

The GOOD NEWS LETTER

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A personal letter to all the brethren of The Churches of God, from your pastor, co-laborer, and fellow-servant in Christ, Herbert W. Armstrong, Box 111, Eugene.

HOW TO FIGURE PENTECOST

GREETINGS, Brethren! Next Monday, June 14th, is a very sacred annual SABBATH-day! It is the annual day of PENTECOST, or Festival of First Fruits. On that day we are commanded to cease our work, just as on the weekly Sabbath, and to assemble in holy convocation.

The Original PENTECOST

Notice Acts 1:1: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." They were ASSEMBLED! Why? And they were all with ONE ACCORD about it, not divided as to which day.

The word "Pentecost" is a GREEK word. It was not used in Old Testament times. It signifies "Fifty," because this day was determined by COUNTING fifty days FROM the morrow after the weekly Sabbath which falls during the days of unleavened bread. Literally, the Greek word "pentecost" means "fifty-count." Count fifty. Count fifty FROM a certain day. The day we count from is the morrow AFTER the Sabbath. The Sabbath we now call "Saturday." The morrow after Saturday is Sunday. Count one day FROM Sunday. Any little child would readily know it is Monday. Sunday is not one day FROM Sunday. Sunday is Sunday, and one day FROM Sunday is Monday. Seven days from Sunday is the following Sunday. Seven WEEKS from Sunday is the seventh Sunday. And the morrow after that seventh week is Monday. 49 days FROM Sunday is the seventh Sunday, and 50 days after, or counted FROM any Sunday always falls on a MONDAY. That is simple second-grade arithmetic. Yes, thank God, these things are not difficult; they are plain and simple; and they are revealed to BABES who are surrendered of heart and mind and willing to learn God's way, and hidden from the wise and the prudent.

In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the word "Pentecost" is not used. "Pentecost" is a Greek word, used only after the Jews of Palestine came to speak the common language of the time, Greek. Originally, in the Hebrew, this festival was called primarily by two names, "Feast of FIRST FRUITS," and "FEAST OF WEEKS," because it is COUNTED by numbering seven WEEKS from the morrow after the Sabbath, and then adding one day to make fifty. Hence, in the Hebrew, the festival was named "Feast of WEEKS," signifying seven WEEKS were counted from a Sunday, to the morrow after that seventh week, or to a Monday; while in the New Testament it was named Pentecost, meaning "count FIFTY" days from a Sunday, (morrow after the Sabbath), to a MONDAY. Thus the method of counting is embodied into the very NAME of the festival, both in Hebrew and Greek---both in Old Testament and New. And if it is counted any other way, we nullify the very NAME of the festival. It is IMPORTANT that we figure the RIGHT DAY!

Suppose the disciples and the "Jews, devout men out of every nation, had figured only 49 days, by counting the first Sunday as one day FROM Sunday -- or had figured to the morrow after seven SATURDAYS instead of seven WEEKS numbered from a Sunday, as we are SO PLAINLY directed? They would have assembled, NOT on the day of Pentecost at all, but on a PAGAN SUNDAY, and they would have waited all day IN VAIN -- and WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. Then they would have gone away, thinking the day had passed, and on the following day, which was the TRUE "Feast of WEEKS," the Holy Spirit would have come, but they would not have been there to receive God's most precious Gift! Yes, it is IMPORTANT we figure the right day.

The MEANING of "Pentecost."

Notice, first, "Pentecost" is not "an upper room" as some seem to believe. It is not an experience. The Scripture does not say "When the EXPERIENCE of Pentecost came," it says "when the DAY OF PENTECOST was fully come." Pentecost is a DAY. The day before, or the day after, is not Pentecost -- is not the FIFTIETH day -- is not the festival of WEEKS.

"Pentecost" is one of the annual Sabbaths, or Holydays OF THE LORD (not of Moses), which the Eternal God set apart for His people FOREVER. If those who were converted into the New Testament CHURCH had not been ASSEMBLED, observing that day, some 50 days after Christ had nailed all things done away to His Cross, they would not have received the Holy Spirit -- the New Testament Church would not have started!

Notice Exodus 23:14-16: "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread ... and the feast of harvest, the FIRSTFRUITS of thy labors, which thou has sown in the field; and the feast of INGATHERING, which is in the end of the year."

God gave to His CHURCH, at the time when the Church was first called, while His people were still in Egypt, seven annual holydays to picture to the Church GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION, which the Church was to proclaim. The Church, both of Old and New Testaments, was to be used as God's instrumentality in carrying out His PLAN. The holydays were given to keep the Church in the true knowledge and understanding of the Plan the Church was to be used in carrying out.

As the redemptive Plan BEGINS with the crucified Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, so the annual festive season began with the Passover, picturing the Crucifixion. Once we repent of sin, and turn to Jesus Christ as sin-bearer and personal Saviour, with FAITH in His shed blood for the remission of sins, we are JUSTIFIED. But justification has only to do with a guilty PAST. We must then QUIT sinning -- put sin COMPLETELY out of our lives. And this is pictured to us by the SEVEN DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD which follow the Passover. On the 14th day of the first month, God's sacred calendar (month called Abib, or Nisen), is the Passover. And in the 15th day of this same month is the FESTIVAL, for seven days. The first and last of these seven days are HOLY days -- annual Sabbaths. The days of unleavened bread remind us annually we are to put sin COMPLETELY out of our lives, by keeping God's Commandments.

But the Plan cannot stop there. We are justified -- reconciled to God -- by the DEATH of His Son, but we are SAVED, not by His death, but by His LIFE (Rom. 5:10). If Christ remained dead, we could never be saved. For "if Christ be not risen, ... your faith is also vain ... And IF Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are PERISHED." (I Cor. 15:14-18).

And so, during these seven days of unleavened bread, the Eternal commanded: "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 Eternal, to be accepted for you: on the MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH the priest shall wave it." (Lev. 23: 10-11).

God used the material food harvest to picture the harvest of SOULS. This was the season of the early GRAIN harvest. This first sheaf of grain pictured the RISEN CHRIST. It had to be accepted BY THE ETERNAL for them -- as Christ had to be accepted of God FOR US. It was ON the morrow after the Sabbath -- the weekly Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread -- that the risen Christ had to be presented to God, to be accepted of Him, for us. It was on this Sunday morning -- the day after the weekly Sabbath -- that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene. When she recognized Him, she would run forward and embraced Him for joy. But Jesus restrained her. "Touch me not," He said, "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 the angel instructed Mary, "Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you." (John 20:17; and Mark 16:7). The same evening Jesus met with them, and then they could touch Him. He was the antetypical Wave Sheaf, and on that Sunday, the morrow after the Sabbath, He was accepted FOR THEM of God. Thus the wave-sheaf pictured the RESURRECTED Christ.

Now notice verse 14, Lev. 23: "And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day." The wave-sheaf was the first sheaf of grain cut. None could be harvested or used UNTIL that first wave-sheaf had been accepted of the Eternal. Likewise the first harvest of souls could not even begin until Christ, first of the first-fruits, had been resurrected and accepted of God. Until then the Holy Spirit could not come -- the New Testament spirit-filled Church could not START. (See John 7:37-39; and 16:7).

Counting Pentecost

Continue now Leviticus 23: "And ye shall COUNT ..." (verse 15). The date of the next annual holy day is determined by COUNTING. We ought to be able to COUNT straight. The directions are plain and simple: ... ye shall COUNT unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering ..."

For almost 1900 years, according to historic records, there has been dispute as to which day to count FROM. Josephus, the Jewish historian who wrote about 70 A.D., shows that in his day most of the Jews counted FROM the annual Sabbath -- the FIRST holyday, Abib 15th. Some counted from the last annual Sabbath, Abib 21. The Jews today count FROM the day they call Passover, which is not Passover at all but Abib 15, the first annual holy- day. They do not count from the morrow AFTER that day, but from Abib 16. The Sadducees and another Jewish sect, the Samaritans, counted from the day after the weekly Sabbath occurring during the days of unleavened bread. The Samaritans are the ONLY sect that have continued to observe all these festivals down to the present day exactly as in the days of Moses. They still sacrifice and roast the paschal lamb. They have kept up all these rites continuously without a break. They are the ONLY people who have continued these rites exactly as God originally gave them to the Israelites under the Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant. They have NEVER MADE ANY CHANGE in their doctrines or manner of observing the holy days. They use the same calendar -- the original sacred calendar -- that is today called "the Jewish calendar." They kill the Passover lamb between sunset and dark, the night of the 14th Abib. They roast and eat it that same night. They observe the FEAST the following night, same as all Jews, beginning of the 15th. THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO FIGURE PENTECOST FROM THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE WEEKLY SABBATH OCCURRING DURING THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD -- just as God originally gave it to the people thru Moses!

Jesus, the great Antetypical Lamb, and after His resurrection, the Antetypical Wave-sheaf, was presented before and accepted of God on the morrow after the WEEKLY Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread, A.D. 31. That is the day we now call Sunday. He was in His grave on the morrow after the annual Sabbath, Abib 16th. So the fulfillment of the type ought to set us straight beyond doubt as to which day to count FROM. We count FROM the day following the weekly Sabbath -- always FROM a Sunday.

Making it PLAIN!

Let us get that point fixed plainly in mind. we count in order to determine which day is Pentecost. Can we COUNT? We count FROM a Sunday, always. The particular Sunday which follows the weekly Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread.

This particular year Passover was the eve of April 19th -- that is, after sunset Sunday April 18th. The days of unleavened bread were April 20th to 26th inclusive (each day beginning the previous sunset). The weekly Sabbath DURING these days was April 24th. The morrow AFTER the Sabbath was Sunday April 25th -- the day on which the wave-sheaf would have been waved.

Now we have the day to count FROM -- Sunday April 25th. No one should get mixed up in counting 50 days FROM a definite day.

"And ye shall count unto you FROM the morrow after the Sabbath, seven sabbaths (weeks) shall be complete, even to the morrow after the seventh sabbath (week) shall ye number FIFTY DAYS." (Lev. 23:15).

Those who have Miscounted Pentecost have done so thru one or more of three errors. Error number one is assuming that the word "Sabbaths" means always and only SATURDAYS -- that is, seventh day of the week. Anyone who understands Hebrew knows the Hebrew word Sabbath, or "shabbaths" as it is in this text, has also the meaning of any PERIOD of seven days, or WEEKS. The Hebrew word "Sabbath" means "rest," "cessation," "holy day" -- as, for instance, all seven annual holydays are SABBATHS, and they are not SATURDAYS; it means also "seven" or period of seven days, or week, and it means also THE seventh DAY of each week.

For instance, the expression first day of the WEEK occurs in eight places in the New Testament. Tho written in the Greek language, God inspired the writing THRU Hebrews, and in every one of these eight places the GREEK word for "week" was not used -- because he Jews always used the word "SABBATH" to express "WEEK." In every one of those eight places the expression is "shabbathon," literally "sabbaths," or "first into the sabbaths."

From the Dictionary of the Bible by Hastings, you'll find the root (of the Heb. "sabbath") means to desist, cease, -- the doubled "b" having an intensive force and implying complete cessation, hence, seven. To say that the word "sabbath" must mean the equivalent of what is today called "Saturday" ALONE, without any other meaning, is simply to express rank ignorance. The ROOT of the word signifies COMPLETE cessation, and since SEVEN is God's number denoting completeness, the number seven is connected with the Hebrew "shabbaths." It means a period of SEVEN days -- ANY period of seven days, or, as we say in English "WEEKS," as well as the seventh day of each week. It is so used elsewhere in the Bible.

The Moffatt translation settles it. Listen: "From the day after the sabbath, the day you bring the sheaf of the waved offering, you shall count SEVEN FULL WEEKS." Not seven SATURDAYS -- seven full WEEKS. They are counted FROM a Sunday. Now if you count your FIRST week to the following SATURDAY, you do not count a FULL week, but only six days, and the instruction is plain -- seven FULL weeks FROM a Sunday, and seven FULL weeks from a Sunday brings you to a Sunday seven weeks later. Then we count to the morrow AFTER that seventh full WEEK, or a MONDAY, making FIFTY DAYS from the Sunday where we begin counting.

Now suppose this meant seven SATURDAYS, and to the morrow after the seventh Saturday. This would be ONLY 49 DAYS from the day we count from. It would not be COMPLETE, and the text explicitly commands us to count seven weeks COMPLETE, to a total of FIFTY DAYS from a Sunday. Notice, "FROM the morrow after the Sabbath" shall ye number FIFTY DAYS." Those who count seven SATURDAYS instead of seven FULL WEEKS as the Bible says, are not counting FIFTY DAYS (Pentecost) but ONLY FORTY-NINE DAYS. And the 49th day is NOT Pentecost, and those who observe it do NOT observe Pentecost, no matter how well-meaning their intentions, for PENTECOST means FIFTY-count; that is, COUNT FIFTY, not count 49! Now let us PROVE that this word "shabbath" as it is in the original Hebrew means WEEKS here, and not "SATURDAYS." The same identical Hebrew word is used in Lev. 25:8,: "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years: and the space of seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years." There it is FIGURED OUT. It does not mean SATURDAYS -- it means PERIOD OF SEVEN -- seven TIMES SEVEN. and it figures to FORTY NINE. Now counting from Sunday April 25th, seven sabbaths complete are FORTY NINE DAYS, and we count "even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath ... FIFTY DAYS," and this is a MONDAY. If you count it seven SATURDAYS you do not have 49 days, but 48. Seven Saturdays after Sunday April 25th brings you to Saturday June 12, exactly 48 days. The text quoted above FIGURES it for us, and this expression figures out to FORTY NINE, not 48. Then we add one day to make it FIFTY.

You'll find the same identical word used in the same identical meaning in Lev. 25:8, 26:34, 43 and II Chron. 36:21. In all these places it means PERIOD OF SEVEN, or multiply by seven, not seven SATURDAYS.

We are also instructed how to count Pentecost in Deut. 16:9. "Seven WEEKS (not Saturdays) shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the FEAST OF WEEKS unto the Lord thy God." Now here a DIFFERENT Hebrew word is used -- "shabuah", meaning "sevened, i.e., a WEEK. It is another derivation from the Hebrew "Shabbath." Here, even in the King James translation, we are told to count SEVEN WEEKS, not seven Saturdays, FROM the day the first sheaf was cut and waved -- from a Sunday.

Again from the Bible Dictionary: "PENTECOST: The term, adopted from the Greek, means 'fiftieth,' and was applied by Greek-speaking Jews to the second of the three chief Hebrew feasts, because it fell on the fiftieth day AFTER the offering of the barley-sheaf during the Feast of Unleavened Bread." Again, "The Feast of WEEKS came on the 50th day after the barley sheaf was waved, (i.e., the day AFTER the completion of seven WEEKS). Hence we read, (Jer. 5:24) of the 'appointed weeks of harvest.'" There has been in the past a dispute as to WHICH Sabbath, weekly or annual, the wave-sheaf day followed to count FROM, but never as to HOW TO COUNT THE FIFTY DAYS.

Suppose you had borrowed some money. We are all in agreement as to which day we count FROM -- we count fifty days FROM Sunday April 25th. The problem, then, is how to COUNT fifty days. Suppose that on April 25th you had borrowed \$1,000 at the bank. You don't want to pay it back a day too soon. You would pay it back ON the day that is PENTECOST, if you borrowed it for FIFTY DAYS.

I have just gone to the bank -- the First National of Eugene. I asked if I had borrowed a thousand dollars on April 25th payable 50 days from date, WHEN I would be expected to pay it. I asked, "Which day do you count as number one, the day you figure from, that is April 25th, or the day following?" "Why," answered the banker, "your note would not be one day old the day it is made. It is not one day old until the day following. You number 'ONE' the day AFTER you borrow the money. You are not a year old the day you are born. You are not a year old until one year AFTER you are born. We have people coming in here almost every day confused on that point," he added, "but when I asked them how they count how old they are, they usually see it. But come back here. We figure when notes are due on our Meilicke Calculating machine. See, I set it here at Sunday, April 25th. Now I set it over here at 50 days. And right here the machine tells you which is the 50th day -- see, it is June 14th. That machine can't figure it wrong." And, if YOU, dear brethren, are confused or in doubt as to how to count 50 days FROM SUNDAY April 25th, go into the bank and ask them to let you see the calculating machine figure it for you. That ought to settle the matter and convince all who are willing to receive the TRUTH!

In conclusion, let me apologize for not having been able to get this News-LETTER out sooner. We are overloaded with

work at the office. I have to be away most of the time. Study this carefully if you are in doubt. And let us all ASSEMBLE with one accord on next Monday, June 14th, the 50th day, PENTECOST, as we are commanded, and God bless you all.
With love, Your pastor, Herbert W. Armstrong