groups all counted using the *last* day of Unleavened Bread. But if one

does that, you always end up on Sivan 12, and that too effectively removes the reason for counting.

One man wrote to me and made the comment that counting beginning with the day after the first day of Unleavened Bread was also counting. So I said back to him, "Yes, that is true, but it only has to be done once for all time and it never has to be counted again because the date will never change."

Israel received God's command in Exodus 12 to eat unleavened bread for seven days. By this man's reasoning, once that was fulfilled that first year, we would never have to eat it again because they had already done that the first year. I want you to consider this then in light of Leviticus 23:15-16 where God clearly commands that **WE** count, and the implication is **COUNT EACH YEAR**. Therefore, the beginning of the count must be from a day whose date changes from year to year depending on the day on which Passover falls, thus forcing one to count every year.

The day Passover falls on determines the date one must begin to count from. Therefore the count must begin on the day following the weekly Sabbath which, like Passover, is constantly changing. That is the day in which the sheaf is waved and the count begins. Since the weekly Sabbath always falls on a Saturday, the count to Pentecost always begins with a Sunday.

It may interest you to know that this is the way the Sadducees in Jesus' day counted. In Jesus' day the Sadducees still retained control of the Temple, and they determined when Pentecost was to be kept. That is one of the reasons why you will find no disagreement between Jesus and the Sadducees regarding the celebration of Pentecost. They were in agreement.

I said I was going to give you absolute proof that the sheaf is to be waved on the day after the weekly Sabbath that falls within the days of Unleavened Bread. Believe it or not, it is in the New Testament. Let us go to John 20.

**John 20:1** The first day of the week comes Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

This establishes the time element. We will fill in here a few more details that I am sure you are familiar with regarding that week in which Jesus was put to death.

In the year that Jesus was put to death, Passover, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, was on a Wednesday. Very close to the end of the day, maybe even as the sun was setting, Jesus was interred in the tomb. The book of Matthew tells us that Jesus was to spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. That is, He would be buried for three days and for three nights, and that this was the only sign He would give that He was the Savior of the world, that He was the Messiah.

So *exactly* seventy-two (72) hours after He was put into the grave, He rose from the dead and came out of the grave. Seventy-two hours from the time He was put into the tomb on Wednesday as the sun was setting, the sun was setting on the weekly Sabbath—Saturday—when He walked out of that tomb. This brings us to Matthew 20:1 in the time element. On Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene showed up at the tomb. She found it empty. Christ had already been resurrected, probably somewhere close to ten hours by that time. We will pick up the story in verse 11.

**Matthew 20:11-17** But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. And seeing two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid him. [She thought He was still dead.] And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener said unto him, Sir, if you have borne him hence, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said unto her, Mary. [And she melted, because she recognized the voice.] She turned herself, and said unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; [It actually says, "Do not cling to Me." She had already

grabbed Him.] for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Remember, the sheaf was raised up before God. Jesus is the Firstfruit of God's spiritual harvest. You can see this in I Corinthians 15:20 where Paul calls Him that.

**I Corinthians 15:20** But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

And so Jesus, as the first of the Firstfruits, was the reality of the Wavesheaf. Everything else was a type and a symbol. The reality had to ascend to the Father, and He did. He just ascended to the Father and was accepted on our behalf by the Father. When did this occur? The reality occurred on Sunday morning—the day after the weekly Sabbath. That nails it down.

The Sabbath in question is the *weekly* Sabbath that falls between the two holy days of the days of Unleavened Bread. In one sense, brethren, that is the end of the argument. It is over, because we have located the Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath *is the sign*, proven by Jesus' resurrection and His rising to heaven to be accepted by the Father. Wavesheaf day is the day after the weekly Sabbath. Now with that understanding why would anybody want to change it?

This notion, this idea, these people have come up with is that because Jesus was waved before the Father between the two holy days, that *every* Wavesheaf has to fall within the days of Unleavened Bread. But that is not correct. Why? Because there is no authority for doing such a thing.

Let me ask you something? Do we keep Passover on a Wednesday every year because Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday? Brethren, there is no more authority for doing that crazy idea than there is for this Wavesheaf idea—that it always has to be between the two holy days. No, it is the *Sabbath* that we are instructed to find first—*it* has to be between the two holy days. With the rule that we have learned here from Leviticus 23, and proved by John the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter, Pentecost's date is just as firmly set by God

in Leviticus 23 as any other festival by the rule of beginning the count the day after the weekly Sabbath that falls within the days of Unleavened Bread.

There is no place in the Bible that God, by command, gives any permission at all for changing that rule. In fact, He solemnly warns us in both Deuteronomy 12:32 and Revelation 22:18 that we are to neither add to nor take away anything from His word. But so insistent are some who believe this wrong idea that one group went so far as to declare *Passover* a day of Unleavened Bread. **Did you hear what I said?** They declared Passover a day of Unleavened Bread.

Brethren, it clearly states in Leviticus 23:5 that Passover is on the 14<sup>th</sup> and that the first day of Unleavened Bread is on the 15<sup>th</sup>. We are dealing there with two separate festivals, and they have different teaching to them. Though they are related to some extent, their teaching is different. Passover teaches us about the death of our Savior, and the days of Unleavened Bread teach us about God's deliverance. But by contrast, Wavesheaf day and Pentecost are directly tied to each other. Wavesheaf day is the beginning of a harvest, and Pentecost completes the harvest that Wavesheaf Day began. Both of them are harvest celebrations.

People did this in order to begin the count to Pentecost always from within the days of Unleavened Bread, but God does not require that conclusion. The count to Pentecost always begins with the day after the weekly Sabbath that falls within the days of Unleavened Bread. When this rule is violated, they end up breaking the Sabbath by keeping Pentecost (a Sabbath) on the wrong day.

The weekly Sabbath within the days of Unleavened Bread is the key to finding Wavesheaf Day. Once that point has been reached, any mystery regarding the counting to Pentecost is solved except for a another red herring that some have thrown into the mix in order to confuse the issue.

Because some realized their argument for keeping Wavesheaf day within the days of Unleavened Bread was very weak, they leaped to another rationalization and conclusion for "do's" from assumptions that are read into Joshua 5:10-11.

Summary Statement: Part 2 establishes 7 overlooked assumptions that prove that Joshua 5:10-11 *cannot* be used to change from the normal counting pattern used when Passover falls on a Monday, a Wednesday, or a Friday.

**Joshua 5:10-11** And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

There is not very much there, is there? But you should see what they came up with here. Very interesting. The first two are really minor assumptions, but they are there.

Assumption One: First of all, it does not say anywhere in the context of Joshua 5 that the Israelites waved the sheaf or made the required offerings following a harvest of Canaanite grain. Remember in Leviticus 23 they not only had to wave the sheaf, but they had to have a burnt offering and they had to have a meal offering. They had to have a wine offering as well. You cannot find any mention at all of that in Joshua 5. In addition to that, neither the words "wave," "waved," "waveth," "wavesheaf," nor "wave offering" appear in the entire book of Joshua, not just Joshua 5. They do not appear *anyplace* in Joshua. And not only that, you cannot find in the entire Bible one reference to Joshua 5 and what the Israelites are supposed to have done.

Assumption Two: The second assumption is that this was a year that Passover fell on a Saturday. The key work here is "year"—that this was a year that Passover fell on a Saturday. How do they know that?

Are you aware (despite the thousands of men and women who have researched into ancient documents and the Bible) that nobody knows for *certain* what year the Israelites came out of Egypt or went into the Promised Land forty years later? There may be some scholars who might have hit it right on the nail head, but nobody knows for sure. It is just that their calculations might be pretty good, but nobody knows for sure. In other words, there is no calendar, no calendar date from which they can offer proof.

Those first two assumptions are rather minor, but from this point on the assumptions become far more serious.

Assumption Three: The third assumption is that Israel was required by God (that is, forced by law) to make the wavesheaf offering before they could eat the particular grain in question.

Again, brethren, where does God say that? He does not. Turn to Leviticus 23: 10 and I will show you what this particular assumption is formed around.

**Leviticus 23:10** Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priests:

**Leviticus 23:14** And you shall eat neither bread nor parched corn, nor green ears until the selfsame day that you have brought an offering unto your God: It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The Third Assumption: The third assumption is that Israel was required to immediately begin obeying Leviticus 23. This assumption is built upon the idea that as soon as Israel stepped across the Jordan River and onto solid ground that Leviticus 23 came into full effect, and they had to do what it said here. The assumption is that they not only had to make the offering, but that they were not allowed to eat the grain until after the offering was made. We are going to see that this assumption will not stand the scrutiny of other scriptures.

The Fourth Assumption: The fourth assumption is that God would even accept an offering from Israel made with crops they had not planted on their own land.

This is very interesting. Let us go back to Exodus 23, verses 14 through 16.

**Exodus 23:14-16** Three times you shall keep a feast unto me in the year. You shall keep the feast of unleavened bread: (you shall eat

unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it you came out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty: And the feast of harvest (Pentecost), the firstfruits (Wavesheaf day) of your *labours which you have sown* in the field.

Do you see that? We are supposed to live by every word of God. That little word "**sown**" limits what God would accept as an offering. The offering had to come from the grain that *they had planted* ; not the grain the Canaanites had planted, but what the *Israelites* had planted. Could the Israelites have planted that grain they harvested in Canaan? No way! They were still out in the wilderness when that grain was planted.

We are going to go from here to II Samuel, and I am going to show you that David understood the principle involved here. David was looking at a piece of ground he wanted to buy. The reason he wanted to buy it was because he foresaw this as the place where he wanted to build the Temple to God. The man he wanted to buy it from was not even an Israelite, but he was moved out of generosity to say, "David, "I will give it to you. You can have it."

**II Samuel 24:23-24** All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD your God accept you. And the king [David] said unto Araunah, No; but I will surely buy it of you at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that **which does cost me nothing**. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

The person making the offering must have made the labor and the sacrifices necessary to produce the offering in order to make the offering acceptable to God. Offerings that cost the offerer nothing are not acceptable to God. Offerings are to be sacrifices. It is something the offerer gives up that is precious to **him** that **he** has produced by his labor.

I am going to take you back to the New Testament to Luke 21 and show you this principle in spades.

**Luke 21:1-4** And he [Jesus] looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you that this poor widow has cast in more than they all; For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her poverty has cast in all the living that she had.

It was the cost to *her* that made what she did outstanding before God. David understood that. If Israel made a Wavesheaf offering [in Joshua 5], where was the sacrifice involved? There was not any, because the offering would have cost them nothing. Now consider the spiritual principle that is involved here. Spiritual fruit produced by means of God's Spirit cannot be built or produced by one person and then transferred to another. Whoever builds the character retains it. He cannot give it to somebody else. He can offer it to God, but it has to be something that he has built.

Without going into all the details I could here, in short, God wants offered to Him what He has first given to us. Did you get that? God wants offered to Him what He has first given to us. When we love God, it is because He first loved us, and when we offer our love to Him, it is His own holy love returning back to Him, and that is acceptable because His providence comes right back to Him.

Consider this: If one follows the analogy through to the spiritual, does God's Spirit produce the spiritual fruit of the heathen? No way! Israel had no offering that was acceptable to God because that entire crop was of heathen origin. We are going to see what that means in just a minute.

We are going to go to Leviticus 22 for assumption five, and this is another big one.

Assumption Five: The fifth assumption is that God would accept an offering of polluted things.

**Leviticus 22:19-20** You shall offer at your own will a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats. But whatsoever has a blemish, that shall you not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you.

If we would read through this in detail we would see that what is involved here are primarily animal offerings, but the same principle applies to grain offerings. The principle is that we give our best to the Master.

**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.

If the offering were of pagan origin, God did not want it. If you think that this is a small matter, I want you to consider what it tells us in Leviticus 10 of Nadab and Abihu—Aaron's sons. Aaron was a man greatly loved by God and was the high priest God appointed. God struck Nadab and Abihu **dead** right in the middle of their service in the Tabernacle when they offered incense from coals from a strange fire.

God had told them that any coals that were used on the incense altar had to be taken from the brazen altar. Nowhere else would do. Do you know why? Because God was the One who lit the fire that started the coals on the brazen altar to burn. Again we have the Holy God making one thing holy, and nothing else would do. So coals from anywhere except from the brazen altar, as far as God was concerned, were corrupted. That is the principle in Leviticus 22.

Brethren, as we are seeing, Israel was required by law to **NOT** make a Wavesheaf offering.

The sixth assumption is going to show that their idea about Joshua 5 is nothing more than a house of cards. This is going to come to us out of Deuteronomy 12. Deuteronomy 12 is of such importance that it supersedes the instruction in Leviticus 23 **and** Numbers 28 and 29 which contain the instructions regarding the offerings.

The Sixth Assumption is that Israel was even permitted to make an offering of any kind at all.

Deuteronomy 12 shows that the offerings made in the worship of God were specifically forbidden by God until certain other things were accomplished.

**Deuteronomy 12:1-13** These are the statutes and judgments which you shall observe to do in the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives you to possess it, all the days that you live upon the earth. You shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which you shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. And you shall overthrow their altars and break their pillars and burn their groves with fire: and you shall hew down the graven images of their gods and destroy the names of them out of that place. 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, 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 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 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 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. **Take heed to yourself that you offer not your burnt offerings in every place that you see.**

That is so clear! Do you understand what He said there? When they went across the Jordan River and into the land, Deuteronomy 12 supersedes the instructions given in Leviticus 23, so they were not allowed to even make any offerings at all to God until first the Tabernacle was built, with it the altar, with it the laver, and with it all of the interior furniture as well. They had to wait until God's house was built. And then when the Tabernacle was built they brought their offerings to Him *there*, not anywhere they pleased. That is the key to this whole mystery. They were not allowed to make any offerings. This is so easy to see if we just believe what God says. There is nothing difficult about that at all

We are going to look a little bit more specifically at this because He details what had to be done before they were free to make any offerings. I have already given you a series of them. The Tabernacle had to be in place. That place turned out to be Shiloh. There they erected the Tabernacle, but that was not the end of the matter, because He also said they had to be at rest. They had to be settled, and they were not allowed to be at war with the Canaanites. **THEN** they were allowed to begin to make offerings to God.

We are going to read Joshua 18—it is a long way from Joshua 5.

**Joshua 18:1** And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

This is the first indication that things were just about in place. God told them to put up the Tabernacle in Shiloh, and they did, but all the conditions of Deuteronomy 12 were not yet met because Joshua 18 shows that seven tribes had not even yet received their inheritance. Not only that, the cities of the Levites were not set aside, and neither were the refuge cities set aside. So in

the remainder of Joshua 18, we go all the way through Joshua 19, and all the way through Joshua 20, and all the way up to Joshua 21, to verse 43, which says:

**Joshua 21:43-45** And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers: and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And **the LORD gave them rest** round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; **the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand**. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; **all came to pass**.

Brethren, it was seven years before Joshua 21:45 was reached. Now they were free to give offerings. They made no offering in Joshua 5. They were not allowed.

The seventh assumption is attached to this. These people who say that you can just move this counting method around assume that Joshua and the Israelites were so weak and rebellious as to fly in the face of God's clear instruction given through Moses while they were still wandering. I am talking about the book of Deuteronomy, and especially verse 12.

I want you to go to Joshua 1:6-9. God is the speaker, and He is speaking to Joshua.

**Joshua 1:6-9** Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be you strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you [that included Deuteronomy 12]; Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper whithersoever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous and then you shall have good

success. Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you whithersoever you go.

Has anybody ever read anything in the Bible about Joshua turning aside? Does the Bible say *anything* bad about him? There was one occasion where we could say he lacked a little bit of wisdom, but at the end of the book of Joshua, Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we are going to serve the Lord." And he did. He did not turn aside from what Moses gave him. There was no offering made at all in Joshua 5.

Now what about the Israelites? This is really interesting, because they were put to the test by God, too, not just Joshua. They were put to the test about this very thing, because in Joshua 22 we find a very interesting occurrence. We know that two and one-half tribes stayed on the east side of Jordan while the rest went on the west side of Jordan. Those tribes on the east side of Jordan—Gad, Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh—erected what looked to the Israelites on the west side of Jordan an altar upon which they were going to offer animals and whatever in the worship of God in direct defiance of Deuteronomy 12.

The other tribes were so upset that they got their army together and were ready to beat the tar out of those three tribes on the east side of Jordan. They were ready to go to war because they thought those three tribes had set up an altar. Joshua 22 includes the explanation. "Hey! Wait a minute! Get rid of your army there! This is not an altar. It is a monument to show that we are unified with you. We are one family." And so the nine and one-half tribes put down their weapons, and hugged their brothers. It was not an altar at all. They got some bad information. It was a monument to show their unity.

That is the end of the assumptions. Neither Joshua nor the Israelites were ready yet to defy what God had given in Deuteronomy, through Moses, especially Deuteronomy the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter. No offerings were made until everything was in place: the Tabernacle and all of its furniture, **all** were in possession of their inheritances and no longer at war and the land had peace.

Now what about the old corn?

**Joshua 5:11** And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

Once you have what preceded in my sermon in place, it makes this not at all difficult. It is very clearly answerable.

We are going to go back to Joshua 1 and verse 10. Immediately after God gave this pep talk to Joshua in verses 6 through 9, Joshua went back to the Israelites.

**Joshua 1:10-11** Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals [food, provisions] for within three days you shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess it.

Let us put together the sequence of events. Where did these victuals (food and provisions) come from? Let us consider manna. Could it have been from manna? The Bible answers that. It could not have been from manna. Even though the manna was still falling, it could not have been manna because Exodus 16 makes it very clear that manna left over one day turned into worms. It spoiled. It rotted. You could not save it. You could not put together a booty and carry it with you. They had to get something that would preserve for awhile until they needed it.

They were not going to need it right away, because remember that every day, up to a certain point, the manna was still falling. So every day, up to a certain point, the manna was there and they did not need the provisions. They were not forbidden from eating from it, but they did not need to do it because the manna took care of them every single day.

We know they went across the river on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. Now we have a marker: the 10<sup>th</sup> day. The next thing that occurred in Joshua 5 was that the circumcisions took place. Maybe a million or more men who had not been circumcised the whole time they were in the wilderness had to be circumcised. It does not say the date, but the best indication is that the

circumcisions happened on the 11<sup>th</sup> because on the 10<sup>th</sup> they went over the river. They went to Gilgal and there they camped.

On the next day—the 11<sup>th</sup>—they did the circumcisions. (The manna was there on the 11<sup>th</sup> day.) The men of course were sore while this was going on. Some harvesting could have been done by the ladies. We find that they kept the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup>. We find that in Joshua 5:10. We gather information from Exodus 12 and other places besides that Passover began as the sun set on the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> day began. So they had to then kill the lambs.

You might wonder why they were allowed to make that sacrifice. The reason is because it was a home sacrifice. It did not require an altar. It did not require a priesthood. It did not require the Tabernacle, and so they were allowed to do that. They sacrificed the lambs. They roasted the lambs. They ate the lambs, and then they burnt what remained of the lambs. By the time that was all done, it was morning.

Now brethren, what do you do on the daylight part of the 14<sup>th</sup>? Do you not make your final preparations for the holy day which begins at even at the 14<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup>? What do you then celebrate? You celebrate **the night to be much observed**, which is the beginning of the first day of Unleavened Bread. Right? Right! Do you think they did not celebrate it? Oh, yes they did! That is another sermon all by itself. That is one of *the most significant days* to your spiritual life that there is in the whole calendar. Do you know what it does? It observes the covenant that God made with our forefather Abraham. That is when He did it. You can look those things up in Genesis 15.

They came out of Egypt, as Exodus 12:41 says, *the selfsame day* —exactly 430 years after that covenant between God and Abraham was made. Now here we are *exactly* 430 years later, and they are in the land. God does things right on time. They observed *the night to be much observed*. What did they do? "And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover." The "morrow after the Passover" did not have to wait till daylight. It was the very next day. One minute the sun was there. It was the 14<sup>th</sup>. The

sun disappeared. It was now the 15<sup>th</sup>. That was "the morrow." Now what did they eat? They ate what they set aside in Joshua 1:10-11—the provisions: the old corn that they harvested from the Canaanites.

When did the Jews normally make the Wavesheaf offering? They made it in the daylight part of the day after the weekly Sabbath. Here are the Israelites at the beginning, at night, eating the old corn in celebration of "the night to be much observed" before the daylight even came. If they really had made a Wavesheaf offering, it would have been in the daylight. So here they are eating of that parched corn and so forth before the daylight even came.

That is the final nail. They did not have to make an offering. That last point is a big one to understand. What they kept was the night to be much observed. That happens on the first day of Unleavened Bread.

I am going to give six conclusions. I want you to know, and know, and *know* that you know that you are doing it right.

1. Counting to Pentecost always begins the day after the weekly Sabbath within the days of Unleavened Bread. It is the weekly Sabbath (God's sign), not Wavesheaf day, that must fall within the days of Unleavened Bread.
2. There is no authority given in scripture to change the method of counting to Pentecost when Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath.
3. Exodus 23 explicitly requires the grain offering had to be planted by the offerer; thus Israel had none to give.
4. Leviticus 22 forbids making an offering of heathen substance; thus they had no acceptable offering to give.
5. Deuteronomy 12 forbids offerings until the Tabernacle, altar, laver, and all Tabernacle furniture was in place.
6. The Israelites were required to actually be settled in their inheritances, and no longer involved in warfare before any sacrifice could be lawfully made.

The Israelites made no Wavesheaf offering that first year.

Now what is the practical application of this? Well first off, the Church of the Great God does not stand alone, because there are others who believe this truth. Some of those others are in other groups, and some of them have told me that when Pentecost rolls around in one of these years, they just do not keep Pentecost with the group they are in. But as things now stand, the Church of the Great God will observe Pentecost one week later than United, Living, Philadelphia, and Christian Biblical, because they will be doing something that is not authorized in Scripture.