

NEWS WATCH FOR the CHURCH OF GOD

News in the world and church — to give warning and help for God's people — by Ron Weiland

May 1999

COUNTING PENTECOST

Only 12 years ago, people might have concluded that there were nearly 95,000 brethren who could be included as a part of the count for Pentecost. The Church has the blessing of being a part of the count of firstfruits. Many have already died and await their resurrection as the firstfruits of God.

But the number of faithful brethren has diminished dramatically over the past 12 years. How many of those 95,000 are currently holding to the testimony of Jesus Christ and keeping the commandments of God? The number isn't as large as you might think, and each year it gets smaller.

Over the past decade more than a third of the brethren have simply given up the way of life God delivered to them. In the continuing trend of the Worldwide Church of God, with many of her congregations and brethren moving back to traditional Christianity, well over another third of the Church has returned to spiritual Egypt.

The most optimistic scenario would leave around 30,000 who might be considered to be a part of the count for Pentecost. But sad to say, the actual number is far smaller. What remains in the scattered churches reveals that many brethren continue to move away from the commandments of God. As they do, they move away from the potential of being in that firstfruit count!

One of the greatest needs in God's Church today is for brethren to examine their lives more closely, putting themselves to the test to see if they are truly walking in the faith once delivered. *"Examine yourselves [Greek: to prove in either a good or bad sense, put to the test] as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves [Greek: examine, investigate]. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified"* (2 Corinthians 13:5, NKJ). The wording of the Phillips translation is sobering: *"You should be looking at yourselves to make sure that you are really Christ's. It is yourselves that you should be testing. You ought to know by this time that Christ Jesus is in you, unless you are not real Christians."*

Increasing numbers of brethren are returning to the spiritual idolatry of the late

80s and early 90s. The result is a watering down of God's Word and the gradual acceptance of false ideas. This is a movement away from God and must be repented of in order to get back on a right track. Too many fail to see that spiritual idolatry and watering down of God's Word is sin.

There is a powerful current within the scattered Church to move brethren away from the faith once delivered. From the beginning, God placed into our minds certain understanding of His plan, and the Sabbath and holy days that reveal that plan.

The WCG began discarding basic understanding about Passover and began to move toward the more traditional Communion. Thankfully, many have been incensed and enraged by such audacity and presumptuousness. Yet how many are incensed by those who seek to move observance of Passover from the night of the 14th to the afternoon of the 14th or evening of the 15th? How many are startled by the large numbers of scattered ministers in the large organizations and in many scattered groups that teach the Passover of the Old Testament was on the 15th instead of the 14th. The next issue of *News Watch* will examine this problem more closely and show just how serious such actions are.

There is also another movement under way to turn brethren away from the correct observance of Pentecost. Teachings that distort and falsify the truths that have been revealed to us are turning brethren away from God and moving them toward sin. These matters are fundamental to our relationship with God and have everything to do with keeping His commandments and holding to the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Some of our church history should sober us to understand what it means to move away from God by not holding to basic truths that He has revealed to us about the Passover and other holy days.

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful,

and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent'" (Revelation 3:1-3, NKJ).

It would be ever so wise to remember those words today. It is not hard to deceive ourselves into believing that since we are called by the name of the Church of God we must therefore be alive spiritually. God told the Sardis Church that overall it was dead; only a few had not defiled their garments. Herbert W. Armstrong left the Church of God (Seventh Day) because they refused the holy days. It is deadly to move away from true understanding about the Passover and holy days.

Reflecting on the condition of the Church today and the numbers of people who are turning away from God because of spiritual idolatry and moving away from truth regarding the Passover and the holy days, the figure of 30,000 brethren may well be far too optimistic. Much repentance is in order for God's Church. Are you willing to gamble that your spiritual life and that the life of the Church are not in such a perilous condition today?

PENTECOST UNDER ATTACK

A movement that is gaining momentum in scattered areas has to do with the proper timing of Pentecost. When do you observe Pentecost, and why? Are you firmly grounded in what is true or are you prey for those who would wish to convince you of some other way?

When was the last time you heard a sermon about the wave sheaf that was offered up during the Days of Unleavened Bread? Is the story of Jesus Christ as our wave sheaf inspiring and meaningful to you? Or have we already started to lose some of the meaning and importance of the beginning of God's harvest? How important is it to you to be among the firstfruits, to be in the count of Pentecost? Perhaps it is time to revisit this subject that some are now attacking and prove where you stand.

GOD'S DELIVERANCE

The story of the Exodus is one of the greatest events in the history of Israel. Even Hollywood has profited from it by portraying this account in the movie *The Ten Commandments*. When looking back on this story, people will often think about the plagues in Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea and the manna God gave the Israelites during their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. But do people know the rest of this story?

There is another great event that is rarely spoken of, but it was immensely important to the Israelites. God promised to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Perhaps the rest of the story doesn't have the kind of Hollywood drama that plagues and the parting of a sea provide, but when the Israelites finally came to the Promised Land, this too was a most notable and exciting part of their history. The promises of deliverance that God gave to Israel included bringing them into the Promised Land.

God intended that this time of deliverance should be magnified in their minds as the awesome occasion it truly was. "And Joshua said to the people, 'Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among

you'" (Joshua 3:5, NKJ).

"And the LORD said to Joshua, 'This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you'"(verse 7).

"And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap" (verse 13). The Living Bible gives a clearer account of the waters being held upstream: "The river will stop flowing as though held back by a dam, and will pile up as though against an invisible wall!"

This miracle unfolded during the harvest season. "And as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the

people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan" (verses 15-17).

"Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, 'Come up from the Jordan.' And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before" (Joshua 4:17-18, NKJ).

God wanted the Israelites to understand the importance of this time in their history. It was important for them and it is important for us. We, too, need to recognize the magnitude of this historic occasion. There are too many people in the scattered Church who do not grasp the depth of this event and some deny its significance because of the beliefs they embrace concerning the wave sheaf and Pentecost.

Notice again how important this was to God when He brought the Israelites out of the

<u>STRONG'S</u>	<u>BASIC WORD IN HEBREW</u>	<u>VARIATIONS OF THE SAME STRONG'S NUMBER</u>			
		<u>"to the"</u>	<u>"unto"</u>	<u>"at"</u>	<u>"two" or plural</u>
#6153	ערב even or evening	מערב to the even	עד-ערב unto even	בערב at even	הערבים "evenings" or "two evenings"
#3117	יום day	מיום to the day			
#4283	מחרת morrow	ממחרת to the morrow			
#5669	עבור produce, yield	מעבור to the produce, to the yield			
#8393	תבואה increase, gain, yield	מתבואת to the increase, to the yield			

wilderness and into the Promised Land. "And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: 'When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land; for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.'" (verses 20-24).

The WAVE SHEAF

The story of Joshua holds information that is important to accurately counting Pentecost. We have just read about one of the most historic occasions for the people of Israel, but there is yet more to the story. Their crossing over the Jordan on dry ground, at a time when it was flooding its banks, was a miracle God wanted all to see in order to commemorate their deliverance into the promised land. The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. This was a most significant event. But there are brethren who unwittingly deny the significance of this great event by their beliefs related to the counting of Pentecost.

God gave very specific instruction to the Israelites concerning the time when He would deliver them into the Promised Land. That instruction is found in Leviticus 23 where He revealed knowledge about the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.

The wave sheaf, included as part of that knowledge and instruction, was symbolic of Jesus Christ being offered up before God for all of us. The waving of this sheaf was to be carried out during the Days of Unleavened Bread, symbolizing that our Savior was unleavened. The firstfruits of God's plan which follow Jesus Christ are pictured in Pentecost by the two leavened loaves that are waved before God to be accepted by Him. This symbolizes our being received by God after our deliverance from leaven, from the spiritual Egypt of sin. (For more on this subject you may request the sermon titled "The Wave Sheaf of Unleavened Bread.")

"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 [Hebrew: beginning] of your harvest unto the priest" (Leviticus 23:10, KJV). The children of Israel were plainly told that when they came into the land God was giving to them they should do very specific things. In this case, they were to bring a sheaf of the beginning of their harvest to 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" (verse 11). This sheaf was to be offered up before God on the day following the weekly Sabbath, the first day of the week..

As we will see later, the wave sheaf was focal to the timing for counting Pentecost. This sheaf was not waved before God every year on the day following the annual Sabbath on the first day of Unleavened Bread. If that were so, then the yearly observance of Pentecost would be the fixed date of Sivan 6 and there would be no need to count. The instruction becomes quite specific regarding a count that centers around the weekly Sabbath and not on the yearly Sabbath.

A REVIEW OF PASSOVER

Although one does not have to know the Hebrew language in order to learn to count Pentecost, a little understanding adds tremendous inspiration to God's instruction, which is found in Leviticus. For those who have studied the issue of *News Watch* about Passover, this review will be very helpful. If you have not studied that issue, this information will prove to be very enlightening and valuable.

Those who argue that the Old Testament Passover was on the 15th should be put to shame when they come to understand how they have misused scriptures, especially because of lacking just a little understanding of the Hebrew language. The chart on page 2 will help you to delve more deeply into this subject.

To study more deeply into the meaning of words, many people like to use Strong's Concordance. If they do so on the subject of Passover, they are going to be led astray in some scriptures. If a person doing such a study on Passover looks up the words for "even" or "evening" in regard to the 14th of Abib, he will find a reference to number 6153 but they will never know from that number that there are several variations of this word used in scripture. The chart on page 2 gives

some examples of how this occurs in Hebrew.

A good example of this variation is found in the instruction concerning the Day of Atonement. We know when we should observe Atonement. "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement" (Leviticus 23:27, KJV). There is another verse that becomes even more specific; a little understanding of Hebrew shows just how specific it is.

"It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at evening, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" (Leviticus 23:32, KJV). This is additional instruction for observing Atonement. All three of these words for "even" are listed as number 6153 in Strong's, but each is different from the others.

Notice this verse again. "It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even [בערב, 6153], from even [מערב, 6153] unto even [ער-ערב, 6153] shall ye celebrate your sabbath."

As explained in the *News Watch* issue on Passover, "at even" is correctly translated and has a very specific meaning. It is "at" the very moment of sundown, when the rays of the sun can no longer be seen. It is "at" that very moment that a day ends. Sundown can only happen once in a day, "at" the very end of that day. So when we are told to observe Atonement "at even" on the 9th day, it is "at" the very moment of sundown on that day, "at" its very end. God's instruction to us is very specific.

The next word is also very specific, even more specific than we explained in the Passover issue. The instruction for Atonement goes on to say "from even," but it is more specific. As the chart on page 2 shows, that word is "to the even" and means to the very moment of even that was just mentioned, which was "at even" or at sundown. We are being told that "to that very moment," "at sundown," you are to begin observing Atonement.

The third word means exactly what it says. "Unto even" does not occur again until the end of the 10th day. God tells us that we are to begin to observe Atonement to the very moment "at sundown" on the 9th, until the even comes again, at the end of the 10th. Atonement is observed between two evenings, one at the end of the 9th and the

other at the end of the 10th. This verse says that on the 9th day of the month from the very moment of sundown, until the next "even" at the end of the 10th, we are to observe Atonement.

When we understand how the variations of these Hebrew words can change the entire meaning of what is being said, then we are able to see more clearly how people become so tangled in terminology. Such understanding will help us spot error more easily. Just like the material presented in the issue of *News Watch* covering the subject of Passover, understanding some basic variations to words in Hebrew can eliminate much misunderstanding.

One example of God's Word being so plain and easy to understand is found in a very basic instruction for observing Passover. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover" (Leviticus 23:5, KJV). The word for "even" in this verse has been widely misunderstood. If you look up this word in Strong's concordance, you will find a reference to number 6153. This is quite misleading, because there are two words here in the Hebrew. The first word is "between" [בֵּין]. The second word (chart on page 2) is "evenings" or "two evenings" [הָעֶרְבַּיִם]. Just as with the clear and specific instruction for keeping Atonement, we are being told that Passover is on the 14th day of the first month "between the evenings" or "between the two evenings." What could be simpler? This is the same way we observe a weekly Sabbath or feast day: between the two evenings that make a complete day. We generally recognize it as being between two periods of sundown that identify one full day.

GOD'S INSTRUCTION CONTINUES

Now that we have had a quick look at how a single word in Hebrew may have several variations, we need to continue our discussion of Pentecost. We were reading God's instruction about what the Israelites were to do when they entered the Promised Land.

"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 [Hebrew: beginning] 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" (Leviticus 23:10-11, KJV).

The words "on the morrow after" in verse 11 are a translation of one Hebrew word [מִמָּחָרָה], as can be seen on the chart on page 2. "Morrow" simply means "the day after" or "the next day." However, the addition of one Hebrew letter alters the meaning, making it very specific in its context. It now means "to the morrow."

They were being told that the priest shall wave the sheaf before the Lord "to the morrow" of the Sabbath. "To the morrow" of the weekly Sabbath is always the first day of the week. "To the day after" or "to the next day" of the weekly Sabbath is very direct instruction.

Notice what else they were to do on the same day the wave sheaf was offered, the first day of the week. "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 savor; and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, a fourth part of a 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" (Leviticus 23:12-14, KJV).

When the children of Israel came into the Promised Land, they were to bring a sheaf from the beginning of the harvest and present it to the priest. This instruction **can only be applied** during the Days of Unleavened Bread. They were also to make a special offering to God after the wave sheaf had been offered.

It is also important that we do not read anything into these verses. Many things that have been accepted by commentators and historians as factual are actually a matter of Jewish tradition. A case in point is what these verses say concerning the produce of the land. They were not told they could not begin harvest before the wave sheaf, rather that they were **not to eat** of the produce of the land until the wave sheaf had been offered and they had made this special offering to God.

Let's look a little more closely at the instruction in verse 14: "And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn [roasted grain], nor green ears [garden growth (fresh)], 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. They were not to eat of any produce from the land until they had made their offering to God. The bread being spoken of was not that which could be made from manna, because they had been doing so for 40 years. They could not use the new grain of the land for their bread until this time. This instruction from God had to do with what the land was producing new in that year. Parched corn or roasted grain is not made from the old dried-up grain of the previous year. The grain used to make roasted grain was new and not dried out. Green ears or garden produce also referred to that which the land was newly producing.

THE FULFILLMENT

Now let's look at the beginning of the fulfillment of these instructions from God, concerning the time when they were to come into the Promised Land. The first verse we will read has caused some people difficulty because of the statement made about Passover.

"And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening [בֵּעֶרֶב] in the plains of Jericho" (Joshua 5:10, KJV). The word "at even" [בֵּעֶרֶב] was discussed earlier concerning the proper observance of Atonement; that instruction was very specific. This verse is not instruction for when to observe Passover; it does not "look forward" to when we are to keep Passover. Some try to use this verse to say it is instruction for keeping Passover on the 15th, since the word "at even" is used, which means a point at the very end of a day. We were told earlier to begin observing Atonement "at even" on the 9th, at the very moment of sundown on the 9th. This verse in Joshua is not the same.

This is a historical account "looking back" and explaining the timing of their entrance into the Promised Land. It tells us that on the 14th they kept the Passover "at even" or at the moment of sundown. This is a very casual expression describing an event to readers who should thoroughly understand when Passover is kept. We know by the clear instruction of Leviticus 23:5 that Passover is to be observed on the 14th day of the first month. All who know the simple instruction of Leviticus 23 could easily apply common sense to this verse. We would know it was a simple expression telling us they had observed or kept (past tense) the Passover on

the 14th. When the term "at even" or at sundown is added, we know the time being referred to. It just wasn't added to the rest of the thought or sentence. They would begin observing Passover "at even" on the 13th. But that didn't need to be said by those who already know the truth regarding God's instruction of keeping the Passover on the 14th.

If I said, "I kept the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week at even [בערב]," then you as a Sabbath keeper, knowing God's clear law, would understand that I was keeping the Sabbath starting at even [בערב] (at sundown) on the sixth day of the week. I would not have to explain to you when the Sabbath begins and you would not even consider that I was giving some new instruction about keeping the Sabbath starting at the end of the seventh day of the week.

Continuing, "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" (Joshua 5:11, KJV). This verse deserves some real scrutinizing, as it has been translated in a manner that favors Jewish tradition.

"And they did eat of the old corn [מעבור] of the land on the morrow after [ממחרת] the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn in the selfsame day." "Old corn" is a mistranslation. This word in Hebrew has nothing to do with something being "old." Yet even Strong's claims it is a word that means old corn or that which is stored over. It doesn't! The *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Brown, Driver and Briggs, gives the true definition of this word as being "produce or yield" of the land. *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* by H.W.F. Gesenius, gives one of the best meanings of this word as "produce" or "offering of the land." It does concern what the land "offered up" that year.

The only reason for perpetuating the concept of "old corn" is because of Jewish tradition and denial that this great event is the fulfillment of instruction given in Leviticus 23. That idea is based on the premise that if it is the old corn of the land, then this could be a Passover that falls on a day of the week other than the weekly Sabbath. Such reasoning denies that this Passover and period of Unleavened Bread fulfills the instruction God gave in Leviticus 23 regarding the time they were to come into the Promised Land. Such reasoning is incorrect,

because the timing of their entrance into the Promised Land centers around the period of Passover and the offering of the wave sheaf during the Days of Unleavened Bread. These points will become more obvious as we continue.

Verse 11 needs one more correction. "On the morrow after" is better translated "to the morrow" of the Passover (chart on page 2). The reason for making this distinction is because "to the morrow" of the Passover is not only a more accurate translation, it gives the kind of specific information that is important to understanding the exact fulfillment of this occasion.

"To the morrow" of the Passover is when they began to eat of the "produce, yield, or offering of the land." We know that this day had to be the first day of Unleavened Bread.

What did they begin to eat on this day? We are being told that they ate unleavened cakes and parched corn [roasted grain] on the day that followed the Passover, the first day of Unleavened Bread. They were obviously eating unleavened cakes, but they were made from the "produce or offering of the land." The roasted grain was also of the "produce or offering of the land."

Another way of stating verse 11 more literally in the English language would be to say, "And they did eat of the offering of the land, unleavened cakes and roasted grain, on the morrow of the Passover, which is the first day of Unleavened Bread."

Continuing with the story, "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 ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Joshua 5:12, KJV). This verse needs to be examined more closely as well.

"And the manna ceased on the morrow after [ממחרת] they had eaten of the old corn [מעבור] of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they ate of the fruit [מתבואת] of the land of Canaan that year." These words are listed on the chart on page 2. As before, the word translated as "morrow" means "to the morrow" and the word for old corn is "yield or offering of the land."

We need to look at yet another word. It is translated "of the fruit" and means "to the increase or to the yield." Even the word "that year" is more explicit in Hebrew and literally means, "at that year."

Putting this understanding into English,

verse 12 would more precisely say, "And the manna ceased to the morrow when they had eaten of the offering of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they ate to the yield of the land at that year."

This account is very specific in Hebrew. It is making clear that the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten of the produce of the land. They ate it on the first day of Unleavened Bread. The manna ceased on the following day or the second day of Unleavened Bread. It is also specific as to what produce of the land they had eaten and that it was of the yield of that very year! How much more precise could this account have been to make it clear that it fulfilled the instruction of Leviticus 23?

COUNTING PENTECOST

Arguments that deny that this was the beginning fulfillment of the instruction in Leviticus 23 have a number of inaccuracies that produce contradictions within the scriptures.

The story of Israel coming into the Promised Land was a most historic occasion for them. They had been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years and were now able to enter by crossing over the Jordan and finally begin to eat of the produce of the earth once again, then the manna ceased.

God told them that when they came into the land He was giving to them that they should bring a sheaf from the beginning of their harvest to the priest. This was to be done during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Obedience to this instruction helps us understand when to keep Pentecost.

"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 23:15-16, KJV).

This is instruction for counting Pentecost. These two verses should be understood easily enough as they are, but let's look more closely at them to see the very precise instruction God is giving here.

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after [ממחרת] the sabbath, from the day [מיום -- literally, "to the day"] that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete. Even unto [עד]

the morrow after [ממחרת] the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD."

We should already know the meaning of two of these words. The first underlined phrase "from the morrow after" should be "to the morrow" the Sabbath. "To the morrow" of the Sabbath is the first day of the week.

The double underlined phrase "the morrow after" should be "to the morrow" the seventh Sabbath. "To the morrow" of the seventh Sabbath is very precise and is the first day of the week. Even those Jews who count Pentecost to Sivan 6 should know better, because that day can fall on different days of the week. Counting to a day after the seventh Sabbath is always the first day of the week.

The second underlined phrase "from the day" should be "to the day" (see chart on page 2). It is saying "to the day" that they brought the sheaf of the wave offering. We already know that was on the first day of the week.

The third underlined phrase "even unto" is most accurate and needs to be recognized as such. Gesenius gives the definition of this word as "even to" or "until."

Let's look at what a more literal translation of these two verses would be. "And ye shall count unto you to the morrow the Sabbath, to the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete. Even unto to the morrow the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD."

The timing for when to begin the count is quite clear. It says "to the morrow" the Sabbath, which is the first day of the week. And it says "to the day" that they brought the wave sheaf, which was the first day of the week.

Next we are told that seven Sabbaths must be complete. If you begin counting at the very point of the first day of the week, every seventh day will be a Sabbath. Counting 49 days beginning at the point of the first day of the week brings us to the seventh weekly Sabbath. But the instruction continues by saying "even unto" "to the morrow" of the seventh Sabbath. "To the morrow" of any weekly Sabbath is the first day of the week. "Even unto" to the morrow of the seventh Sabbath brings us to the 50th

day, which is always on the first day of the week. What could be more clear or precise?

THE CONCLUSION

Joshua 5 is the beginning fulfillment for God's instruction found in Leviticus 23. *"And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn [offering, produce] of the land on the morrow after [to the morrow] the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn [roasted grain] in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after [to the morrow] they had eaten of the old corn [offering, yield] of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they ate of the fruit [to the yield] of the land of Canaan [at] that year"* (Joshua 5:10-12).

When they came into the Promised Land they were told they could not eat of the yield or produce of the land until the wave sheaf and special offering had been offered up to God. That was to be on the day after the weekly Sabbath, the first day of the week.

Joshua 5 makes it clear when they came into the Promised Land. The day following the Passover is when they ate of the yield or produce of the land. Therefore, the Passover had to be the weekly Sabbath that year. And the day they ate of the yield of the land was the first day of the week and the first day of Unleavened Bread.

The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten of the yield or produce of the land. That had to be the second day of the week and also the second day of Unleavened Bread.

Why didn't the manna cease on the Passover or on the first day of Unleavened Bread? Because that year both were Sabbaths. The first day of Unleavened Bread is always an annual Sabbath, and in that year the Passover was a weekly Sabbath. According to God's law, no one could go out and gather manna on a Sabbath. Additional manna, needed for the Sabbath, could be gathered on the sixth day of the week. In that particular year, the next earliest appearance for manna could only be on the day after the first day of Unleavened Bread. We are told in this account that the manna was not there that day, because now they were eating of the yield or produce of the land and no longer needed the manna.

The gathering of manna, after 40 long years, was no longer necessary.

Another great truth comes out of this historic account in Joshua 5 that cannot be specifically gleaned from any other account. It settles the argument of what weekly Sabbath is to be counted as the one preceding the bringing of the wave sheaf to the priest. There is only one situation in which that question could arise, and Joshua 5 answers it.

On a year when the Passover is a weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of Unleavened Bread falls on the following weekly Sabbath. The question arises about when to bring the wave sheaf. Is that weekly Sabbath supposed to fall within the Days of Unleavened Bread or is the wave sheaf itself always to fall within the Days of Unleavened Bread?

Joshua 5 settles all arguments. The Passover that year fell on the weekly Sabbath and the wave sheaf was offered within the Days of Unleavened Bread. If the seventh day of Unleavened Bread were the proper weekly Sabbath to bring the wave sheaf, then the wave sheaf would have been offered after the Days of Unleavened Bread had ended. Joshua 5 makes it clear that the wave sheaf must be offered up before God during the Days of Unleavened Bread. This is a fitting conclusion to the whole matter. Our wave sheaf is Jesus Christ and He is pictured in a time that is unleavened. He was unleavened. He had no sin and became the perfect offering, offered up for us! NW

You may request 3 sermons that cover this subject:

- 1) **The Wave Sheaf of Unleavened Bread**
- 2) **Counting Pentecost – Part 1 & 2**

Send Subscription requests to:

the CHURCH OF GOD

P.O. Box 406

Temperance, MI 48182

E-mail: theCofG@aol.com

Web Site: www.the-Church-of-God.org