



*The
Pentecost
Questions Answered*

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

The Pentecost *Questions* *Answered*

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The Pentecost

Questions

Answered

Unfortunately, among the splintered Churches of God, numerous technical issues and conflicts exist regarding the feast of Pentecost. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to provide an appendix in order to address the many, and varied, questions in its own separate section of the book so that initially, individuals could read through the Priceless Meaning of Pentecost and not lose the magnificent meaning of this unique Holy Day in a myriad of tangential details. Therefore, what follows are answers to most of the questions and conflicts regarding Pentecost in circulation today.

Was the Law Given on Pentecost?

Ancient tradition holds that the law was given from atop Mount Sinai on the day of Pentecost. However, the Scriptures never actually state this. Thus this issue can be debated. In this section, we offer a likely possibility.

A major issue starts with the question of whether or not the Israelites arrived at Sinai on the first day of the month or the fifteenth day. The King James Version reads as follows:

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, **the same day** came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had

pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount (Exodus 19:1-2).

Different opinions arise from the verse above. Some take it to mean that Israel arrived on the 15th of the third month—the same day they left Egypt. Others believe it refers to the first day of the third month.

We suggest that it would seem strange to most Bible students that God would perform so many pivotal acts on His Holy Days and not include the giving of the law and making His covenant with Israel on a Holy Day. This is especially true when the time of the third month is somewhat ambiguous, and any time arrived at by counting by either date always ends up being either, the day of Pentecost, or mere days from it.

Consider how God fulfills unique miracles on His Holy Days. For example, God destroyed the first born in Egypt on Passover, which was the exact same day that His firstborn Son—Christ died for man. He took Israel out of Egypt on the first day of Unleavened Bread. He tested Israel regarding the Sabbath on the very day of Sabbath.

Thus it would seem highly unusual to give Israel His Law on any other day than Pentecost. Moreover, by giving His law to Israel on Pentecost, it would perfectly foreshadow the Christ being offered on Passover, and His Church—Spiritual Israel—receiving the Holy Spirit, putting His law in their minds on Pentecost.

The Scriptures state that Israel came into the area of Sinai on the same day they left Egypt. It was the 15th day of the month. As Moses wrote:

On the **third New Moon** after the Israelis went out of the land of Egypt, on that very day, they came to the desert of Sinai (Exodus 19:1).

Jamison Faucet and Brown write a similar explanation. They state:

In the third month—according to Jewish usage, the first day of that month—“same day”—It is

added, to mark the time more explicitly, that is, forty-five days after Egypt- one day spent on the mount (Exo. 19:3), one returning the people's answer (Exo.19:7, Exo.19:8), three days of preparation, making the whole time fifty days...

There appears to be considerable evidence that the Scriptures are speaking of the Israelites arriving and setting up camp the first day of the third month. However, there is more to consider.

For example, there is no question that the wording in Exodus 19 makes it difficult to tell exactly how much time it took to set up camp, how long it took for Moses to climb the mountain twice, then collect the elders to explain God's requirements two times and then climb the mountain again to give God their answer.

On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to consider that from departing Egypt on the 15th day of the first month to the first day of the third month would have taken 45 days. Israel would have set up camp the first day. Then on the second day Moses would have climb the mountain.

There God explained to Moses what He was going to do. Moses then went down the mountain and called a meeting with the elders. He relayed God's promise and conditions to the people, and they agreed.

Next, Moses went back up the mountain and reported to God that the Israelites agreed. Each climb up and down the mountain, organizing the people, and talking to them would likely take a day. That would bring the timing to three days after arriving. It would then be the forty seventh day.

It was at this time that God told Moses to sanctify the people for two days, and be ready for the third day when He would appear to them and give the Ten Commandments.

The first day was given to the people in order for each person to wash one set of his or her clothes to wear on that 50th day. They were also to keep themselves pure both that day, and on the next day—the Sabbath.

This brought them to the forty-ninth day from the departure from Egypt. On the following day, the day after their sanctification—the fiftieth day, God’s glory appeared on the mount on the Day of Pentecost.

In that context, it is also interesting to note that the giving of the law on Pentecost was also accompanied by the powerful blowing of a trumpet. As Moses writes:

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice (Exodus 19:19).

Further, on the day in which the Ten Commandments were given by God, and the Statues and Judgments by Moses, that fire burned the mountain at God’s presence, and that on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Pentecost was also accompanied by visible flames of fire. Finally, at the last trump, the resurrection on Pentecost will be accompanied by an angel of fire (Rev. 14:18).

A Simplified Chart

1st day	Israel arrives at Sinai and sets up camp	45 days from Egypt
2nd day	Moses goes up the mountain talks with God and returns to meet with the people	46 days from Egypt

3rd day	Moses tells God their answer, and he returns to tell them to wash their clothes and be sanctified	47 days from Egypt
4-5th day	The people wash Friday, and are sanctified Saturday	49 days from Egypt
6th day	The day of Pentecost God gives the law to Israel	50th day from Egypt

In this scenario, the law was given on the day of Pentecost. The spirit was given thousands of years later, on the day of Pentecost in order that, through His Spirit, those God would call could understand His law and, keep it Holy. Finally, at the last trump God will raise His first fruits, converting them to Spirit. At that time, they will become one with Christ and the embodiment of God’s Holy Law.

Wasn’t Pentecost Already Fulfilled?

While many believe the final fulfillment of Pentecost took place fifty days after Christ’s ascension, Pentecost has more than one fulfillment, each occurs over vast periods of time. Pentecost was fulfilled when the disciples were filled with the spirit. It will be fulfilled on the seventh trump. It us fulfilled by the resurrection of God’s first fruits and it was likely fulfilled by the giving of the law.

For example, in the preceding section, Scripture supports the proposal that, fifty days after left Egypt, God miraculously gave His law to Israel in a display of fire and power accompanied by the blast of a trumpet on the Feast of Pentecost (Exodus 19:16,18-19).

Later, the New Testament describes a time after Christ had been crucified, resurrected, and ascended to the Father's throne. From there He sent God's Holy Spirit, accompanied by the miracle of tongues of fire on Pentecost. However, this was not the final fulfillment of Pentecost. On this occasion, the Almighty offered His Spirit as a seed to those He would call (1Pet. 1:23; 1Joh. 3:9). That seed will continue to bear spiritual fruit until the final Pentecost when those who are chosen will become God's first harvest—born into the spirit dimension as Kings and Priests.

After the resurrection, it is not yet possible to really know what further events will occur on God's Holy Days. However, there will be great events yet to come. There will be a second resurrection consisting of the great majority of humanity (Rev. 20:5). There will be the release of Satan (Rev. 20:7). That will be followed by war with Gog and Magog and their utter destruction (Ezek. 38-39).

What's more, individuals throughout the millennium and the second resurrection will ultimately be judged and those found in the book of life will live and those who reject God's way will perish in a great spiritual lake of fire (Rev 20:11-12).

Those who are found written in the book of life will also become one of God's harvests of humanity. However, they will not be firstfruits—not Kings and Priests. They will be a second greater harvest. They will be the great multitude consisting of the rest of mankind who have chosen God's and become the citizens of God's righteous Kingdom.

Ultimately, there will be the creation of a New Heavens and a new earth. Finally, God the Father, Himself will descend to the new earth bringing with Him, an enormous and magnificent gift—The New Jerusalem.

Is it possible these other profound events in the history of God's plan will take place on God's Holy Days? The Scriptures remind us that these days are designed to foreshadow events in God's plan of salvation (Col. 2:16-17).

Is Pentecost on the Seventh Trump out of Order?

If Pentecost occurs at the seventh trump, some Bible students may question the order of the timing. Does the fact that the trumpet plagues begin prior to the resurrection mean that Trumpets is being fulfilled before Pentecost? Would such a case make the Holy Days out of their natural order?"

In answer "no." It must be understood that, while it was traditionally taught that the last trump only portrayed the resurrection. Instead, God's Word specifically defines the 7th trump as **the third woe**—consisting of seven additional vial plagues (Rev. 11:14-15; 15:1-8).

The seven vial plagues are the seventh trump, and both the trumpets and vial plagues are an entire year long. Therefore, they overlap all other Holy Days. In that context, God designed the resurrection on Pentecost so it coincided with the seventh trump. Ostensibly, this was done so that Pentecost occurring at the seventh trump, would serve a number of purposes.

First, remember that the seventh trump is the third woe, comprised of seven additional vial plagues. These plagues continue several months longer in order to fill up the entire year of God's wrath. They finally conclude on the Feast of Trumpets (Isa 61:2). Therefore, the final fulfillment of Trumpets occurs, just as it normally does, several months after Pentecost. The Sequence is listed below:

1. Trumpets starts the year of God's wrath
2. There are 7 trumpet plagues
3. The 7 th Trump God raises His people
4. The 7 th Trump is the 3 rd Woe
5. The 3 rd Woe is the 7 vial plagues
6. The 7 Vial plagues are poured out
7. All the Plagues culminate on Trumpets

A second point why the resurrection takes place at the seventh trump is that God removes His faithful from the earth at this time in order to protect them. At the sound of the seventh trump, the viol plagues will begin to literally pummel the earth for months until the end of God's year of wrath also occurring at Trumpets.

During this time, the world will experience the most horrific and terrifying disasters ever witnessed since the flood. God's timing of the resurrection insures that His faithful are resurrected prior to these plagues to protect them from the worst devastation to occur in mankind's history on the earth.

Third, this timing insures that after the vial plagues, the meaning of the remaining Holy Days will be fulfilled in proper order. For example, the next Holy Day after the conclusion of the seven trumpet and viol plagues on the Feast of Trumpets is the Day Atonement.

It is at this time Satan is put away and bound in confinement for a thousand years. Next, the Feast of Tabernacles will occur. It is on this day, Christ will likely return to earth. His feet will touch down on the Mount of Olives. From this time He will once again tabernacle with mankind. Finally on the Last Day, there will be a new beginning for mankind after Christ establishes the Kingdom of God on earth!

Was Christ Resurrected as a Human?

One minister has written a book in which he asserts two false beliefs. First he states that Christ did not ascend on the day of the Wave Sheaf offering.

Second he claims that the Savior was not resurrected as a Spirit Being. This author states that Christ was raised in a physical body, and that He taught the disciples forty days as a human being before ascending to heaven. This individual so writes that while Christ was in this physical state, He passed through the clouds in the sight of His Apostles (Acts 1:1-9).

When viewed critically, this theory omits several vital points. Neither does the author explain any of the obvious issues. For example, consider Christ's resurrection. The fact that He was now spirit should immediately be clear by the narrative that begins with the women coming to the tomb when it was still dark. As the Apostle Matthew explained:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for **the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone** from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay (Matthew 28:1-6).

As the women were coming to the tomb early Sunday morning, they witnessed an angel descend. The women saw the angel roll back the massive stone, and viewed the guards shaking in abject fear.

The words of this great angel also provide a witness to a miraculous resurrection. The angel explained that he knew what the two women sought. They had come to honor Christ at the tomb, but the angel stated, "He is not here." Christ did not leave the tomb when the stone was removed. The Savior had been resurrected and left hours prior.

What is important to realize is that this interaction took place many hours after Christ had been resurrected at the end of the Sabbath—sunset the previous day. Obviously the angel did not roll the stone away to free Christ from the grave. It was to enable the Savior's disciples to see that He

had risen as promised. He was raised when the stone and its guards were still in place. The only way He could leave the grave without the stone rolling back or the guards seeing Him is if He were a Spirit being capable of passing through the stone walls of the grave invisibly.

It is also important to realize that, although Christ had been resurrected the evening before, He did not ascend to the Father, nor did He seek His followers. Instead, He waited to make Himself known that Sunday morning when He first appeared in an unrecognizable form to the women who had returned to the grave site. In fact, it was not until Christ literally called out Mary's name that He was recognizable to these followers.

Further, as will be demonstrated later, the resurrected Christ appeared in different forms in several others instances. This fact alone would require Him to be a Spirit Being and not a physical human.

Christ Appearing as a Human

Those who advocate that Christ was resurrected as a human appeal to His appearance as a human being for proof. But, what really took place at those times? Notice the verses some use to prove Christ appeared to His apostles as a human:

And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But **they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.** And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a

spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them (Luke 24:33-43).

Based on the fact that the disciples thought that Jesus was a spirit, and Christ told them He was not, some conclude that the Savior was raised in a physical human body and not as a Spirit Being. However, there is an enormous difference between “a spirit” and a Spirit Being. What the disciples meant when they feared a spirit had entered the room is of enormous significance.

The term “spirit” has several possible meanings. It is Strong’s (G4151) and can mean breath, spirit, demon or ghost. For example, the word is translated as ghost 92 times in the King James and this is the meaning that explains what the disciples thought, and it is why they were so terrified realizing some sort of being had just walked right through locked doors. They reacted with the same exact fear they experienced when they first saw Christ walking on water (Mark 6:49).

In other words, the disciples thought they were seeing an apparition or ghost. Seeing a Spirit Being from God would not cause such fear. Consider that the women were not afraid of the angel that spoke to them at the tomb. The leading disciples were not in fear when they witnessed Christ appearing as He would come bringing His Kingdom. They saw Jesus, Moses and Elias standing together shining in splendor. In this case, the disciples saw Spirit Beings, but did not fear. In those cases, they realized that what they saw were not demonic spirits (Mat. 17:1-3).

When the disciples first saw Christ afterward, they did not yet know that Jesus had been resurrected. Their fear was generated by their thinking that the figure they saw

was an apparition. Thus the Savior quelled their fears by showing Himself in human form.

This is of extreme very importance. For example, many Protestant ministries teach that Christ was resurrected with a physical body. It is one of their primary doctrines, and it is natural that their followers would accept their teaching. However, true Christians are to study to prove all things. With that understood, consider what a number of respected commentators admit:

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible: what they **saw was a phantom**, or apparition, or a spirit that had assumed, and appeared in, the shape of Jesus.

The Popular Commentary on the New Testament: they beheld a spirit. **A ghost, a departed spirit**, returned in the semblance of a body.

David Guzik's *Enduring Word Commentary*: He wasn't some **ghost or phantom**.

Matthew Henry's Commentary: **a spirit—the ghost** of their dead Lord,

Wycliffe Bible Commentary: The risen Christ seemed to have the ability to appear and disappear at will. **His resurrected body possessed powers that transcended the laws of ordinary matter.**

The Case of Thomas

Thus it is clear that the disciples first thought Christ was a ghost, not that He was a resurrected Spirit Being. Later, Christ appeared to His followers a second time. On this occasion, the Savior confirmed His resurrection from the dead to Thomas who was not present on Christ's first visit.

On this occasion, Christ showed His wounds to Thomas, telling him to stick His hands in them (John 20:28). Does this mean that Christ was a human being and not a Spirit Being?

The truth is that Christ was not a physical human being. Readers need to think these circumstances through. It was seven days later when He told Thomas to put his hands in His wounds. If Christ was a human, His wounds would have closed up, be scabbed over, and healing as would occur as any normal human. It would be impossible to put a hand into a spear wound ten days after the wound was inflicted.

The truth is that Christ was a Spirit being, and could walk through locked doors or stone walls. He could appear as a gardener, as a common man as in Emmaus, as a human on His first encounter with the disciples, or in the form He was in when on the stake with His deep wounds.

Christ was a Spirit Being and every Bible student should realize why He did not appear to His disciples as such. Humans cannot see spirit unless the spirit being manifests them self as physical! In fact, men cannot look on God and live! (Exo. 33:20). For this reason, Christ appeared as a human when speaking to His disciples as well as to Adam, Eve, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, and Joshua. He appeared to these heroes of faith as a human when He was no less than the glorious majestic Spirit being—the Creator God.

Christ Changed His Appearance Several Times

The Savior was raised as a Spirit being; however, when He first showed Himself, He appeared as a human, and had to call out Mary's name in order for her to recognize Him. He also changed appearance that Sunday when manifesting Himself to the men walking to Emmaus. At that time He ate with them, only to vanish into thin air (Luke 24:14-31). This was something only a Spirit Being could do! When Christ visited the disciples, He did not

knock on the door; He just appeared before them—passing through any walls or doors.

However, so that He would not frighten them, He manifested Himself in a human form—not Spirit. However, Christ was Spirit and, as such, could change His structure and appearance at will. Further, He did so a number of times. As the gospel writer, Mark wrote:

Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, **he appeared** first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. **After that he appeared in another form** unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: Neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen (Mark 16:9-14).

In what State was Christ Resurrected?

Some may teach that Christ was resurrected as a human being. However the Scriptures state otherwise. For example the Apostle Paul spoke of the Savior's resurrection, making this issue clear. What He wrote proves that Christ was not raised as a human with limited human powers. The apostle stated:

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And **declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead** (Romans 1:3-4).

Thus, it should be clear that Christ was not raised as a human. He was born of the seed of David—a human. He was raised as the Son of God **with power!** If Christ was

raised from the dead as the Son of God with power, He was not human. If that is the case, what kind of body did He have?

His body must have been Spirit. Moreover, this question is also answered on another level. The Scriptures states that Christ's saints will follow His example—the path He blazed for us. In that case, what kind of body are the saints raised with?

What Body are the Saints Resurrected with

It must be remembered that Christ is the forerunner of which believers are to follow in His steps. That means that we will be resurrected like He was. We will be raised as Spirit Beings, not human beings.

Further, like Christ, who had to ascend to the Father's throne to be glorified, the saints must also follow that example. They must ascend to appear before Christ's judgment seat and have their reward performed in them according to their works (2 Cor. 5:10). Those who attain the first resurrection will be Spirit. As Paul wrote:

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? ...It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; **it is raised a spiritual body.** There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body... Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the **dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed** (1Corinthians 15:35; 42-44, 52).

In this chapter, the Apostle Paul makes this issue clear. He explained that there was an order in the resurrections. Christ would be first to be raised. Then, at

His return, true Christians would also be raised just as Christ was—changed—but, changed to what? To a Spirit body!

Consider What John Saw

Reflect on another interesting phenomenon in the gospels pointed out by author, R. Lyman. He explained that when Mary found the grave empty, she ran to tell Peter and John that Christ was no longer there. These men ran to the empty tomb, looked inside, and saw no body. At that point, they did not know He had been resurrected, only that the body was missing. Later John went back inside a second time. The Scriptures reveal that after taking a second look, John believed Christ had been resurrected. Why? What did John see? The apostle explained:

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, **saw the linen clothes lying**; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. **Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.** For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead (John 20:1-9).

John was first to peer into the sepulchre, and he saw it empty. Peter looked and also confirmed it vacant. However, John returned later and looked in the tomb more closely a second time. There he saw something that suddenly caused him to believe in Christ was resurrected. What was it that he saw?

The word “saw” adds important information to aid our understanding. Strong’s defines the word as G1491 from G1492; a view, that is, form (literally or figuratively): - appearance, fashion, shape, sight. This Greek word is of great importance.

It leaves the reader with the perception that while Christ’s head piece had been folded; the rest of the clothes appeared to have collapsed as though they had fallen together, undisturbed or perhaps still in the shape of a cocoon due to the hundred pounds of aloe that were applied earlier and had likely solidified (John 19:39).

John realized that Christ’s tightly wrapped body had suddenly been retracted without physically removing the bedclothes. They were still in the same place they were when Christ was buried. T

This proved to John that His body had not been stolen, but more importantly, it was evidence enough for John to believe that Christ body had been resurrected. He realized that He would have to be a Spirit in order for Him to have passed through the grave clothes just as He later passed through walls—something He never did as a human when on earth.

In that context, consider the raising of Lazarus. He was raised as a physical human. As a physical being, he came out of his grave still wearing the bed clothes, and those grave clothes had to be removed externally.

Two Resurrections and Ascensions:

Consider what the belief that Christ was resurrected as a human requires. This belief imagines that the Savior finally ascended as a human, rising through the clouds after forty days. But, think! If He were still human, at that point,

He would pass above oxygen levels unsafe for humans. He would continue through the freezing vacuum of outer space to ascend to heaven. He could only do that if He were a Spirit Being.

Next consider the first resurrection. Those in this resurrection ascended just as did Christ, through the clouds, past outer space to the place of Christ's throne in heaven. There they stand before Christ for their judgment. Notice these words:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad (2Co 5:10).

Thus, the saints rise to heaven, and it is only after rising to meet Christ in the clouds that the Savior takes them to His throne in heaven. There they are glorified. They must be Spirit to rise past earth's atmosphere and stand in heaven before Christ's throne and be glorified.

What is fascinating is that the resurrection of the saints is no different than Christ's resurrection and ascension. He too was changed to spirit, passed through His bed clothes, appeared in different forms and then ascended past earth's atmosphere to appear in heaven where God glorified Him and gave Him power over the physical kingdoms of earth. As Daniel explains:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13).

After considering that Christ came to the Father in heaven, it should be clear that He was spirit prior to traveling to the God's throne in heaven where all is composed of spirit.

He then returns to earth and rules over the earthly kingdoms during the millennium with His Spirit Saints. Finally, the rest of all mankind also appear before His throne in the third resurrection which is the final judgment of all humankind. This is another case in which the dead are raised past the atmosphere, when the earth and its atmosphere are extinguished. After this, all will have been raised and they are judged for either life or death in the lake of fire. As the Apostle John wrote:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, **from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

Notice that multiple millions are raised from death. However, at this time there is no more heaven or earth. Thus, even these who are raise from the dead must be raised to the essence of their spirit in order to be able to live through God's white throne Judgment.

The power of God must be understood. He can create spirit, destroy spirit, and He can glorify spirit. Those who will be judged according to their works in the third

Resurrection must also be raised to spirit. There is no earth to stand on, neither is there heavens or air to breath. They too, can be, and are, composed of spirit.

Did Mary Cling to Christ?

There are others who teach that Christ did not ascend to the Father on Sunday. These also advance the argument that He was not raised as a Spirit Being. For evidence they present a scenario in which Mary was already clinging to Christ and He simply told her not to hang on Him, but leave quickly and tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee.

Holding the belief that Mary clung to the Savior that Sunday, they conclude that Christ could not have been Spirit, ostensibly because Spirit cannot be held. Further, her hanging on or clinging to Him is their proof that He was not a Spirit Being waiting to arise to the father's throne.

First, notice that Christ called Mary to get her attention, not to encourage her to come to Him. Further, the verse does not say she moved in His direction. It only states that she "turned herself" to face Him:

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. **She turned herself**,
and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say,
Master (John 20:16).

The Scriptures nowhere indicate that Mary had run to, walked to, or was already clinging to Him. Scripture does not show that even one of His followers touched Him at this time. When He spoke, Mary simply turned to face Him.

This word "turned" is "strephō" in the Greek. Strongs defines it as:

Strengthened from the base of G5157; to twist, that is, **turn quite around** or reverse (literally or figuratively): - convert, turn (again, back again, self, self about) (Strong's G4762).

Mary merely turned around to face Christ. However, knowing she would approach Him to embrace, **He told her beforehand not to do so.** He also gave the reason she was not to approach Him. It was because He had **NOT YET ASCENDED** to the Father.

The word touch also provides further evidence. Christ DID NOT tell Mary not to “cling” to Him. The term “touch” is number G680 in Strong’s Dictionary, and is:

haptomai, and is defined as the Reflexive of G681; properly to attach oneself to, **that is, to touch** (in many implied relations): - touch

Because there are some cases in which this term can be used to mean attach oneself, it is believed by some that it is possible to translate the words as “cling.” However, Christ told Mary not to do it! Therefore, the first point to realize is that **she DID NOT** cling to Him.

It is also interesting that in the entire King James Bible, this word is never translated as cling. By way of example the, well respected, New Englishman’s Greek-English Concordance provides every place a specific Greek word is used regardless of how it is translated. When looking up G680 in this work, it shows the term is used 36 times.

This work also reveals that “haptomai” is translated as touch, touches, and toucheth—never cling or any other word like it. The Scriptures never indicate that Mary had already grasped Christ, and was told not to cling to Him.

If we are committed to being faithful to the Word of God, and not to self proclaimed theologians, the truth is that the Scriptures only state that Mary turned to face Him. It was at that point Christ instructed her NOT to “touch” Him.

The Scriptures never say that Mary was already touching Christ and at that point He said don’t cling to Him. It would be dishonest to say such a thing, but in the interest of clarity, consider what is the spiritual difference between touching and clinging? Christ still said not to do it,

and the reason He gave adds a piece of vital information. She was not to touch Him BECAUSE HE HAD NOT YET ASCENDED to God—obviously that morning—and He said this for two reasons. Christ stated the first of these:

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; 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 (Joh 20:17).

Christ's words make it plain. He told Mary not to touch Him because He had not yet ascended to the Father. What He stated next is also vital. He instructed Mary to go and tell the brethren that **He would “ascend unto my Father.”** Christ was not telling her that He would ascend over a month later. The context makes it clear that He would ascend that morning. Further, there was no urgency in Christ's sending her away to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee. He did not go there immediately. He next went to Emmaus, and then returned to Jerusalem because the disciples did not believe the women's report and therefore did not go to Galilee as Mary had told them that Christ had instructed them.

Why Not Touch Christ at That Point?

Just as God told Israel not to use a human tool on the altar of offerings because human touch or tools would defile it, after His resurrection, Christ explained that Mary should not touch Him until after He had ascended to the Father to be accepted as the wave sheaf offering. The obvious meaning of His words, and the events occurring later that day, show that His ascension took place that very Sunday.

For example, one vital event taking place that day confirms that He had ascended Sunday. While He had told Mary not to touch Him because He had not yet ascended, He actually did allow her to touch Him later that day. Thus He must have ascended between telling Mary not to touch

Him that morning, and later, when Christ met with His disciples, Mary was permitted to hold His feet (Mat. 28:9).

Christ Ascended Sunday

Some opponents of the Sunday ascension teach that Christ did not ascend to heaven until His followers watched Him rise from the Mount of Olives forty days later. However notice the direct words of Scripture. Christ told Mary to leave, and tell His followers that He would first ascend to the Father and afterward meet them in Galilee.

Using normal common sense, Christ told Mary that she was to tell the other disciples that He would ascend to God the Father and then meet them in Galilee. By these words, no one could logically conclude that Christ meant He would ascend to the Father 40 days from His resurrection. Such thinking is simply twisting the Scriptures in an attempt to force God's Word to support a personal prior conviction.

Could Christ Ascend, be Glorified, and Return that Day?

Could Christ ascend to the Father, and returned that same day, or even within a few hours? The answer is yes. As the Scriptures tell us, nothing is impossible for Him. Peter also wrote:

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing,
that one day is with the Lord as a thousand
years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter.
3:8)

Notice that this verse offers two sides of the same truth. One day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. In other words, Christ lived inside and outside of time. He was patient enough to take a thousand years to accomplish what would only require a day. On the other hand, He could do in one day what would take mankind a thousand years. Therefore, as a Spirit Being, traveling at the speed of thought, He could easily ascend to heaven, be glorified, and return in just moments.

Is the Wave Sheaf offered After the Feast Day?

A number of individuals mistakenly believe that the wave sheaf was offered according to the Pharisaic method—after the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. Those who profess this doctrine present a number of arguments to support their view. Many of these are addressed below.

In Leviticus 23, God gave instructions for observing His Holy Days. He spoke of each observance, including the Wave Sheaf. As the Scriptures record:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 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. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat offering thereof *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 an hin. And the meat offering thereof *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 an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete (Leviticus 23:10-15).

The Passover and days of unleavened bread occurred as the first of the three pilgrimage feasts taking place in Jerusalem. God's people saved an additional tithe to finance travel and expenses to celebrate His feasts there.

The Scriptures state that prior to observing the Passover, worshippers were to harvest their barely crop. They were to take the first sheaf to ripen and set it aside. At the Feast of Unleavened Bread, they were to present an omer of this first barley to the priests who would prepare it, and wave it as an offering to God on the day after the Sabbath (Lev. 23:11). The people were also instructed not to eat any of their harvest until this omer had been presented (Lev. 23:14).

Afterward, the people were to count seven Sabbaths from the day the grain was waved, and then celebrate the feast of First Fruits, known today as Pentecost. It is the timing of this Wave Sheaf that so much debate has been generated.

Why Count to Arrive at Pentecost?

The day of the wave sheaf offering—the day after the weekly Sabbath—could take place on any one of the seven days of Unleavened Bread. For this reason, God does not designate a specific days in the month of Sivan in which Pentecost should always fall. That is just one reason why a count is necessary.

To answer another aspect of this issue, some claim it was necessary to count because in ancient times, the Levites sighted the new moon. Thus, their sighting could be up to two days off. In such cases, their count to Pentecost could conclude on the 5th, 6th or 7th of Sivan.

However, it must be understood that nowhere does God say to site the new moon! Further, He nowhere states that if it was cloudy, and the moon could not be seen that the priests were to wait no more than two days past their already pre-calculated new moon to start their count.

All this sighting of the new moon, and rules about when it was cloudy, was added by men to give the religious

leaders Legitimacy, power, and authority within Israel. Sighting the new moon is not commanded by God, and even now, has long been abandoned by the vast number of the observant Jewish people.

A Word Study in Leviticus 23

In that context, the religious sects of Sadducees, Samaritans, and Karaites all believed the term morrow after the Sabbath referred to the day after the weekly Sabbath. On the other hand, much later, the Pharisees became convinced that the term Sabbath meant the first day after the feast of Unleavened Bread.

As with most religious arguments, few turn solely to God's Word, making the truth clear. For example, in Leviticus 23:11 where God speaks of the morrow after the **Sabbath**, the word is "shabbâth, *shab-bawth'* Intensive from [H7673](#); *intermission*, that is, (specifically) **the Sabbath**: - (+ every) Sabbath" (Strong's H7676). This is the term God always uses for the weekly Sabbath, and that is what is meant regarding the Wave Sheaf. It was not an annual Feast Day.

By God specifically using this word in His command to celebrate the Wave sheaf, He identifies the day following the weekly Sabbath as the start of the count. Further, Israel was instructed to count from this Sabbath until seven Sabbaths were complete.

Obviously it is simple enough to see that this instruction makes the 49th day a weekly Sabbath. When commanding to count seven Sabbaths, the **Scriptures use the very same word meaning the weekly Sabbath**. Therefore, the only honest conclusion possible is that the count to fifty started on Sunday, and ended on the day after the seventh Sabbath—also a Sunday.

Think! If, as some contend, God intended the term Sabbath to mean the annual Sabbath, then the command to count seven Sabbaths, would literally mean to count seven annual Holy Days—not seven weekly Sabbaths—an

absolute, ludicrous impossibility that would rule out counting a mere 50 days.

Further, if God meant “Sabbath” to be the feast day, He would have used the term for Feast. For example, the Eternal states:

And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the **feast** of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:6).

There are two High Days that serve as “book ends” to the Days of Unleavened Bread. God calls both of these days “Feasts.” If God intended His people to count from the first annual feast, He would have designated which one of these two that He meant. Did He mean the first day of Unleavened Bread, or the last day as some even attempt to argue today?

Common logic, coupled with God’s Spirit, and His plain spoken Word, proves that the Almighty cannot be referring to the annual Holy Days. The word the Scripture uses for the first day of Unleavened Bread is called a “Feast,” not a Sabbath. God does not tell us to start the count the day after the first feast day.

The words translated Feast are either “Chag” or “Moed” and these are consistently used when speaking of an annual “feast” day, never the word “shabbâth” (Strong’s H7676)—the term repeatedly used for the weekly Sabbath. Thus, there are several differences to consider regarding these two terms.

For example, when God uses the term Sabbath, the Almighty does so regarding the weekly Sabbath. He also uses it when speaking of counting the seven Sabbaths to Pentecost. He makes it clear that the Day of Atonement is a Sabbath, and the Almighty uses the same word to it and in reference to the land Sabbath (7676).

For this reason, some have interpreted the annual Feast days as Sabbaths. However, this is an enormous error. The mistake made because readers don’t recognize why

Atonement and the land Sabbath are called Sabbaths. It is not because they share the fact that they are the same word as the weekly Sabbath. It is not because the other Feast days are Sabbaths. They are not. It is because these two times share the same criteria for being a Sabbath. That criteria is that on Atonement, absolutely NO WORK was to be done. NO WORK was done on the land during the land Sabbath. Thus, these are referred to as a Sabbath, but on the Feast days, families were allowed to cook food, but not perform their regular work, chores (Exo.12:16; Lev.23:7-8). In this context, notice the words within God's command that makes the obvious difference in these days:

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first *day* of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, **(H7677—a special holiday,)** a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.... Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the **feast (chag—a feast or victim)** of tabernacles *for* seven days unto the LORD. On the first day *shall be* an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work *therein*. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on **the eighth day shall be an holy convocation (H6944, qôdesh, 4744, miqrâ—a sacred public meeting)** unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: *it is* a solemn assembly; *and* ye shall do no servile work *therein*. These *are* the **feasts (Mo'ed, a set appointed time)** of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day: (these are) Beside the Sabbaths **(7676)** of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD (Leviticus 23:24-38).

Are We to Count Weeks?

Regarding the count of Sabbaths to Pentecost, as written in the book of Deuteronomy, the general translation refers to “weeks.” Some use the fact that this word can be translated as “weeks” in today’s language to teach that seven weeks can be counted beginning with any day.

However, the term week was not actually used in ancient Hebrew. The word “week” is an artificial construct only recently included in the Hebrew. This modern term came from the **English word**—“**wice.**” Notice what Princeton states:

The English word week continues an Old English *wice*, ultimately from a Common Germanic **wikōn-*, from a root **wik-* "turn, move, change". The Germanic word probably had a wider meaning prior to the adoption of the Roman calendar, perhaps "succession series", as suggested by Gothic *wikō* translating *taxis* "order" in Luke 1:8. (<https://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Week.html>)

As stated, this term was originally an artificial time reference that had a very wide meaning. It could mean a course, or series of time with no single defined length. In that context, understand that when considering the instructions to count to Pentecost, in which the term week appears, this term did not exist in the culture of Judah until they became captives in Babylon. Thus, God never speaks of the week of Tabernacles or week of Unleavened Bread.

Further evidence is the Hebrew context. For example, Strong’s even defines the word now translated as “week” as “shâbûa’.” It is considered to be a passive participle of H7650 as a denominative of H7651; literally *sevened*, that is, a *week* (specifically of years): - seven, week (Strong’s H7620).

It must also be understood that Deuteronomy was written before the Hebrews had a term for a week other than seven days ending on the Sabbath. Originally, they called the days by number just as God had originally done. Therefore the day to begin the count was already understood from the time God spoke to them 40 years earlier. Understanding that truth, the book of Deuteronomy states:

Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest to *put* the sickle to the corn (Deuteronomy 16:9)

In the verse above, the word, “weeks” was understood to mean “sevened” expecting believer to understand the reference is Sabbath from Leviticus 23.

This later term refers to the point when the High Priest put the sickle to the barley for the nation’s wave sheaf offering. This occurred Saturday evening at sunset. It did not refer to the harvesting of the crop by the people. That could take place at any time of the year. The people were to bring the sheaf after the entire crop was harvested (Lev. 23:10).

This instruction was for the High Priest who cut the sheaf exactly after Saturday night at sunset. This was now the first day of the week, Sunday, when the count to Pentecost was to begin.

In one sense, this fact also rules out the false concept, some harbor that the wave sheaf was sometimes offered after the last holy day. By then, the pilgrimage feast in which the wave sheaf was to be offered was over. The people were heading home.

Further, the people did not have printed calendars in those days. If God had meant to count seven periods comprised of seven days from a day other than the weekly Sabbath, people would have difficulty keeping track. Naturally, God used the term weekly Sabbath, a day in which all were acutely aware.

The Meaning of the Morrow after the Sabbath

Consider that the Holy Days are described in the order that they occur. Does any reader actually believe that God pronounced the instructions regarding the method to count Pentecost to the Levites and did so in the presence of the entire nation, and it was not obvious to everyone? God recorded Leviticus 23 to be understood by all.

God began explaining His days with the weekly Sabbath (H7676). On this day **NO work** or business was to be done. Next, He spoke of Passover on the 14th day of the first month, and the pilgrimage feast of Unleavened Bread, in which the days falling on the 15th and 21st were celebrated and **NO SERVILE** work was to be done on these two Holy Days, but cooking was allowed.

In every case, when referring to a feast day, God differentiates its observance from that of the weekly Sabbath by calling it a “feast,” or by stating that only servile work may be done. This fact directly applies to the Wave Sheaf.

When God speaks of the Wave Sheaf, He does not say it falls on the morrow after the feast. He clearly states that it is to occur the day after the word repeatedly used in reference to the weekly Sabbath (Strong’s H7676).

Think this through! While a number of groups are convinced that, the phrase “morrow after the Sabbath,” refers to day after the first Feast Day, there is not a single person that believes in the phrase “the morrow after the **seventh Sabbath**” that the word Sabbath refers to an annual Feast Day. Both words are H7676 in Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew Words, and both refer to only the weekly Sabbath.

No Other Meaning

Further, all of God’s holy times are listed in order. If the wave sheaf was to be offered on the day after the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, then Leviticus 23 would state something on the order of “On the first day of

the feast you shall have a holy convocation, and on the day after the “feast,” you shall offer the wave sheaf.” Such language would naturally follow God’s chronological method of observing the Holy Days. But God’s command reflects nothing of the kind. Therefore, the Pharisee’s modern method of interpreting the word Sabbath and their count to Pentecost appears suspicious to say the least.

From another perspective, the New Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance is a respected reference work. It uses the Strong’s number to record every instance in the Bible where a particular Hebrew word is used—even when translated differently. When looking up the word Sabbath, used in Leviticus 23, it appears exactly 180 times in the Old Testament. However, every single time, it is translated as either Sabbath or Sabbaths (Strong’s 7676).

On the other hand, the actual word “Sabbath” is never literally translated as feast, Atonement, year, week, or anything other than the weekly Sabbath or Sabbaths. Thus, when God says the morrow after the Sabbath, He obviously meant the weekly Sabbath

The Conflict between the Sadducees and Pharisees

The controversy regarding which day to begin the count to Pentecost developed over considerable time. Ultimately it became the primary disagreement between the Sadducees and Pharisees.

Although the Sadducees gave only minimal allegiance to their religion, it is well known that they had retained the ancient Old Testament method of counting Pentecost. They served as priests in the temple until 70 A.D. when Rome destroyed this great edifice. Among the priestly line, their long standing belief was that the Wave Sheaf took place the morrow after the weekly Sabbath.

On the other hand, the Pharisees were of the opinion that the wave sheaf took place the day following the first day of Unleavened Bread—an annual Sabbath. However, the Pharisees were not of the priestly line and had no God given legitimate religious authority. Still, over time events

led to the Pharisees having considerable influence in both the Temple and Sanhedrin.

According to Scripture, they were not allowed to declare the time or the way to celebrate God's Holy Day observances. According to God, that responsibility belonged only to the priestly line—the Levites (Exo. 29:9; Lev. 10:11).

Not Unusual

It certainly was not unusual to find Christ observing the Holy Days differently than the Pharisaic religious leaders. For example, the Savior kept the Passover the day before Pharisees (Mar. 14:12; John 18:28).

Christ would also have observed Pentecost according to priestly dictates rather than the Pharisees who were not priests. Thus He would likely have kept it later than most Jews of His time. Still, this difference in opinion regarding the times to observe Passover and Pentecost has continued among many believers to this day.

Why the Confusion?

Why such confusion regarding counting Pentecost? The answer is that we have disregarded God's command that we not interpret His Word (2 Pet. 1:20). However, this is exactly what Bible students, scholars, and commentators do. As a result, most people have misunderstood His laws regarding the weekly Sabbath, the creation of a calendar, the Passover, and the timing of the wave sheaf. They have substituted their own traditions, holidays, and doctrines in place of God's law.

Further complicating the issue, to make their mark in the world, many religious scholars and historians have written their own treatises on this subject. Most of their writings are often personal interpretations of history, or in the case of the wave sheaf, arguing over who had charge of the temple.

The truth is that none of these arguments can be counted as absolute truth. Whether an individual is a

scholar, or a doctor of theology, each person, carries his or her own personal prejudice and that prejudice ultimately finds itself expressed in their conclusions. The only trustworthy source is the truth of the Bible which often directly opposes scholars and historians.

For example, in Leviticus 23 the Eternal instructed the Levites to proclaim His Holy Days. He explained the time of these days and how they were to be observed. At this time God made it clear. The Levites were His official religious authorities, and they had the responsibility for declaring the time of the Holy Days (Lev.23:20-21).

Ministers and their followers need to realize. It is no different today. God's leaders are to guard and perform that which the Almighty has originally declared in the Scriptures—not what men have muddled with and changed.

Those who handle God's Word must fear to misuse it. They must insure that they teach what God meant when originally explaining His observances to the Levites. For example, when revealing His Holy days, the Eternal included the entire camp of Israel; and even the common people. God's public pronouncement was to insure that all people would know the truth. That applies to us today. As readers of His words, we become His witness—an obligation of enormous magnitude.

Who Was in Charge of the Temple?

During Christ's ministry, were the Sadducees in control of the temple, or the Pharisees? Which religious view held precedence in the first century? Sadly, the answer reveals that the ideas of men had again taken priority over what God has sanctified.

For centuries, human beings have made their own decisions regarding worship. As they did, they adjusted various celebrations, setting feasts in ways other than God had ordained.

This tendency is true for all people, and is clearly reflected in the History of the Jewish people. For example, in Christ's time, the High Priest was of the line of the

Sadducees and God had placed them in charge of the temple. As the Biblical record states:

Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation (Acts 5:17)

Thus, the Sadducees represented the body of leadership in the temple from the time of Ezra's reformation. Not everything they believed was true, however. For example, they believed that only the first five books of the law were legitimate and therefore were of the opinion that there was no such thing as the resurrection.

However, other beliefs they held based on the first five books of the law were true. They were certain that these books, containing the written law of God, were to be observed exactly as stated—and they were correct in this.

The Sadducees were primarily comprised of the wealthy aristocracy and were known for their political corruption. For example, after the Maccabean revolt, the Sadducees desired to align themselves with the Greek, Hellenized society. Their desire was to enhance trade, grow the economy, and ultimately put more money in their pockets.

However, after the enormous success of the Maccabees in routing the Greek forces, two major events took place. First, the Jews greatly expanded their control over other territories. This included those of the Diaspora who were located nearby, various Hellenized people, and even rural uncivilized tribes. Second, at the same time, the Jewish people also experienced a religious resurgence, and study of the Scriptures came to have a much higher priority in the land (p. 106, *A History Of The Jews*)

As the Jewish people accepted various portions of Greek culture and at the same time put more emphasis on the study of the Scriptures, a group emerged calling themselves Pharisees. This new group of religious zealots

taught that when God gave Moses the written law, he also transmitted an oral law, and that oral law was for the purpose of allowing adjustments in the written Law that they could adapt to changing cultural and societal norms.

Thus, over time, the Pharisees made embellishments contrary to the written law—something God had forbidden. In addition, as Jewish history progressed beyond the Greek era, the Jews found themselves faced with a new threat—the powerful empire of Rome! Judah ultimately became a client state of Rome, and in 39-40 B.C., Rome appointed Herod as the overseer of Judah. As Rome’s official ruler, Herod placed whoever he pleased in the position of High Priest.

One assignment Herod created came to be of enormous significance to Jewish religious practice. Herod appointed a Segan—a captain of the temple. As the respected historian, Paul Johnson Writes:

By downgrading the importance of the high-priest, a hated Sadducee, Herod automatically raised in importance his deputy, the *segan*, a Pharisee, who got control over all the regular Temple functions and ensured that even the Sadducee high-priests performed the liturgy in a Pharisaical manner. (pp. 117-118, *A History Of The Jews*)

Upon Herod’s death, Rome split the territory among his sons. One was Alexander Jannaeus who married Salome, a woman who was personally supportive of the Pharisees. After the death of Jannaeus in 76 B.C., she ruled alone, and during her reign, the numbers and influence of the Pharisees grew enormously. As Edersheim writes:

Queen Salome had appointed her eldest son, Hyrcanus II, a weak prince, to the Pontificate. But, as Josephus puts it (*Ant. XIII, 16, 2*), although Salome had the title, the Pharisees held the real rule of the country, and they

administered it with the harshness, insolence and recklessness of a fanatical religious party which suddenly obtained unlimited power. ...previous orders differing from Pharisaical views were abrogated and others breathing their spirit substituted. So Sweeping and thorough was the change wrought, that the Sadducees never recovered from the blow. Whatever they might teach, yet those in office were obliged in all time coming to conform to the Pharisaic practice (Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah p. 675-676).

Thus, during Christ's time, the Sadducees functioned in the priestly role, but in many instances, they were forced to conform to Pharisaic practices. This stemmed from Herod's appointed Segan who functioned as the captain of the temple, and is often mentioned in the Scriptures. For example:

Then the band and the **captain** and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him (John 18:12).

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the **captain of the temple**, and the Sadducees, came upon them (Acts 4:1).

Now when the high priest and the **captain of the temple** and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow (Acts 5:24).

The captain of the temple had so much power from Rome that he could change the Sadducee's priestly observance of the wave-sheaf and the count to Pentecost. Some of the Sadducees did not go along with Herod's appointment, however.

For example, while the Pharisees may have determined the time to cut the wave sheaf, the sons of

Bothus, who were heirs in the line of High Priests, and of the sect of the Sadducees, objected. As the Mishna records:

“The Boetheusians say: ‘The cutting of the sheaf does not take place at the end of the day of the feast [the first of the seven days of unleavened bread], but only at the end of the next regular Sabbath’” (Menahoth, 10, 3).

Therefore, the Sadducees were the priests, but they were often politically forced to follow the Pharisees when offering the wave sheaf omer. What does this mean? Does this fact make the Pharisaic method of counting valid because they were in charge?

An Enormous Irony

If this eye opening history proves anything at all, it displays the tendency for the ideas of men to take precedence over what the Holy God sanctified. For centuries, human beings have done this, making their own decisions regarding worship. As they did so, they adjusted various celebrations, and set times and ceremonies in ways other than God had ordained.

It is in this context that an enormous irony came to exist. Whoever was in charge during the time of Christ, or afterward, has absolutely no meaning. For example, while Moses was on the mountain, Aaron was in charge and set up a golden calf.

God placed Jeroboam in charge of the nation of Israel to the north of Judah. Tragically he changed the Holy Days, set up calves to worship in Ephraim and Dan, and ultimately set up the nation to worship Baal. As a result, the Almighty took the northern tribes of Israel captive by the brutal Assyrians and they have become lost to secular history.

Later Judah’s kings also led the people to sin, and as their punishment, God took the nation captive by Babylon. Judah was allowed to return after 70 years, but not because they were better than Israel. Their sins were

worse (Jer. 3:7-11). They were brought back to the land so that God's Words in Genesis 49:22-26 would be fulfilled. The Jewish people would be in existence, and the law kept when Christ was born to become God's saving sacrifice for mankind.

Once Christ's sacrifice was complete, in keeping with the end-time prophesy in both the Old and New Testament eras, God destroyed the last era of the Old Covenant—the Jewish nation and their temple. He scattered their priests during a 3 ½ year period of war, tribulation, and persecution. For more information regarding these eras in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, please read the book, *Evidence for Eras*.

The Jewish religious leaders also made changes to the calendar. For example, while nowhere found in Scripture, the priests demanded that they see the visible crescent of the moon before they could declare the beginning of the month. This sighting often made the month as much as two days late when it was cloudy, and the crescent could not be seen.

Additionally, by use of the sighted crescent, Holy Days falling on the fifteenth day, the full moon actually fell up to two days later than the literal full moon (Psa. 81:3; NKJV). Thus, based on the decisions of those in charge, it was sometimes possible for the full moon to four days late!

Later, the Roman Church took control over what was becoming an apostate faith during the early 300's A.D. In the 325th year, during the council of Nicaea, the unconverted Emperor, Constantine, decreed that, instead of celebrating Passover as the Scriptures had enjoined, the church was to celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after Passover, then count fifty days to the observance of this carnal emperor's man-made, apostate Pentecost.

Should his decision be accepted as legitimate because Constantine was in charge of the church at that time? Absolutely not! We must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). For a full explanation of this subject, read the booklet titled, *Easter or Passover*.

In this context, it is generally well understood that over time, the Pharisees grew in power. Then they challenged the existing priestly line regarding which day to start the count to Pentecost. This change in leadership has caused numerous contentions between differing sects of the Jews; and even a number of professing Christians.

However, what men think, what they feel, or what they want to believe must never be the deciding factor. It is, and it must always be, what the Bible actually says. It is God and His Word that must be our authority. It is the Almighty who must be in charge!

Should We Follow The Pharisees?

One prolific author among the Churches of God once taught that Christians should follow the Pharisees regarding their method of counting Pentecost. He presents his evidence for this in Matthew 23. There he records God's Apostle, Matthew quoting the words of Christ:

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and **the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:** All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not (Matthew 23:1-3)

What was Moses' Seat?

To fully understand this statement, it is important to know what Moses Seat actually was. While leading Israel out of Egypt, Moses sat making judgments regarding conflicts among the people.

His father in law, Jethro, counseled him to divide the responsibility among the leaders of the tribes, and this division later became the basis for the Sanhedrin. In that context, Moses explained what His Seat represented:

When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do

make them know the statutes of God, and his laws (Exodus 18:16)

It is important to realize that Moses sat in the judgment seat dealing with matters in which individuals had conflicts. He did not sit in Aaron's seat dealing with religious doctrines. God had appointed the Levites to be Israel's priests, and they were to declare the method of sacrifice and times of the Holy days.

In later history, an opposing sect of the Pharisees rose up from the common people, and ultimately, became the majority in the Sanhedrin. Thus, they judged from Moses' seat. However, it must be remembered that this was making judgments regarding conflicts among the people. Christ said the people were to adhere to these civil judgments. But notice that Christ plainly said, **DO NOT DO AS THEY DO!** In other words, do not follow their human made traditions which would include their religious observances!

The Pharisees had moved the day of the wave-sheaf from God's command. But that is not the full extent of their error. Note an abbreviated version of Christ's personal appraisal of this religious sect:

...they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne... their works they do for to be seen of men... and to be called... Rabbi, Rabbi. But, be not ye called Rabbi... woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom... neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites... ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites... ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and... make him twofold more the child of hell... Woe unto you, ye blind guides... Ye fools and blind... Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe.. and have omitted the weightier matters of the law... Ye blind guides... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees,

hypocrites... full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee... ye are like unto whited sepulchers.... ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell... I send unto you prophets and some ...ye shall kill and crucify; and ...scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them (Matthew 23:4-34).

Christ called the Pharisees blind guides, hypocrites, fools, children of hell, and murderers of God's prophets. Are these the kind of people we should follow? They want to be called Rabbi but Christ said not to call any man Rabbi. Doesn't this single fact alone send a clear message to anyone who might consider following the practices of Rabbinical Judaism?

Was Paul a Pharisee?

Ignoring Christ's personal appraisal of the Pharisees, this author continues to write that their practices should be followed because Paul cried out to a religious council that he was a Pharisee after his conversion to Christ. For evidence he quotes Acts 23:6 and Philippians 3:4. But, what do these additional verses actually tell us?

First consider Acts 23. Paul was under Roman arrest, and about to be flogged. In this predicament, he explained that he was born a Roman, and therefore his citizenship allowed him to avoid the flogging. As a result, the Chief Captain placed him before the High Priest and Sanhedrin thinking that this was simply a religious matter.

As he was standing before this council, Paul took note that the group was divided between Sadducees and Pharisees. Therefore, the apostle claimed that the charges brought against him were a result of having one similar and fundamental belief also held by the Pharisees—they also taught there is a resurrection of the dead. The apostle said:

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a

Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question (Act 23:6).

The Apostle claimed he was born into the sect of the Pharisees, and he made this claim for a specific purpose. It was not to advocate following the Pharisees any more than his claiming to be Roman meant that he believed and acted like a Roman. Paul was born into the Pharisaic sect and educated by it. He shared their belief in a resurrection of the dead, but that is as far as it went. Paul was not a practicing Pharisee. He was a Christian in which there were no such divisions (1Cor. 10:1)

Consider the true Christian today. If a member of God's Church was converted from one of the sects of modern Christianity, they might claim to have been of that sect. However, would they claim to be an active member of their prior belief to escape persecution? A Christian is not to lie even to save their own life.

Thus, it is actually highly likely that the Apostle Paul never actually stated he was a Pharisee. Translators may not have taken into account the vital Christian doctrine of not having various parties, sects, or groups exactly like what is occurring in the last era of God's Church—some of which is directly due to this doctrine of the Wave Sheaf.

In that context, consider the words "I am" that Paul stated. The Strong's number for "I am" is (G1510) and is used emphatically as "am," "have been," "I" or "was." While primarily translated as "I am," in a number of cases this term is also translated as "had," "been," "belonged," or "used." Thus, it is possible that Paul was actually telling the crowd that He "had been" a Pharisee and was being called into question regarding the resurrection.

Whatever the translation could, or should be, Paul's statement was not saying that He was a member of the Pharisaic party. Instead His statement was to purposely divide the council and cause a disturbance so they would not indict Him. This occurred expressly so he would be

forced to go to Rome as Christ later told him he was to do (Acts 23:11).

The next argument this writer uses as evidence that Paul was a Pharisee is found in Philippians 3:4. Consider the context of the verse, and note that while once a Pharisee, Paul had abandoned the sect of the Pharisees. As he personally stated:

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; **as touching the law, a Pharisee;** touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **do count them but dung**, that I may win Christ (Philippians 3:4-8).

The Apostle Paul admitted that he was once a Pharisee, but the context clearly shows that he had abandoned that cult for true Christianity. In fact, he clearly counted his involvement with the Pharisees as dung! Does anyone really think we should follow what Paul considered dung?

Should Christians Trust the Talmud?

At first, counting from the wave-sheaf to Pentecost does not appear that difficult, but scholars and historians have made it an enormous problem! Their arguments continue to this day as theologians, scholars, and historians debate the meaning of words or the importance of ancient writings.

They study the beliefs held by those who lived near the end of the first century. As a result, many conclude they can find the truth by examining the Talmud, or Mishna, both of which were written hundreds of years after Christ's ministry. Therefore, those who wrote them were obviously prejudiced by their time period and prevalent culture.

In that context, it should first be understood that the Talmud and Mishna are much like the book of Mormon or the Koran. They were written long after the Bible and depend on the existence of oral testimony which cannot be verified. Worse, they also frequently contradict, add to, or take away from the clear statements of the Bible.

It must also be remembered that the Talmud is Babylonian, and the Mishna is filled with arguments regarding the Talmud. These works were NOT written by those who returned after the captivity under the God inspired leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Babylonian Talmud was written by those who stayed in Babylon and adopted much of their culture.

By this alone, it should be obvious that these sources cannot be trusted. Consider a few outrageous inconsistencies. The Talmudic Jews required sighting the new moon, yet God never said this was to be done. They use the Babylonian names for their months. They accepted the Babylonian New Year, Tishri as the designation of the beginning of the Jewish civil year, and continue its use to this day in spite of God setting the start of the year in the spring (Exo. 12:2). All of these things are decried by God (Deut. 12:32).

Talmudic Jews wear the yarmulke like Catholics priests do today. Instead of counting beads for prayer, they count the knots in their prayer shawls. They write prayers on paper and stick them in a crack in a retaining wall known as the "wailing wall." Constructed by Herod, this wall is composed of a group of stones that have become an idol of immense size. By this alone, most arguments based on the authors of the Babylonian Talmud should NOT and must NOT be considered as trustworthy sources.

Others quote Josephus who stated that Pentecost was kept according to Pharisaic practice. It must be remembered that Josephus was a Pharisee, and speaking of the practice of his own people who had literally usurped the authority of the priestly cast that were originally appointed directly by God.

It must be understood that keeping Pentecost on the wrong day is no different to God than Jeroboam worshipping in Bethel on wrong days. The fact that the Pharisees ultimately gained control of determining the Wave Sheaf and the count to Pentecost cannot, and does not, make it right.

Further, the Pharisees formed Judaism, a religion created by men not God. Their religion is absolutely not the place to seek the truth. But, state this? The answer is that Christ Himself said that they put their tradition before God's Commandments (Mat. 15:3, 6).

That is exactly what the Pharisees did with Pentecost, and according to Christ, their teachings cannot be used as proof of God's intention for believers in the past or today. Honest, unprejudiced study of the Bible, prayer, and meditation, while consistently seeking to live like Christ as we are led by His spirit is the way God intended us to come to an understanding of the truth.

Can the Septuagint or Targums be Trusted?

Counting to Pentecost from the day after the first Day of Unleavened bread is the current Jewish observance. In part, some validate this practice by citing ancient Aramaic manuscripts, called Targums. Some of these manuscripts were written long after the Jewish works, and specifically the Septuagint.

The Septuagint also states that the count is to take place after the "first day." The first day could have originally been a reference to Sunday. However, they interpreted it to be a reference to the first Holy Day. Therefore, while these later translations might be used by Rabbinical Judaism to defend counting after the first Holy

Day, should we use these translations instead of the Masoretic text? Which translation is more authoritative?

The ancient Hebrew remained the language in which the sacred books were written, but Aramaic became the common language of the people after the exile to Babylon. As a result, the population became less familiar with the Hebrew as time went on. Thus some religious leaders felt it necessary to make an Aramaic translation.

At first these Aramaic renditions were given by word of mouth. In fact in many cases, they were simply paraphrases of the Scripture. They eventually evolved into what became known as the Targums. As Ewert, author of the book, *From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations*, writes:

This practice of paraphrasing the synagogue readings in Aramaic was begun in pre-Christian times. And by the time of Christ some of these oral paraphrases had been put into writing, called Targums (meaning translation or 'paraphrases'...) The Palestinian Targums are earlier and show greater diversity, for they were never officially edited. ...Targums ...definitive wording was established in the fifth century A.D., after a long history of development. ...the official Targum of the Pentateuch took shape in Babylonia and is called Targum Onkelos. this Aramaic version stands much closer to the text of the Hebrew Pentateuch, and dates from the third and second century A.D. The Targums range from Aramaic translations of the Hebrew text to a free retelling of the biblical narrative. Targums that have extraneous material are an important index of Jewish life and thought during the centuries when the Aramaic Targums took shape (p. 102-103).

Ewert's research reveals that the Targums were NOT meticulously translated by official scribes with strict rules for translation. As He further explains:

The Targums are translations, paraphrases, and expansions of the Hebrew text (p.104).

The Inaccuracy of the Septuagint

There are several traditions regarding the origin of the Septuagint. Ewert continues to record some examples:

There is sufficient evidence that the LXX was made in Alexandria, not by Palestinian translators, however, but by Alexandrian Jews. The Hebrew text from which they translated may well have been a parchment scroll from Jerusalem. The LXX contains not only the books of the Hebrew Bible, but it has the apocrypha as well... also, there are a number of passages in the Hebrew Bible that have been transposed in the LXX. The Psalms are hopelessly scrambled; chapter 9 and 10, and 114 and 115 appear as single units... and chapter 116 is split up. ...the translation varies greatly, from a close literal rendering of the Hebrew in some places to a very free translation in others....about A.D. 100 a kind of standard Hebrew text emerged, and it would be expected that a Greek version of the biblical books should conform more closely to this established text. In the end the rejection of the LXX by the Jews was so complete that they called it a work of Satan (p.105-107).

The most meticulous care was taken in translating the Hebrew manuscripts. Other manuscripts were copies of the Hebrew, and were often an expansion of the text, reflecting the current usage and practice during the time of their creation.

Conversely, the Masoretic texts have been copied by professionals who followed a set of elaborate and inflexible rules in their copying. In addition, they made extensive notes on any substitutions or judgment calls they felt compelled to make.

The book, *From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations* continues to state the following regarding the Hebrew text:

There are many other manuscripts, than those cited some of them quite fragmentary, but these are the most important Hebrew Codices of the O.T. in the Masoretic tradition. With the discovery of the Hebrew scrolls in the Judean desert in 1947 and following, we can now look at manuscripts a thousand years older. What is assuring, when one considers all the possibilities of transcriptional errors slipping in, is the fact that the Masoretic text is substantially the same as that of the Dead Sea Scrolls (p.105-107).

Without question, the Masoretic text is the most authoritative. It has the least errors, and is the primary manuscript upon which others are based. It is the one to which we should give most weight when determining doctrine.

In that context, what does the Masoretic text state when it comes to identifying God's Holy Days? Notice what it states regarding how they are to be observed:

These *are* the feasts of the LORD, *even* holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even *is* the LORD'S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:4-6).

After the Days of Unleavened Bread, God speaks of the Wave Sheaf. As *The Jewish Publication Society* states:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 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. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat offering thereof *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 an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD (Lev 23:10-16).

Notice that the Masoretic text states that the Wave Sheaf is the day to start the count. It is the day after the Sabbath. It does not say the day after the Passover. It does not say after the Feast Day. It does not say after the first day. If God intended the day after the first day of Unleavened Bread to be the basis for the count, He would have clearly said as much. However, He states the obvious, using the well known word, consistently used to mean the weekly Sabbath.

Further, in these instructions, God never calls the Days of Unleavened bread or Passover by the name "Sabbath." The word used in the verses above is H7673 in Strong's. It is used four times in this Masoretic translation, and is the Hebrew word "shâbath" and can only mean the weekly Sabbath.

Is the Mishna Reliable?

After the Temple era, the Pharisees continued to maintain the traditions contained in their oral law. The original tradition of Rabbinical Judaism was that the oral law was absolutely never to be written down. The object of not recording it was to prevent different interpretations from developing. Of course that is exactly what occurred. Numerous variations developed over the nearly two centuries of handing down their oral law from generation to generation.

Comments were frequently taken out of context, and numerous points came to be in serious conflict. To correct this problem, Rabbi Yehuda haNasi took up the much needed job of redacting the Mishna, and he completed the task before his death in 217 A.D. Over time, this famous Rabbi made what he believed to be appropriate corrections. He attempted to solidify statements as best he could. Ironically, as a result of his work, Rabbis have raised the Oral law to a status in which it is believed to be of more value than the Bible's written law. As the Jewish Virtual Library states:

The contents of the Mishnah are the product of an ongoing process of elaborating and explaining the foundations, the details and the significance of the Torah's commandments. This process began long before the redaction of the Mishnah, and continued throughout the talmudic period (1st to 6th centuries CE) and beyond. Nevertheless, the Mishnah has a unique place within the **rabbinic tradition**. It was the central literary document of the entire talmudic period, providing the framework for the redaction of its companion volume, the *Tosefta, and serving as the foundation for both the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0014_0_13999.html/ret-11/3/15

Imagine how hundreds of laws, orally handed down for more than two centuries, would of necessity end up

confused and terribly misquoted. However, the result was that even after the redaction by Rabbis, obvious conflicts still continued to exist—even today. For example, one Jewish man tells his personal story that reflects the truth regarding the veracity of the Mishna. He describes his protracted agonizing transition from Rabbinical Judaism to study of the Scriptures alone.

After studying the Talmud, and Mishna for years, and in spite of Rabbis threatening him by saying, “He who does not believe in the Oral Law will have no share in the world to come,” his study of the Scriptures and Mishna led him to realize that the Mishna is not a law revealed by God Himself. He found it to be no more than simply the opinions of men, and wrote the following statements regarding a few of the contradictions he found:

- 1). Rulings of some Amoraic sages are accepted while others are not. If this is so, why accept opinions of any of the Amoraic sages?
- 2). If the sages received the Oral Law through a chain going back to Moshe why not accept every Mishnaic sage?
- 3). The Mishna states that carrion is not to be cooked in milk and that means a bird cannot be cooked in milk, but Scriptures state not to cook a kid in its mother’s milk, and a bird has no milk.
- 4). The Mishna mentions Samaritans... but they were not present at Mt. Sinai when the oral Law was supposed to be given.
- 5) The Mishna talks of Hanukkah and Purim—also after the law.
- 6). Three times a day the poor were to be attended. One Rabbi states it is the minimum while another says a maximum.

7). Shammai says “wash the hands and after fill the cup.” Hillel says, “They fill the cup and then wash the hands.”

8). Shammai says, not to soak ink or paints unless they will dissolve the same day, but Hillel permits it

9). Why would morrow after the Sabbath refer the (annual) feast but the six Sabbaths and seventh not also be feasts?
(Hakham Meir Yosef Rekhavi)

Rekhavi finally came to realize that the Omer was offered just as the Scriptures state; not according to the Jewish Sages. Offering it after the Passover was based on the Mishna—the opinions of men—not Scripture. He realized that it was true that God had given the law at Sinai orally, but it was carefully written down and maintained by the priests in the Hebrew Bible.

The Mishna may be an interesting story of the development of rabbinic tradition. However, the Hebrew Biblical manuscripts were those in which the most meticulous care was taken in preservation. Other manuscripts were copies of the Hebrew, and in addition they were often an expansion of the text, reflecting the current usage and practice during the time of their creation.

Follow What God Originally Ordained

As various sects of Judaism arose, each argued over this issue of when to offer the Wave Sheaf. As a result, in our modern age, various ministers continue the controversy attempting to prove who was in control of the temple during Christ’s time.

However, the truth is that it does not matter what scholars or theologians argue or claim to prove. The fact that God personally used Ezra and Nehemiah to set up His government and the priesthood upon returning from Babylon is crucial to this issue.

These faithful men established the priestly line in which it was required that the Levites be descended by a genealogical record in order to prove their right to serve. Only they could hold the position of priest (Neh. 12:1-27). Only they could proclaim God's Holy Days. As Hack writes:

The Levitical priesthood was a close corporation. No man not born a priest could become a priest. More and more, as the interests of the nation widened and deepened, the priesthood failed to keep pace (<http://larocheusa.org/whowerethe.htm/ret./8/21-05>).

It is apparent that those who were keeping Pentecost in Nehemiah's day were keeping what was originally restored. Later the Pharisees influenced temple worship, but they were never part of the priestly line. This fact tells its own story, and it is one of the corruption men have brought to what was once God given. The Pharisees took it upon themselves to change what had previously existed! However, there is an important truth that all Christians need to understand regarding the various historical Jewish sources.

Those who were keeping Pentecost in Nehemiah's day were keeping what was restored as God inspired the leadership in order to fulfill His prophecies (Ezra 3:5). In that context, as Neh. 10:37 states, it was the priests who were to offer His firstfruits as Leviticus 23 states. The wave-sheaf was specifically included in this instruction (Strong's H7225).

Later the Pharisees did exercise considerable influence, but they were never part of the priestly line. This fact makes an enormous truth crystal clear. The Pharisees took it upon themselves to change what had previously existed! This fact alone tells its own story—a story of the changes men have brought to what was originally God given. We cannot trust the Jewish religious community, or

any man, to guide us in worship. In regard to the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ said:

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Mark 7:7).

The Messianic Movement

In these latter years, a Messianic movement developed adopting Pharisaic practices. At first this group was begun by Protestants who recognized that Christ was Jewish, and that the Jews were part of God's chosen people.

As a result, rather than reject Judaism as a man-made religion that was hostile to Christ, they believed that since Christ was a Jew, we should look more deeply into their religion for truth. Ironically Christ may have been born a Jew, but the truth was that He was the Son of God and almost always found Himself in conflict with the Jewish leadership, their standards, and views.

At first this movement attracted many who professed Christ, but also held numerous Catholic or Protestant tenants such as the Trinity, Christmas, and Easter. However, as they learned more about the practices and culture of Jewish life, they discovered the truth regarding the pagan holidays, God's Sabbath, and His Holy Days.

However, when it came to the issue of Pentecost, in this age, there were no priests to be found. The temple had been destroyed in 70 A.D., and the priestly line of the Sadducees scattered after the destruction of the Temple. Therefore, without the temple to provide legitimacy, the more popular Pharisaic movement became the source most people turned to for answers regarding the Jewish people and their religion. As a result, many simply believed the teaching of the Pharisees. Thus, most people automatically accepted that the Wave Sheaf fell after the first feast day of Unleavened Bread.

Although the Karaite movement existed, and taught the truth on this subject, their group was small and exerted little influence. Thus, with only modest research, the greater number of messianic simply accepted the mistaken Pharisaic method of counting Pentecost—a method true Christians should avoid.

A Master Sabbath

Another mistake regarding Pentecost is being advanced by a minister who states that in Luke six, the term Pentecost is identified as a superior or “master” Sabbath. By this, he concluded that the disciples eating grain as they passed through the field did not occur on a weekly Sabbath, but on Pentecost itself. Notice Luke’s words:

Now it happened on the **second sabbath after the first** that he went through the grainfields. and his disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them*, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them, "why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath?" (Luke 6:1-2).

This minister teaches that the second Sabbath after the first means that the first Sabbath was a “master” Sabbath, and therefore these words indicate that it was the Second Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. However that is not what these verses are telling us at all. A day of unleavened bread is not called “the Sabbath” in the Scriptures.

Next, consider the terms “second Sabbath.” The word “second” is “deuteroprōtos.” Strong’s states the simple truth:

G1207 from G1208 and G4413; *second first*, that is, (specifically) a designation of the Sabbath immediately after the paschal week (being the *second* after Passover day, and the **first of the seven Sabbaths** intervening before Pentecost): - second . . . after the first.

Strong's understands that the term is referring to the weekly Sabbath, but follows the modern Pharisee's count, and mistakes exactly which Sabbath. The word "second," is telling readers that the day was the second Sabbath taking place after the one which occurred during the days of Unleavened Bread and started the count to Pentecost.

As will be more fully demonstrated later, this is further evidence that it was the weekly Sabbath during the days of Unleavened Bread that initiates the count to Pentecost. The second term also verifies this. It is simply the term "first." strong's defines this word as:

G4521 "sabbaton" of Hebrew origin [h7676]; the *sabbath* (that is, *shabbath*), or day of weekly *repose* from secular avocations (also the observance or institution itself); by extension a *se'nnight*, that is, the interval between two sabbaths; likewise the plural in all the above applications: - sabbath (day), week.

By simple definition, it is obvious that God identified which Sabbath the disciples ate the grain. It was the second in the count after the first that took place on the wave sheaf offering. Luke is counting Sabbaths as they move toward the observance of Pentecost.

The gospel writer is certainly not mentioning the last day of Unleavened Bread. If he meant the Feast, he would have plainly said so rather than being cryptic. In both cases it is speaking of the weekly Sabbath. It is the second Sabbath after the first one which had occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

In Matthew's account which day it is becomes clear. Christ was teaching the people in chapter 11. Then in chapter 12, Matthew states the following:

At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn,

and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day (Matthew 12:1-2).

Notice that the term “Sabbath” is the same exact word Leviticus uses to define which Sabbath the wave sheaf is offered. It is Sabbaton—from (H7676)—it is the weekly Sabbath, and the reason the Pharisees accused Christ’s disciples of doing what was unlawful was because they were gleaning, an act considered to be work, and disallowed on the weekly Sabbath. Gleaning was to be done on the preparation day.

On the other hand, if it were the last Day of Unleavened Bread, the Pharisees would have known that worshippers could do work necessary to prepare food on a Holy Day (Exo. 12:16).

Moreover, Christ and the disciples would not be traveling because the command states that the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a pilgrimage feast—a commanded assembly in which all males were to assemble in Jerusalem and not a local Synagogue where Christ and His disciples were actually headed.

This alone should make it clear that Christ and His disciples were not celebrating Pentecost. Further, Luke is not stating that a particular Sabbath was a “master Sabbath. The evidence points to the fact that it was a weekly Sabbath.

Again notice Matthew’s account of this same event. After this incident, Christ left the field and continued on his way to a local synagogue:

And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue (Mathew 12:9).

If this Sabbath was the annual Feast, people would not be in the synagogue. They would be at the pilgrimage feast in which the people traveled to the temple in Jerusalem.

In Luke's account, the gospel writer reveals yet another reason to believe this incident occurred on the count of Sabbaths to the observance of Pentecost. Notice the very next verse that follows the eating of the grain on the Sabbath:

And he said to them, "the son of man is also lord of the sabbath." (Luke 6:5).

Here Christ uses the term meaning the weekly Sabbath. Next, notice the verse that comes immediately afterward. As Luke wrote:

Now it happened **on another Sabbath**, also, that he entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered (Luke 6:6)

Notice that Luke mentions that the following week was "another" weekly Sabbath. The fact that Luke states "another Sabbath" is evidence that they were counting Sabbaths just as God commanded.

In other words, this verse states two things. First, it links this next Sabbath as being like the previous one. Thus, they were both weekly Sabbaths.

Second, the reason it speaks of the next, or another Sabbath, demonstrates the fact that Luke is counting Sabbaths. This final reference was designating the second Sabbath in the count to Pentecost. The concept of a Master Sabbath is a master misunderstanding.

Counting Pentecost When Passover occurs on Sabbath

Ten to eleven times a century, the Passover falls on the weekly Sabbath. ¹When this rare event takes place, the "morrow after the Sabbath" is the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Subsequently, the last Holy Day falls on a Sabbath.

In such a case, there is no weekly Sabbath that falls between the two high holy days. How should the count to Pentecost start when this scenario occurs?

Some advance the belief that when the Passover occurs on a Sabbath, the count must start on the day after the last holy day. However, there are several reasons why this should not be the case.

First, when this issue originally came up in 1974, The Church of God council of elders ruled on it much like the council in Acts 15. At that time, the judgment was that the Scriptures always require us to count from the day after the weekly Sabbath.

Thus, in this case, we should count from the **Sunday** that falls within the Days of Unleavened Bread. Notice that this is exactly what the Scriptures command:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 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... And ye shall count unto you from the **morrow after the sabbath**, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the **morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days**; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD (Leviticus 23:10-16).

Because the Biblical command is to count from the "morrow after the Sabbath," the Scriptures tell us that the target day for beginning the count is the day after the Sabbath. The count starts **Sunday** not on the Sabbath during these days.

Those who choose to count from the Sunday after the Last Day of Unleavened Bread do so because their focus is on the weekly Sabbath associated with the Days of Unleavened Bread. It becomes their determining factor

instead of the day the Bible focuses on, which is "the morrow after," or Sunday.

Thus, the day that is of importance is actually the day the sheaf is waved. It is the first Sunday during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In this unique case, it would be the First day of Unleavened Bread.

A second point to consider is that the Passover is a part of these holy days. It is included in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As F.F. Bruce writes:

In general, the Jewish calendar in NT times (at least before AD 70) followed the Sadducean reckoning, since it was by that reckoning that the Temple services were regulated. Thus the day of Pentecost was reckoned as the fiftieth day after the presentation of the first harvested sheaf of barley, *i.e.*, the fiftieth day (inclusive) **from the first Sunday after Passover** (*cf.* Lv. 23:15f.); hence it always fell on a Sunday, as it does in the Christian calendar (P. 225; Article Pentecost).

In his article, Bruce strongly points out that it was the first Sunday after Passover that began the count. This can be an appropriate description because the Days of Unleavened Bread are also called "Passover" in Scripture. Therefore, the Passover is always included as a part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Notice these examples:

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called **the Passover** (Luke 22:1)

Now the first *day* of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the **passover**? (Matthew 26:17)

In the first *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the **passover**, a feast of

seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten (Ezekiel 45:21).

Thou shalt therefore sacrifice **the passover** unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction... (Deuteronomy 16:2-3).

The Passover is a day of unleavened bread, and is an intrinsic part of counting during these days. That means that we are to begin our count from the morrow after the Sabbath that falls between Passover and the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, not outside these days.

A third point is that the count has historically begun with the Sunday that fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Both the Sadducees and Pharisees have always understood that the count began during these days—never after.

Consider that if we were to use the Last Day of Unleavened Bread to determine our count, Wave Sheaf Sunday would occur after the Days of Unleavened Bread ended. The Jews and all Biblical Encyclopedias, Dictionaries and Commentaries state that this never occurred in all history.

A fourth reason to begin the count on the first holy day when Passover falls on the Sabbath is that this is in harmony with the sequence of events that picture God's plan. The Passover pictures the sacrifice of Christ. The wave sheaf pictures Christ being resurrected and ascending to be accepted by the Father and then serving as our High Priest. By His ascension, He also lives in us through the power of the Holy Spirit prompting us to put sin out of our lives.

Thus, the wave sheaf must occur before the Days of Unleavened Bread have ended. If it were to occur after the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, the symbolism would make

no sense. Such a scenario would picture us accepting Christ as our sacrifice, putting away sin throughout an entire lifetime, and then afterward, Christ would be raised and accepted by the Father as our High priest to help us—but only after the entire plan was complete. The concept of taking unleavened bread seven days, and then Christ ascending to the Father to be our high priest makes the symbolism of these days backward.

A final reason not to count outside the days is that Christ's resurrection took place at the end of the Sabbath. Therefore, His ascension to the Father, which is what the Wave Sheaf represents, actually fell on a **Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread**. Christ is our example to follow, and therefore, we too should count from the morrow after the Sabbath that occurs during these days.

For these reasons, the wave sheaf must fall before the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. And our count to Pentecost must always begin on the Sunday within the Days of Unleavened Bread.

A Monday Pentecost

At one time, the Church of God believed that Pentecost should always fall on a Monday. This was believed because the Scriptures said to count **from** the day after the Sabbath.

At that time, it was thought the word “from” meant that the count was “away from” the morrow after the Sabbath. This thinking placed Monday as the first day. Using this method, Pentecost would always be celebrated on Monday. However, this is easily disproved by a careful reading of the Scriptures. For example, it is written:

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread **from** the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel (Exodus 12:15).

In this case, most would agree that unleavened bread is to be eaten the first day through to the seventh day—not after it. The first day and seven are both included. Therefore, the context dictates that the phrase to count “from” is inclusive.

For example, if we were to say that we went to High School from the 10th grade to the 12th, we would include the 10th grade through the 12th grade—10, 11, 12. In another example, the general work week is five days. It is Monday through Friday. Both Monday and Friday are counted. So, in like manner we are to count from the morrow after the first Sabbath to the Seventh Sabbath. Counting from the First Sabbath to the last Sabbath is 49 days, and must include the first Sabbath and the last. As Moses wrote:

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

This simply means that the count always includes the beginning day and the ending day. The count includes the first Sunday to the final Saturday, and then Pentecost is celebrated the following day, the 50th day—Sunday.

The Need to be Right

Those who once believed that Pentecost had to occur on a Monday finally came to admit it. Indeed, the count was intended to be inclusive.

However, they still believed God had inspired them, and therefore that they were correct. However, they needed a way to justify observing Pentecost on Monday.

They found their answer in the statement that the day had “fully come.” They began to teach that in order to fully come, the 50th day had to be completely filled up and over so that the 51st day was celebrated. Thus, they admitted being wrong on counting exclusively, but

announced they were still right because the 51st day—Monday was actually to be observed.

There are several reasons why this could not be the case. Scripture does not say the count of 50 was completely over, or 50 days had passed. The natural reading is that the 50th day had fully arrived. God's Word clearly states that Pentecost is celebrated the day **after** counting seven Sabbaths or 49 days. Hence, the Scriptures never mention 51 days.

Additionally, the actual meaning of the words used in these verses shows that the day of Pentecost was in the process of being observed. The word for "fully come" is (G4845) in Strong's. It is *sumpleroo* and means "implenish completely." It is a reference to the count of seven Sabbaths having been completely fulfilled.

Sumpleroo comes from two roots. The first is (G4862), the word "sum" in Greek. It means union, with, or together. The second root is (G4137), *pleroo* which can mean to coincide with, execute, or accomplish. This word can also mean also to satisfy, finish or fulfill.

Putting these two roots together indicates that the day of Pentecost was together with, or coincided with the day they were celebrating. Simply put, they were in the process of celebrating Pentecost. The day they were celebrating coincided with Pentecost. They were executing or accomplishing the day. They were fully in the fiftieth day.

The Interlinear Bible coded with the Strong's numbers gives a literal translation of each word. This literal Bible translates the verse as, "and in the fulfilling of the day of Pentecost." Thus, the authors understood the word to be translated as "fulfilling" or "in the process" of Pentecost, and cannot possibly refer to being after the fifty days.

In another instance, the volumes entitled *26 Translations* the authors show every translation existing at that time which differed from the King James. Out of 26 translations there are only 3 that differ from the King James. These three translate the term as follows:

(1). “In the course of the harvest thanksgiving-day.” TCNT

(2). “On the day of the harvest festival.” GSPD

(3). “While the day of Pentecost was running its course.” NEB

All of these translations show that the 50th day is the day of Pentecost—not the day after 50 days are over. Further, in other places where this same word is used, it does not refer to something being completed and over. For example, this word is used in only two other places in the Bible. The first of these is Luke 8 which states:

But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were **filled** *with water*, and were in jeopardy (Luke 8:23).

In this case, the term must mean that the boat was "in the process" of being filled. It was filling with water, it was in jeopardy, but not completely full. If the word meant completely filled, then the boat would have already sunk!

The second place this word is used is also in Luke. There the gospel writer states:

And it came to pass, when the **time was come** that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).

This refers to the time Christ would be taken to be crucified. Obviously the phrase, “the time had come,” did not mean that it had come and was over. This statement is saying that the time had come, “sumpleroo,” that Christ should be received up. Many days would pass before He was actually crucified. In other words, Christ was fully in His last days.

If we apply this word as the Monday Pentecost believers do, then the time Christ would be received up would have already occurred, been fully completed, and over. He would have already been crucified, resurrected, and ascended to heaven. Obviously this is not the case, and therefore, the Scriptures nowhere indicate a Monday Pentecost.

Instead the verse makes perfect sense to understand *sumpleroo*, just as the scholars agree, and the way in which it is used in the two other places in the Bible. The time had come for Christ to be received up so He was in the process that would lead to that event. His course was set to go to Jerusalem where He would eventually be killed, resurrected, and ascend to the Father.

The Witness of Scholars

The account in Acts is no different than these cases. The time to celebrate Pentecost had fully come. They were in the process of celebrating it. As *Vines Dictionary* states:

sumpleroo 4845, to fill completely is used in the passive voice (a) of a boat filling with water, and (b) of fulfilling, with regard to time, 'when the days were well-nigh come,' when the time was come,' were being fulfilled.

The only way Vines sees this word is in the context of the incident being in process, not filled up, past, and now into the next day. In fact, this is the only way any authorities have ever understood this word. It simply means they had counted to fifty and the day had finally come.

The apostles were celebrating Pentecost which was the day after 49 days. The 50th day had arrived. Remember it was Pentecost that had fully come. That can only mean the 50th day had come. They were fully in the 50th day. As the Companion Bible writes:

“The day being completed: The Syriac and Vulgate read 'days'. This refers to the

completion of the seven weeks. (fifty days inclusive) from the waving of the Sheaf of Firstfruits..."

The Companion Bible also explains that this term does not mean that the 50th day was completed. Rather, it shows that the translation should properly read the days being fully completed, meaning that the count of all 50 days was completed. They had counted seven weeks, and the next day, the 50th day had fully come.

The Example of the Jubilee

God uses the same method when counting the Jubilee, but instead of weeks or days, God says to number years. Notice the account given by Moses:

And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the **seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.** then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth [day] of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land and **ye shall hallow the fiftieth year,** and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family (Leviticus 25:8-10).

Note the method of counting the Jubilee. It began on the Day of Atonement. Forty nine years were to be counted including the year beginning on the Day of Atonement.

The 49th year is included in the count, and the beginning of the fiftieth year on Atonement is the Jubilee. This is the exact pattern God uses for counting Pentecost. The 50th year is celebrated—not the 51st year!

The Jubilee is an example that helps us understand how God intends for us to count Pentecost. The count to Pentecost starts the first day—Sunday. Seven weeks are counted to the 49th day, then, the next day, the fiftieth day, is Pentecost. It is as the Encyclopedia Britannica explains:

Here we must bear in mind that Hebrew numeration always includes the day which is the "terminus a quo" as well as that which is "term. ad quem" (Encyclopedia Britannica 11th edition, Vol. 21-22v p. 123).

Simply stated, the encyclopedia is stating that in Hebrew, the start day is included as well as the end date. Thus, when counting Pentecost, the start date is Sunday, and the end date is the fiftieth day—Sunday.

The Witness of History

Generally, the Church of God does not look to human practice to determine God's doctrine on a subject. In the case of the Pentecost issue however, there is legitimate reason to do so.

That is because, there is absolutely no record of any group of Jews, Samaritans, or Christians keeping a Monday Pentecost prior to 1930.

Further the individual who first taught that Pentecost took place on a Monday changed when he found he was wrong. He openly admitted it publically. Only those who left his organization predicated on the belief of celebrating the 51st day have continued to propagate it.

Joshua Five and the Wave Sheaf

When Israel entered the Promised Land, they did so on the 10th day of the month. This was the day that the Passover lamb was to be chosen (Jos 4:19).

On that same day, those who had not been circumcised during their forty years of wandering underwent the historic covenant procedure. Afterward, God

made it clear that these Israelite men were now acceptable to Him and could partake of the Passover:

And the lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal ["rolling"] unto this day. 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 (Joshua 5:9-10).

When Joshua states that the children of Israel kept the Passover "on the fourteenth day of the month," he is obviously referring to the same month. Thus, Israel observed the Passover, killing the lambs after sunset at the beginning of the fourteenth day of Abib. The following day, the fifteenth day, marked the beginning of the feast of Unleavened Bread. Notice Joshua's statement:

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 (Joshua 5:11-12).

Because the children of Israel ate unleavened bread from the old store abandoned by the inhabitants of the land, some believe this indicates that the wave sheaf had been offered prior to eating the stored harvest. Further, they believe this proves that the Passover occurred on a Sabbath that year. However, this does not actually prove there was a wave sheaf that year. Consider a number of reasons.

First of all, the terms "wave sheaf" are never mentioned in this account. This is a major indicator. The crossing of Jordan is mentioned. The Passover is mentioned, but the Wave Sheaf that was to be taken to the priest and offered by each land owner is never mentioned.

This is a strong sign that the Wave Sheaf was not yet offered.

Second, the new corn from their personal harvest could be eaten after the wave sheaf was offered. However, Israel ate the old corn the next day. This again points to the fact that the wave sheaf had not yet been offered (Lev. 23:19-14).

Third, it is ludicrous to consider that the priest was to wave a sheaf of grain from gentiles who prayed to false gods for their crop and offered from it to their gods. Consider that God's people were not to eat foods offered to idols (Acts 15:20).

Would God accept a gift of crops offered to idols? Their offerings were given to devils, and Paul says to have nothing to do with devils (I Cor. 10:20). The Gentile's spiritually polluted crop would not be offered to God any more than the golden calf was accepted by God. He had told the people the exact opposite. They were NOT to worship Him by the means, or with the items the pagans used in the worship of their gods (Deu. 12:28-32).

Fourth, on another level, honestly consider! Is there any way that God would accept old stored grain to represent the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and He being freshly cut off from the earth and raised up by the Father? (Leviticus 23:10-11). Of course not!

Fifth, the Israelites ate of the old store of corn. This word corn is strong's number, H5669 'âbûr, the same as H5668, meaning *passed*, that is, *kept* over; used only of *stored* grain: - old corn. As such there could be no first fruit sheaf. This was barely from the previous year's harvest, not from the grain growing that year.

Sixth, the Wave Sheaf was to come from the Israelite harvest that would take place in the land God would give them—not the harvest of pagans:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 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 (Leviticus 23:10).

This command is similar to that of Exodus 23:16 in which God speaks of the next harvest, Pentecost. The verse shows that it was certainly to be harvested from what the Israelites planted, not from their spoils of war. However, until all the land was completely taken, Israel could not plant and harvest as usual. They did what any invading army does. They ate of the spoils of war.

Seventh, notice that God did not stop giving the manna on the 15th the first day of unleavened bread when many believe the wave sheaf was offered. He stopped the manna, the day after they ate of the old store:

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*** (Joshua 5:11-12).

Thus, while some may have raided neighboring farms and eaten their old store, others could eat manna on the Feast Day. This would be totally out of the context of the command regarding the Wave Sheaf offering which was originally to be offered by each land owner, and individually offered by the priest on the individual's behalf (Lev. 23:10-11).

Eighth, what the people did on the day they ate the old store had nothing to do with the Wave Sheaf. There had never been an opportunity to single out and tie off the first fruits of the pagan's harvest. Thus, there were no first fruits with which to make an offering. The Israelites only had access to the previous harvest. Therefore, Joshua five cannot be used to prove that the Passover fell on a Sabbath

that year. It simply proves that the people kept the Passover, and days of Unleavened Bread—nothing else.