

PENTECOST --

The Final Analysis

The correct counting of Pentecost remains a volatile issue in the minds of some who insist that when all is said and done, Pentecost must be counted from the weekly Sabbath, not the 16th of Nisan, as the Jews have done for millennia. They insist that the word translated "Sabbath" in Leviticus 23:16 cannot refer to "week," or be translated that way. This, they claim, is "fatal" to any argument that we should count from Nisan 16. What is the truth? Can we determine this matter, once and for all? Are YOU willing to look into this subject, personally, and OBEY GOD?

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The single verse of Leviticus 23:16 has been used by proponents of the Sadducean Pentecost counting method to justify their "Sunday" or even a "Monday" Pentecost. This, they claim, is their "conclusive proof" that Pentecost should not be counted from the day after the fixed first annual holy day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

According to these people, the Hebrew word *shabbat* means exclusively the seventh day of rest -- and can never mean "week." For example, if you look up the word "Sabbath" in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, you will find that in the overwhelming number of cases it refers to the weekly Sabbath. On a few occasions it refers to a high holy day or annual Sabbath. In a few cases, it refers to the sabbath-year of rest, every seven years.

Now, some Bible translations translate it as "week" or "weeks" in Leviticus 23:15-16, but others do not. Merely quoting Bible translations, in this case, does not prove one way or the other how the word ought to be translated. According to critics, those who translate the word as "week" or "weeks" are simply wrong!

Were the Pharisees Wrong?

The Pharisees, whom Jesus Christ described as the guardians of the law of God (Matt. 23:23), understood the "Sabbath" of Leviticus 23:11 to refer to the first day of Passover or the first day of Unleavened Bread, the 15th of Nisan, which was a high Sabbath day of rest (*Ency. Judaica*, vol. 14, pp. 13-19).

The apostle Paul who was also a Pharisee before his conversion, still acknowledged that he was a "Pharisee" years after his conversion. He cried out to a council of religious leaders, approximately 60 A-D., 26 years after his conversion in 34 A-D., "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6). Paul also said that as a Pharisee he was, "as touching the law, a Pharisee," and that as "touching the righteousness which is in the law, BLAMELESS" (Phil 3:5-6).

Does this sound as if the Pharisees were wrong in the way they counted Pentecost?

If the Pharisees were wrong in the way they counted Pentecost, since they counted from the first day after the annual Sabbath, as Josephus, the famous Jewish historian of the first century shows beyond any doubt, then Jesus Christ, the Messiah, our Savior, would not have said to His disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe, and DO. . ." (Matt 23:2-3).

Consider for a moment. The Pharisees very plainly said that people should count the days till Pentecost beginning with the day after the 15th of Nisan -- beginning with the 16th of Nisan. Jesus said that His followers should DO whatever the Pharisees bid them observe, concerning the law of God. Therefore, He was telling them very plainly that they, too, should count Pentecost from the 16th of Nisan!

According to some modern churches, therefore, Jesus either made a mistake, or He contradicted Himself! Because they teach that Pentecost must be counted from the day after the WEEKLY SABBATH, not the day after the HIGH HOLY DAY that begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

Who is right? These "self-appointed experts"? Or Jesus Christ, and the Pharisees, whose teaching in this regard He endorsed and supported?

These things are not mere "academic" issues of nothing but intellectual importance. These things involve OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF GOD! We are either RIGHT, or we are WRONG! There is no "middle ground" on this issue. There is no room for compromise!

Though there are some who accuse me of being a "false prophet" because of my strong teachings concerning the laws of God, particularly the presentation I make concerning Passover and Pentecost, the facts are plain enough if we are willing to look at them with an objective, unbiased approach. Why do some insist, stubbornly, on "getting around" these plain, "Thus-saith-the-Lord" Scriptures? I must shake my head with amazement, and sadness, and even a degree of anger when I see the stubborn, stiff-necked, self-righteous refusal on the part of some to sincerely look into and investigate this question with an open mind and honest heart!

The Hebrew Word "Shabbat"

Obviously, Jesus would not tell us in one place that the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, and that we should DO what they tell us to observe, and then turn around and contradict Himself somewhere else! Our Messiah was, and is, PERFECT! He did not he, or make mistakes. He was a perfect "sin offering" for us, without blemish, without spot, without sin! (Heb. 5:9, 9:14, 26-28).

What, then, about the word "Sabbath" which some make such a huge point over? Can we prove that it also means "week" or "weeks"? What is the truth? The fact that in the vast majority of cases, a word is used one way, does not mean that it cannot sometimes have another meaning.

A scientist studying "bats," small nocturnal flying mammals, would most often be thinking of them when using the word. However, a baseball player in the major leagues, upon hearing the word "bat," would almost always think immediately of a baseball bat, a slender, carved piece of wood with a handle, smoothly sanded and polished, which he uses to hit the ball. One word -- two totally different meanings!

Now, as I have shown in other places, one way we can come to understand the Biblical usage of word is by studying related passages of Scripture, where the same subject is being discussed. Let us do this, for a moment, concerning the word "SABBATH" as used in Leviticus 23:11, and 15-16.

First, notice what Moses was inspired to write in Leviticus, word for word:

"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. . ." (Lev. 23:15-16, KJV).

Now the Jewish Scriptures, called the *Tanakh*, render these verses this way:

"And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering -- the day after the Sabbath you shall count off seven WEEKS. They must be complete: you must count until the day after the SEVENTH WEEK fifty days (The Holy Scriptures, the New Jewish Publication Society Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text).

Obviously, the King James Version says one thing; the official Jewish Scriptures, based on the Massoretic or Traditional Text of the Old Testament, says clearly "weeks" and "WEEK" when the King James Version says "Sabbath" and "Sabbaths."

If it were merely a matter of opinion, we could chose whoever we wanted to believe, I suppose. But human opinion has nothing to do with it!

Many Bible scholars and translators admit that "weeks" and "week" could be used in these verses -- as well as "sabbath" and "sabbaths." Some few today however, claim that ONLY "Sabbath" and "Sabbaths" can be used -- that "weeks" and "week" are totally incorrect! Do such men have even a shred of evidence to prove their contention, which flies in the face of all scholarship?

Years ago, when Herbert W. Armstrong wrote a booklet entitled "Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days -- Which?", he admitted in that booklet:

"It is of very grave importance that we figure the right day. This day, and this day only, is made holy by the Eternal Creator. Suppose at the same time the Church of God was founded, the apostles had miscounted. And 'when the day of Pentecost was fully come' (Acts 2:1) they, instead of being all with one accord in one place were in discord, some having observed the day preceding, and some waiting until the following day!" (p.24).

That is a good question! CHAOS would have been the result! Confusion!

Pentecost -- "Feast of WEEKS"

The parallel Scripture which tells us HOW to count "Pentecost," is found in Deuteronomy 16:9. We read:

"SEVEN WEEKS [שבוע, SHAVUAH] 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. . ." (Deut. 16.9-10, KJV).

Says the Jewish Holy Scriptures, the *Tanakh*:

"You shall count off SEVEN WEEKS; start to count the SEVEN WEEKS when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. Then you shall observe the FEAST OF WEEKS to the Lord you God" (same verses).

It should be perfectly obvious to anyone, I believe, that these verses clearly show that the "seven Sabbaths" referred to in Leviticus 23:15, and the "seventh Sabbath" actually refer to SEVEN WEEKS, and the SEVENTH WEEK! This passage of holy Scripture, inspired by God in the book of Deuteronomy, leaves us no room for doubt or questions. It PLAINLY says "SEVEN WEEKS"! The word translated "WEEKS" here is shavuah, and all commentators admit and agree that it always refers to WEEK and WEEKS, and not the Sabbath day!

Gesenius' Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, says of the Hebrew word "SHABBAT" the following:

"Shabbat -- 1) to rest, to keep as a day of rest . . . The primary idea appears to be that of to sit down, to sit still . . . 2) to cease, to desist, to leave off. . . 3) to celebrate a Sabbath. . .

"Shabbath, const. state . . . 1) Sabbath, the seventh day of the week . . . 2) PERHAPS A WEEK, LIKE THE SYRIAC AND GREEK (Matt. 28: 1) Lev. 23:15; compare Deut. 16:9." (p. 804).

This same authoritative lexicon says of the word "shavua," in Deuteronomy 16:9:

"Shavua. Dan. 9:27, Gen. 29:27, should be rendered the week of this woman) . . . a hebdomad, septenary number . . . 1) of days, a week, Gen. 29:27, 28. Daniel 10:2, 'through three weeks' . . . the feast of (seven) weeks, Pentecost, so called from the seven weeks which were counted from the Passover to this festival, Deut. 16:9 . . ." (p 800).

This word *always* means weeks and never means "Sabbath." Therefore, when this word, and the word "Sabbath," are used in precisely the same way, in similar sentences, it is very obvious to all but the most blind that "shabbat" in the Hebrew can also refer to a "week," or "weeks." As Gesenius points out, in both the Syriac and Greek languages, the word "Sabbath" can also be translated "week."

For example, in Matthew 28.1, we read, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the WEEK. . ." The Greek word for "WEEK" here is *SABBATON*, *THE VERY SAME WORD TRANSLATED "SABBATH"* in the first part of this very verse!

The emphasis of Pentecost is on "weeks. " It is called in the Scriptures, the "Feast of Weeks." The emphasis is not on "Sabbath days," at all, but WEEKS! As God instructed the Hebrews, "Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, *AFTER YOUR WEEKS BE OUT*, ye shall have an holy convocation . . ." (Num. 28:26, KJV).

"On the day of firstfruits, when you present to the Lord an offering of new grain during the FEAST OF WEEKS, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work" (*ibid*, NIV).

In this verse, the word "shabbat" must refer to "weeks," for it does not make any sense for "Sabbaths" to "be out"! Weeks can be "out," that is, "completed," but hardly could "sabbaths" be "out." This is speaking of weeks being fulfilled or completed.

Biblical Usage of "Shabbat"

Since this is a very controversial point to some few churches, let us draw on the Scriptures themselves to prove that the word "SHABBAT" can refer to other than the weekly Sabbath or an annual Sabbath!

Turn to Leviticus 25. We read here of the "Sabbath year" of rest for the land (verses 1-4). Notice what God says:

"But in the seventh year shall be a SABBATH unto the land, a Sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vine" (Lev.25:4, KJV).

Now notice verse 8: "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."

Here, plainly, "sabbaths of years" must mean "WEEKS OF YEARS"! There is no other way to understand it! A "sabbath" of years would simply be "seven years" -- or a complete "week of years"!

In this verse, the word "shabbat" obviously CANNOT refer to the Sabbath day! It plainly refers to the number *SEVEN*, or *WEEK*. "Seven SABBATHS of years" means seven weeks of years, or seven sevens of years -- the identical meaning that seven SHAVUA of years would have!!!

Thus in Hebrew, just as in Syriac and in Greek, the word "shabbat" can also refer to week or weeks -- there is simply no skirting, avoiding, or getting around this fact!

How plain! Yet some people are like those depicted by Winston Churchill, who once said

that some people walk along, stumble across the truth, pick themselves up, dust themselves off, and continue on as if nothing had happened to them!

How true!

Other people, when confronted with the truth of God, tend to get all confused in their mind. When the truth does not conform to what they have previously believed, or what they have assumed to be true, they react with dismay, consternation, bewilderment. The error in their minds, like a pea-soup fog, blocks their minds from seeing the crystal clarity of the new truth!

Others have the attitude, "Don't confuse me with the facts." Still others say, "Leave me alone. I'm content with what I've always believed. Don't disturb my slumber."

I think of the minds of such people as being like a cement mixer, churning up sand, rocks, cement, and water to make concrete. Once the concrete is poured out, and the sun bakes it for a while, and it dries, it becomes permanently set. The minds of such people are like that concrete - all mixed up, and permanently set!

From the Ambassador College Correspondence Course

It is very interesting to me that one of the groups which insists that Pentecost must be counted from the weekly Sabbath, as the Sadducees counted it, and who dismiss the teaching of the Pharisees totally, is the Worldwide Church of God. Yet, in an old lesson of the *Ambassador College Correspondence Course*, the authors admitted that the word "Sabbaths" meant "weeks" and not Saturdays. Notice this remarkable admission:

"3. How many days were the Levites to count? Lev. 23:15-16.

"Comment: The phrase 'seven Sabbaths' does not mean to count seven Saturdays, but 'SEVEN WEEKS,' as Hebrew scholars admit. The word 'Sabbath' here comes from an original Hebrew word which can mean 'weeks' (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*). The Greeks who translated the word into 'Pentecost' clearly understood that it meant weeks, and that they should number, not seven Saturdays, but seven weeks and a day -- or fifty days! Now turn to Numbers 28:26. Here you will find the expression "After your weeks be out." The Hebrew word here can mean only weeks, not Sabbaths" (Lesson 35, original course).

Another Authority Speaks Out

The Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, by M'Clintoch and Strong, volume VIII, published in 1877, says about Pentecost:

"Pentecost, the second of the three great annual festivals on which all the males were required to appear before the Lord in the national sanctuary, the other two being the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles. It fell in due course on the sixth day of Sivan, and its rites, according to the law, were restricted to a single day . . . The time fixed for the celebration of Pentecost is the fiftieth day reckoning from 'the morrow after the Sabbath' of the Passover (Lev. 23:11, 15, 16). The precise meaning, however, of the word [shabbat] in this connection, which determines the

date for celebrating this festival, has been a matter of dispute from time immemorial. The Boethusians and the Sadducees in the time of the second temple (Mishna, Menachoth, x, 3), and the Karaites since the 8th century of the Christian era, took [shabbat] in its literal and ordinary sense as denoting 'the seventh day of the week,' or 'the Sabbath of creation,' and maintained that the omer was offered on the day following that weekly Sabbath which might happen to fall within the seven days of the Passover, so that Pentecost would always be on the first day of the week. But against this it is urged

"(a) That Joshua 5:1 1, where [the morrow after the Passover] is used for [the morrow after the Sabbath] shows that [shabbat] in Lev. 23:11 DENOTES THE FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER, which was to be a day of rest.

"(b) The DEFINITE ARTICLE in [ha-shabbat, or 'the Sabbath'] in Lev. 23:11 REFERS TO ONE OF THE PRECEDING FESTIVAL DAYS.

"(c) The expression ['shabbat]is also used for the Day of Atonement (Lev.23:32), and the abstract ['shabbat'] is applied to the first and eighth days of Tabernacles (ver. 39) and the Feast of Trumpets (23:24), as well as to 'WEEK' (23:15; 25:8); hence this use of sabbaton in the N.T. (Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 18:12).

"(d) According to Lev. 23:15 the seventh week, at the end of which Pentecost is to be celebrated, is to be reckoned from the Sabbath. Now if this Sabbath were not fixed, but could happen on any one of the seven Passover days, possibly the fifth or sixth day of the festival, the Passover would in the course of time be DISPLACED FROM THE FUNDAMENTAL POSITION which it occupies in the order of the annual festivals.

"(e) The sabbatic idea which underlies all the festivals, and which is SCRUPULOUSLY observed in all of them, shows that the reckoning could not have been left to the fifth or sixth day of the festival, but must have FIXEDLY BEGUN ON THE 16TH OF NISAN. Thus, each Sabbath comes after SIX EVEN PERIODS:

"1. The Sabbath of days, after six days

"2. The Sabbath of months, after six months

"3. The Sabbath of years, after six years

"4. The Sabbath of sabbatic years, after six sabbatic years

"5. The Sabbath of festivals = the Day of Atonement, after six festivals; hence the SABBATH OF WEEKS, i.e., PENTECOST, must also be at the end of six common weeks after Passover, which could be obtained ONLY by reckoning from the 16th OF NISAN, as this ALONE yields six common weeks; for the first week during which the counting goes on belongs to the Feast of Passover, and is NOT common.

"(f) The Septuagint, Josephus, Philo, Onkelos, and the synagogue have understood it in this

way and acted upon it, and most Christian commentators espouse and defend the traditional interpretation . . . It is therefore EVIDENT THAT THE JEWS, WHO DURING THE SECOND TEMPLE KEPT PENTECOST FIFTY DAYS AFTER THE 16TH OF NISAN, RIGHTLY INTERPRETED THE INJUNCTION CONTAINED IN LEV.23:15-22" (*Cyclopeifia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, by M'Clintoch and Strong, vol. VII, p.924-925).

The Evidence from Joshua

The reference cited above mentions the evidence from the book of Joshua that the "morrow after the Sabbath" of Leviticus 23:11 must refer to the first annual Sabbath of Passover. Let us look at this verse in Joshua more closely. Notice:

"On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the PASSOVER. The DAY AFTER THE PASSOVER, THAT VERY DAY, THEY ATE SOME OF THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND: unleavened bread and roasted grain" (*Joshua S. 1-11*).

Remember, the Israelites were not permitted to eat of the grain of the harvest UNTIL the "wave sheaf offering" had been presented on "the morrow after the Sabbath" (Lev. 23:11). God commanded, "You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, UNTIL THE VERY DAY you bring this offering to your God" (Lev. 23:14).

Since the Israelites ate that grain on the morrow AFTER THE PASSOVER and remember, the Passover was slain on the 14th of Nisan, but EATEN on the 15th of Nisan therefore, this "morrow" would have to be the 16th of Nisan!

Therefore, "the day after the Sabbath" of Leviticus 23:11 must be the same day as the "DAY AFTER THE PASSOVER" of Joshua 5. 11!

Remember, the *Bible* interprets its own symbols and figures of speech, and makes its own puzzles plain. All we need to do is "SEARCH THE SCPJPTURES" and we will find the answer to these enigmas which have stumped theologians and Church leaders for years!

Sadly, many are still befuddled and perplexed by these questions!

Follow the Sadducees?

Some insist that we must observe the same day as the Sadducees of Jesus' time. But who were the Sadducees? As we have already seen in the works of Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, they were a Hellenizing sect which was subservient to the Pharisees in terms of practice. The people all followed the Pharisees. Although many of the priests were Sadducees, this did not mean they governed the set times for holy days, or regulated Temple rituals and practice. They were forced by circumstances beyond their control to cooperate with the Pharisees, who had the people on their side.

Should we follow the capricious teachings of the Sadducees, as some continue to suggest?

Let us look into the Bible itself and see. What does Jesus say about their knowledge of the laws of God, and His commandments?

When a group of Sadducees came to Jesus asking Him a "technical question," Jesus rebuked them. Notice the account:

"That same day the SADDUCEES, WHO SAY THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, came to him with a question. 'Teacher,' they said, Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

"Jesus replied, 'YOU ARE IN ERROR BECAUSE YOU DO NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURES OR THE POWER OF GOD. . .' (Mat. 22:23-29, NIV).

Does this statement of the Messiah Himself, Jesus Christ, sound as if we should look to the doctrines of the SADDUCEES for our beliefs?

Be honest with yourself! Confess it! Do you really believe that? If the Messiah Himself blasts the Sadducees, and rakes them over the coals, and makes a broad, sweeping denunciation of their teaching, saying THEY KNOW NOT THE SCRIPTURES, nor the POWER of God, would you then go to THEM for spiritual "enlightenment" as some insist today on doing?

How amazing! How dumfounding! How flabbergasting!

I must confess, that I would not trust anybody with that kind of mentality working for me. With that kind of "wisdom," or foolishness masquerading as wisdom, they are sure to destroy whatever business they control, given enough time!

True, many Sadducees were priests. But most of the priests of that time were reprobates, renegades, disobedient to God, and used their priestly power to serve the king, not God. They were clever politicians, seeking political favor and handouts, and did not really serve God at all. Jesus roundly condemned them in scathing language, many times.

Josephus tells us that the high priesthood during those times was a game of musical chairs, with the priests subservient to the king, who appointed them to office according to HIS pleasure. King Herod had the priests slavishly seeking his favor and pleasure, as he was the one who appointed the high priests. We read:

"Herod was then made king by the Romans, but did no longer appoint high priests out of the family of Asamoneus; but made CERTAIN MEN TO BE SO THAT WERE OF NO EMINENT FAMILIES, BUT BARELY OF THOSE THAT WERE PRIESTS. . .

"Archelaus also, Herod's son, did like his father in the appointment of high priests, as did the

Romans also, who took the government over the Jews into their hands afterward.

Accordingly, the NUMBER OF THE HIGH PRIESTS, from the days of Herod until the day when Titus took the temple and the city, and burnt them, WERE IN ALL TWENTY-EIGHT; and the time also that belonged to them was A HUNDRED AND SEVEN YEARS" (*Ant.*, XX,x, 1).

These high priests only reigned for about 3.8 years, on the average. They were shuttled in and out like an express elevator. Originally, however, God had appointed this office to be for life, and it was hereditary, through the sons of Aaron -- not an office to be held at the whim of a pagan or heathen king or despot! (see Exodus 28:1; 40:12-15). But by the time of Christ, the office of high priest had degenerated into disgrace, disrepute, and disregard. Says the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*:

"The chief priests who are mentioned in the N.T. were the officiating high priest, former high priests still alive, and members of their families. They were AN ANOMALY OF THE TIMES. The law that regulated the succession to the high priesthood HAD COME INTO ABEYANCE THROUGH POLITICAL CONFUSION AND FOREIGN DOMINATION. HIGH PRIESTS WERE MADE AND UNMADE AT THE WILL OF THE RULERS" (article "Priests," p.764).

Are these the kinds of men we should look to for leadership and determination of God's commandments, the figuring of dates of God's holy days, and spiritual guidance and enlightenment? You be the judge!

Are these the kinds of men we should look to for leadership and determination of God's commandments, the figuring of dates of God's holy days, and spiritual guidance? GOD FORBID!

Any who would look to the Sadducean priests for spiritual truth and guidance must have rocks in their heads! You figure it out!

Why can't grown men, supposed to be ministers of the Most High God, see this plain and stark truth? Or are they, too, blind, like the "king who had no clothes," and didn't know that he was stark naked?

Bo Reicke, in *The New Testament Era*, wrote:

"When he became king, however, Herod repressed both the patricians and the priestly aristocracy, turning the Sanhedrin into a DOCILE INSTRUMENT FOR CARRYING OUT MS POLICES . . . Ananus 1, or Annas, held the office of high priest from A.D. 6 to A.D. 15. He was the head of a priestly family that, upon his accession, began to supplant the family of *BOETHUS*, WHICH WAS RELATED TO THE HOUSE OF HEROD and had hitherto dominated the priesthood . . ." (p.142).

Boethus, who was related to the house of Herod, was himself a Sadducee. These high priests were completely confused spiritually; they dwelt in a spiritual wasteland. They had perverted

the ways and truths of God. Their spiritual degeneration was so gross and despicable that Jesus went so far as to tell them pointedly, "You DO NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURES" (Matt. 22:29, NIV).

What about the Samaritans?

There was one other renegade, heretical group during the time of Christ which also counted Pentecost from the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. They were the infamous "Samaritans." Who were they? Should we respect and follow their reckoning in this matter?

Rather than give you my own personal opinion, notice what Jesus Christ, the Messiah, had to say about the Samaritans. One time when Jesus was going through the countryside of Samaria, He stopped at a village called Sychar. It was about noon, and a Samaritan woman came to the well, where Jesus was resting, to draw water. Jesus asked her for a drink, which amazed her. Notice the account:

"The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For JEWS DO NOT ASSOCIATE SAMARITANS)" (John 4.7-9, NIV).

All through the history of Israel, the Samaritans had been a PLAGUE to the Jews who returned from Babylonian exile. They opposed the construction of the Temple, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and were a continual pestilence. Their teachings were a smorgasbord of pagan Babylonian beliefs which they combined with some of the beliefs of the apostatizing Kingdom of Israel, which had been carried into captivity (see II Kings 17). They even went so far as to build their own competing "temple" at Mount Gerizim about 400. B.C., out of disdain and hatred of the Jews.

Should we look to pagan Samaritans, who adopted some of the beliefs of the northern Kingdom of Israel, and misinterpreted the Scriptures, and combined some Bible teachings with their pagan superstitions, for guidance in faith and practice?

Jesus Himself answers this question. Later on in this same chapter of John, He tells the woman from Samaria:

"YOU SAMARITANS WORSHIP WHAT YOU DO *NOT* KNOW, we [Jews] worship what we DO KNOW, for SALVATION IS FROM THE *JEWS*" (John 4.22).

If you want to follow someone who doesn't even know what he is worshipping, such as the SAMARITANS, then as the old saying goes - "have at it." "Be my guest." But include me out!

"This Is My God"

Famous novelist Herman Wouk, himself a Jew, discusses Pentecost in his book *This Is My God*. According to Wouk:

"On the morning of the second day of Passover [Nisan 16], in olden times, the community brought a measure called an omer of barley into the Temple for a ceremony hailing the earth's awakening fertility . . . with this omer the annual harvest actually began; new produce was never eaten in Palestine until after the barley rite . . . From the day the measure of barley came to the Temple, seven full weeks were told off. On the fiftieth day the nation celebrated the summer festival Shavuot . . . The Talmud calls it Atzeret, or Last Assembly Day, implying that the holiday is the end of a single religious observance that starts with Passover. Leaving Egypt was the beginning of the event; the climax was Sinai.

"The Rabbis found, analyzing the narrative texts of Exodus, that the revelation at Sinai occurred fifty days after the second day of Passover, the date of Shavuot. The summer festival therefore became the feast of Sinai revelation . . ." (*This Is My God*, p.74).

Another Commentary, called *Aid to Bible Understanding*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, says concerning Pentecost:

"A later name used to denote the festival of harvest or festival of weeks, called also 'the day of the first ripe fruits'. . .-It was to be celebrated on the fiftieth day from Nisan 16, the day that the barley sheaf was offered (Lev.23:15,16). In the Jewish calendar it falls on Sivan 6. It was after the barley harvest and the beginning of the harvest of wheat, which ripened later than the barley. Ex. 9:31,32.

"The Israelites were not allowed to begin the harvest until the firstfruits of the barley had been presented to Jehovah on Nisan 16. Therefore, in Deuteronomy 16:9, 10 the instructions are: 'From when the sickle is first put to the standing grain you will start to count seven weeks. Then you must celebrate the festival of weeks to Jehovah your God.' . . . The Jews traditionally hold that Pentecost corresponded to the time of the giving of the law at Sinai, when Israel became a distinguished people. It was early in the third month (Sivan) that the Israelites gathered at Sinai and received the law" ("Pentecost," p.1284-1285).

Pentecost and Josephus the Jewish Historian

It is well known that the Pharisees observed Pentecost on Sivan 6. It is also well known that Josephus, Jewish historian of the first century, who was himself a priest, a famous general in the war against the Romans in 70 A.D., was a Pharisee as well. He writes about Pentecost:

"But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them . . . They also at this participation of the first fruits of the earth sacrifice a lamb, as a burnt offering to God.

"6. When a week of weeks has passed over after this sacrifice, (which weeks contain forty and nine days,) on the fiftieth day, which is Pentecost . . . they bring to God a loaf made of wheat flour" (*Antiquities*, III, x, 5-6).

Observing this day was the customary practice of the Jews in the time of Christ. Josephus tells us that ALL THE MULTITUDE followed the teachings of the Pharisees in this respect. He tells us: ". . .the Pharisees, who are one of the sects of the Jews . . . These have SO GREAT A POWER OVER THE MULTITUDE, that when they say anything against the king or against the high priest, they are presently believed" (*Antiquities*, XIII, x, 5).

Concerning the Sadducees, the other sect of the Jews, which included some of the aristocracy and some of the high priests, who counted Pentecost from the day after the weekly Sabbath which fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread, Josephus tells us: ". . . the Sadducees are able to persuade NONE BUT THE RICH, and have not the populous obsequious to them, but the Pharisees have the *MULTITUDE ON THEIR SIDE*. . ." (*Anti.*, XIII, x, 6).

Who Were the PHARISEES?

Since the Pharisees were very important during the time of Christ, and He had many "run-ins" with them, it behooves us to know as much about them as possible. Who were they? What did they believe?

In his book *The New Testament*, Bo Reidke describes the origins of the sect known as the Pharisees, who Jesus said "sat in Moses' seat." Reidke writes:

"At the beginning of the Maccabean revolt in 167 B.C., we read of a group of Hasidim or Pietists (Hebrew singular Hasid, 'Pious') who had pledged themselves to obey the law and consequently opposed the Hellenizing policies of Antiochus IV and joined the Maccabean movement (I Macc. 2:42). In 161, some outstanding scribes belonging to this group were deceived by Alcirnus, the Hellenistic high priest (I Macc. 7:12-18); this forced them once more into association with the Maccabees. Scholars are wont to consider these Hasidim the predecessors of the Pharisees, or even a parallel or particular group of them. This view is in harmony with the Pharisees' appearance at the end of the century as a school still closely associated with the house of the Hasmoneans. . ."

Reidke continues:

"Both in the New Testament and in Josephus, as well as in the overwhelming majority of the Rabbinic passages, the Pharisees appear as the very opposite of an isolated sect: they are a most expansive popular party, with highly developed social relationships and structures. In Rabbinic literature, the context in which the name appears suggests a meaning such as 'Puritan,' a zealous proponent of ritual purity . . . Since this interpretation agrees with the passages from the New Testament and Josephus (such as Matt. 15:2; Josephus Ant. XVIII, 12-15), we may assume the same meaning for the preChristian and early Christian period. The basic concept was therefore not that of separation from the rest of the people . . . but rather separation 'from the pouutions of the peoples of the land' (Ezra 6:2 1; 9: 1; I 0: 11; Neh. 9:2; 10:28) and 'from the nations of the world with their abominations' (Mekilta Exod. 19:6, 71a). In this sense the Pharisees may be thought of as PURITANS . . . God had revealed the norms of purity through holy Scriptures, traditions, and scribes: The Pharisees sought to develop this revelation and make it applicable to society, so that every Jew could realize the ideal of the covenant people . . . To preserve and

develop the purity of this Levitical covenant people, the scribes had to master and interpret the commandments and statutes EXACTLY, according to the model of Ezra and his Levites (Neh.8:7-9; 13). Reicke goes on, describing the exacting attitude the Pharisees had toward the law:

"IN SCRUPULOUS DETAIL the Pharisees analyzed and discussed the books of the Bible, which provided the legal norm . . . Pharisaism, then, was an attempt to transfer concretely to the covenant people the PURITY revealed by God through Scripture and tradition . . . Among the obligations of the Pharisaic brethren were strict observance of cultic purity (Mishna Dem ii.3), such as the washing of hands (Mat. 15:2 and parallels), as well as THE SCRUPULOUS OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENTS" (see *The New Testament Era*, Bo Reicke, Fortress Press, Phila., 1981, p.156-161).

The Apostle Paul and Pentecost

The apostle Paul also admitted to being a Pharisee, which tells us he also observed Pentecost on Sivan 6, counting fifty days from the 16th of Nisan. There is no indication in all the New Testament, or in any of Paul's letters, that he ever discontinued this practice.

Paul himself observed Pentecost (Acts 20:16). Being a Pharisee, he must have observed it at the very same time as the other Pharisees. When he arrived in Jerusalem, to keep the Feast, he went up to see James, and all the Jerusalem elders of the Church, to report what God had done through their ministry. When they had done this, James and the others said to Paul:

"You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and ALL OF THEM ARE ZEALOUS FOR THE LAW. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses . . . What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites, and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in those reports about you, but that YOU YOURSELF ARE LIVING IN OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW . . ." (Acts 21:17-24, NIV).

The next day Paul went to the Temple, as instructed, and encountered a crowd there. What were they doing in Jerusalem at that time? The same thing Paul was -- observing the day of Pentecost! Paul was there at the same time Jews from around the world had gathered, and the scattered Jews that came were undoubtedly Pharisees, and not Sadducees. Paul was therefore keeping the same day they were observing.

Some of the Jews recognized Paul, and spread the word that he was a rebel against God's laws, stirring up a mob against Paul. When they were about to stone him, Roman soldiers intervened, and rescued him, and gave him leave to speak to the crowd. In his defense, Paul declared:

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city under GAMALIEL [a leading teacher or "Rabban" among the Pharisees]. I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today" (Acts 22:23, NIV).

Paul knew the laws of God. He had been thoroughly grounded in the teaching of the Torah by Gamaliel, one of the leading and most prestigious rabbis in the land. It is very obvious, therefore, that he observed Pentecost on THE SAME DAY Gamaliel and the Pharisees observed it, and ALL the multitude did -- on SIVAN 6!

Later, in his defense before Felix the governor, Paul declared:

"You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or any where else in the city. . . .

"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me IN THE TEMPLE COURTS doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me" (Acts 24.17-19, NIV).

Paul had come to Jerusalem to worship and to keep the Feast of Pentecost. Great crowds were there from everywhere, observing the Festival. Paul was at the Temple making Pentecost offerings. From the story of his arrest and capture, we can see that he was there, observing Pentecost, at the very same time as the rest of the Jews from the entire region!

Paul, who had been taught the truths of God from the Pharisees, since he was a child, and who was very meticulous as to the laws of God, would not have made an error and been observing Pentecost on the wrong day. He certainly would have had nothing whatever to do with those reprehensible Sadducees! But he was keeping Shavuot, with the rest of the Jews, on the same day that the Pharisees had always taught it should be observed!

Why "Count" Pentecost?

Why does God command that we "count fifty days" each year from Passover till Pentecost? Some have assumed that this was because the date had to be reckoned from the weekly Sabbath that fell on different days during the Passover week. This assumption, however, is simply not true. We read in the *M'Clintock Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*:

"The interval between the Passover and Pentecost was evidently regarded as a RELIGIOUS SEASON. The custom has probably been handed down from ancient times, which is observed by the modern Jews, of KEEPING A REGULAR COMPUTATION OF THE FIFTY DAYS BY A FORMAL OBSERVANCE, BEGINNING WITH A SHORT PRAYER ON THE EVENING OF THE DAY OF THE OMER, AND CONTINUED ON EACH SUCCEEDING DAY BY A SOLEMN DECLARATION OF ITS NUMBER IN THE SUCCESSION, AT EVENING PRAYER, while the members of the family are standing with respectful attention . . . As above noted, in accordance with the injunction in Lev. 23:15, 16, the Jews regularly count every evening the fifty days from the SECOND DAY OF PASSOVER until Pentecost, and they recite

a prayer over it . . . As the counting of these fifty days, on the first of which the sickle was brought out for cutting the corn, and on the last of which it was laid up again because the harvest was entirely finished, is not only a *CONNECTING LINK* between Passover and Pentecost, but may be regarded as *PREPARATORY* for the feast of Pentecost . . . Maimonides, who remarks: '*Pentecost is the day on which the Law was given, and in order to MAGNIFY THIS DAY, the days are counted from the first festival (i.e., Passover) to it, just as one who is expecting the most faithful of his friends is accustomed to count the days and hours of HIS ARRIVAL; for **this is the reason of counting the omer** from the day of our Exodus from Egypt to the day of the giving of the Law, which was the ultimate object of the Exodus. . .*' (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, pp. 926-928).

The day of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai was also the day God "married" Israel, and the nation became His "BRIDE." Thus the counting of the days till Pentecost assumes a very sacred, vitally important significance! It is as if we are literally "COUNTING THE DAYS" till the coming of Jesus Christ, OUR BRIDEGROOM, and the forthcoming marriage of the Church to Him! (Rev. 19:6-10). Are you, personally, "counting the days"?

Pentecost, the reaping of the first (spring) harvest, pictures the entire CHURCH OF GOD, MADE WISE, AND GLORIOUS, BECOMING THE LITERAL "FIRST FRUITS" OF GOD'S KINGDOM AND BECOMING THE BRIDE OF THE LAMB OF GOD FOR ALL ETERNITY!

Think about that! Let its awesome splendor sink into your mind. What a GLORIOUS FESTIVAL! The Christian's journey out of sin, pictured by Egypt, and out of bondage to Satan, pictured by Pharaoh, requires a "journey through the wilderness," and continual intervention and miracles by Almighty God, to get us to our destination where the Laws of God become written upon our hearts and minds, at the resurrection, and at the coming of our Lord to RESCUE His bride from the wrath of Satan and the destruction and devastation of the world!

What a JOYOUS FESTIVAL this ought to be to those of us who truly seek to obey God, and keep His commandments! How wonderfully vital and deeply significant it is for us to observe this holy festival of Almighty God! How important it is that we observe it on the right day -- the "wedding day" -- and not at some other time -- at the "appointed time" -- so that we don't miss our own future "Wedding"!

M'Clintock and Strong continue:

". . . So intimately connected are the beginning of the harvest at Passover with the termination of it at this festival (Pentecost), that Pentecost was actually denominated, during the time of the second temple, and is called in the Jewish literature to the present day, 'THE CONCLUSION,' or, 'THE TERMINATION OF PASSOVER'. . . It was, as we have seen, ESSENTIALLY LINKED TO THE PASSOVER -- that festival which, above all others, expressed the fact of a race chosen and separated from other nations. It was not an insulated day. It stood as the CULMINATING POINT of the Pentecostal season" (p.928-929).

Says M'Clintock and Strong, further:

"Those early fathers who were best acquainted with the Jewish tradition testify to the same thing, that the law was given on Pentecost, and that the Jews commemorate the event on this festival. It was therefore on this day, when the APOSTLES, *IN COMMON WITH THEIR JEWISH BRETHREN*, WERE ASSEMBLED TO COMMMORATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE GIVING OF THE LAW FROM SINAI, and were engaged in the study of Holy Writ, in accordance with the CUSTOM OF THE DAY, that the HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDED UPON THEM. . ." (*ibid.*, p.929).

Notice! The apostles observed Pentecost on the same day as their Jewish brethren. "In common with their Jewish brethren," who were also assembled in Jerusalem at that very same time to observe Pentecost, from regions throughout the Middle East, The apostles "were assembled to commemorate the anniversary of the giving of the law from Sinai," and were studying the Scriptures, as was "the custom of the day"!

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Luke writes in the book of Acts, about that first Pentecost, when all the brethren were gathered together, in Jerusalem: "When the day of Pentecost CAME, they were all together in one place" (Acts 2:1). At this very same time, devout Jews from around the world were assembled in Jerusalem.

"Now there were STAYING IN JERUSALEM GOD-FEARING JEWS from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5, NIV).

What were all these Jews doing staying at Jerusalem? Why were they there? The answer is obvious: They were there, like the apostles, to CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF PENTECOST! These were "God-fearing Jews" -- not ungodly Jews, who had the wrong day! They were keeping Pentecost, just like the apostles were, ON THE VERY SAME DAY!

Let's face it. The evidence is absolutely overwhelming that Pentecost should be observed on the same day as the Jews keep it, the 6th day of Sivan, 50 days after the Passover festival begins! There is absolutely no evidence otherwise. It is amazing how people can remain mired in ignorance, steeped in error, and bogged down in the mud, when the TRUTH is so plain, so self-evident, so palpably strong and blatantly obvious!

Honest Objections Examined

Some claim that Jewish tradition concerning Pentecost is not reliable evidence of which day we should observe, because II Kings 22 makes it clear that at one point in Jewish history the temple itself has been closed down, when apostasy set in due to the malign influence of the wicked king Manasseh.

Says Ronald Dart, evangelist, the Temple had been "long closed, and that even the priesthood were ignorant of the requirements surrounding the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread," because the "book of the Law" had been lost. From that time forward, Ron Dart claims, "the Jews had nothing to go on (relative to the issue at hand) that is not available to us."

Is this observation true?

Ronald Dart is a former minister of the Church of God, International, and now the head of an organization called Christian Educational Ministries (CEM). As such, he wields considerable influence among former Worldwidars and members of various "non-aligned" churches. But how solid and sound is his reasoning that Jewish tradition is useless in determining such matters as Passover and Pentecost?

The Reign of King Josiah

During the reign of king Josiah, the king decided to have repairs made on the Temple of God, which had fallen into disrepair. As work was commencing, Hilkiah the high priest told the king's secretary, Shaphan, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord" (II Kings 22:8). Shaphan took it to the king and read from it, and when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes, and sent the priests to inquire of God's prophetess Huldah about the warnings written in the Book of the Law (verses 11-13). He declared, "Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book . . ." (v. 13).

Some commentators believe that this "book of the Law" which was discovered in the Temple was the entire Pentateuch; others believe that it was a copy of part or all of the book of Deuteronomy. According to Ron Dart of the Church of God, International, this means that all the correct knowledge of the holy days had been lost!

But is that what this Scripture says? Not at all. Such an inference is not warranted by the facts. This discovery of the book of the Law in the Temple occurred during the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign (II Kings 22:3). Prior to him Amon reigned only two years (II Kings 21:19).

Prior to him was the wicked king Manasseh who led the nation into idolatry. He reigned fifty five years (II Kings 21:1). It is obvious that due to his evil influence, the temple of God, and His truth, were neglected during his reign.

However, this does not mean the truth was lost or buried. The prophet Isaiah prophesied during Manasseh's reign. The father of Manasseh was the righteous king Hezekiah, who led Israel in observing the Passover and laws of God correctly. We read:

"Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; HE KEPT THE COMMANDMENTS THE LORD HAD GIVEN MOSES . . . (II Kings 18:56).

Obviously, the truth of God had not become "lost" by the time of Hezekiah, or during his reign, which lasted twenty nine years (II Kings 18:2). It was thoroughly OBEYED, including all the commandments God had given to Moses! Obviously, Hezekiah KNEW when Passover and Pentecost should be observed! He reigned from 726 B.C. to 698 B.C. During his reign the Temple was cleansed, the Levitical priesthood was purified (II Chron.29), During his reign the nation of Judah celebrated Passover with such joy and gladness as had not been seen since the time of Solomon (II Chron.30).

Is Ronald Dart trying to tell us, then, that *within just one generation ALL the truth of God was lost, and the people has a total memory black-out and collective amnesia, so they forgot ALL the commandments of God, and the dates of every annual holy day?*

Is such a thing possible? Or is it incredible fiction and preposterous fantasy -- like aliens living under the earth, and U.S. and Soviet astronauts on the moon as early as the 1950s?

Adam Clarke in his commentary points out the truth of the matter. Consider his cogent and logical presentation of the evidence:

"It is scarcely reasonable to suppose that this was the ONLY COPY of the law that was found in Judea; for even if we grant that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon had endeavored to destroy all the books of the law, yet they could not have succeeded so as to destroy the whole. Besides, Manasseh endeavored AFTER HIS CONVERSION to RESTORE EVERY PART OF THE DIVINE WORSHIP, and in this he could have done nothing without the Pentateuch; and the succeeding reign of Amon was too short to give him opportunity to undo everything that his penitent father had reformed. Add to all these considerations, that in the time of Jehoshaphat teaching from the law was UNIVERSAL in the land, for he set on foot an itinerant ministry, in order to instruct the people fully: for 'he sent to his princes to teach in the cities of Judah; and with them he sent Levites and priests; and the went about through ALL THE CITIES OF JUDAH and taught the people, having THE BOOK OF THE LORD WITH THEM;' see II Chron.17:7-9. . ."

Josiah had begun to restore the correct worship of God during the beginning of his reign,

yet this "book" was not discovered in the Temple until the 18th year of his reign. It is certainly "not likely that during these eighteen years he was without a copy of the Pentateuch," as Adam Clarke continues. He goes on:

"The simple fact seems to be this, that this was the ORIGINAL of the covenant renewed by Moses with the people in the plains of Moab, and which he ordered to be laid up beside the ark, (Deut. 31:26) and now being unexpectedly found, its ANTIQUITY, the occasion of its being made, the present circumstances of the people, the imperfect state in which the reformation was as yet, after all that had been done, would all occur to produce the effect here mentioned on the mind of the pious Josiah."

Clearly the WHOLE TRUTH was restored, and Ron Dart is therefore sadly mistaken when he says the Jews at that time lost the true knowledge of God concerning the holy days. That is NOT what the BIBLE says!

The Critical Experimental Commentary adds this observation:

"It was the TEMPLE COPY, which, having been laid (Deut. 31:25,26) beside the ark in the most holy place, and during the ungodly reigns of Manasseh and Amon perhaps under Ahaz, when the temple itself had been profaned by idols, and the ark also (II Chron. 35:3) removed from its site, was somehow lost, and now found again during the repair of the temple..."

But according to Ron Dart, the Jews lost the truth of the correct time to keep the Passover and Pentecost during this period prior to Josiah's reign. Now, I ask you: Does that really make any sense at all? This very episode is the story of THE FINDING OF THE LAW -- NOT ITS LOSS! Certainly, whatever had been glossed over or lost during the reign of wicked Manasseh was restored during the reign of Josiah, the righteous king! We read of this Josiah:

"Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who TURNED TO THE LORD as he did with ALL HIS HEART AND WITH ALL HIS SOUL AND WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL THE LAWS OF MOSES" (II Kings 23:25, NIV).

Obviously, Josiah returned to God with all his being, "in accordance with ALL THE LAWS OF MOSES." That would include the laws concerning Passover and Pentecost as well -- "ALL THE LAWS," the Scriptures declare! Clearly the WHOLE TRUTH was restored, and Ron Dart is therefore sadly mistaken when he says the Jews at that time lost the true knowledge of God concerning the holy days. That is not what the BIBLE says!

Another Objection Examined

Another question some have raised is: "If God had meant Pentecost to be observed on Sivan 6 every year, then why is this not mentioned, and why did God command us to count 50 days to establish the correct day?"

The answer to this question is given very well by Nick Wood of England, who says:

"The answer is ridiculously easy and lies in the fact that when the LAW was given

to Moses there was no fixed calendar. The months were ascertained by visual observation of the New Moon and depending on whether there were 29 or 30 days in the first and second months, Pentecost could fall on either Sivan 5, 6 or 7. It was not the DATE that was important, rather the count of exactly 50 days. The fact that now there is a fixed Hebrew calendar and Pentecost always falls on Sivan 6 makes no difference."

The key to understand Pentecost is the number "50." God intended it to always be precisely 50 days from Passover, beginning counting the day after the Passover was actually eaten (Nisan 15). "Fifty" is God's number of "liberation" or "liberty" (Lev.25). The "Jubilee year" occurred every fifty years. It was the great year of release, freedom, when "Liberty" was to be "proclaimed throughout the land" (Lev.25:10). Thus, counting "50" from Passover to Pentecost, typified our coming to spiritual "liberty" in Christ! It represented our "journey to freedom"!

This period of time is, in a sense, a "small Jubilee" period, of 50 days -- days to be celebrated, representing our freedom from slavery and our journey to meet with God, in complete liberty and freedom. Thus it pictures our Christian life, as we await and look forward to with expectancy, the return of Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom and King!

The number "50" therefore is extremely significant, and is no small thing. It is very important that we "count 50" every year, from Passover to Pentecost. It is the COUNTING THAT COUNTS!

Another Objection Answered

Another objection which has been raised to a Sivan 6 Pentecost concerns the authority of the scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses' seat, according to Christ (*Matt. 23:12*). It has been claimed this fact only refers to their judging, not their teaching the law of God.

Ron Dart, formerly of the Church of God, International, writes:

"When Moses 'sat,' what did he sit to do? According to Exodus 18:3, he sat to judge the people. Jethro, his father-in-law suggested he not attempt to judge the people alone, but to set up a system of judges to distribute the work load. This is institutionalized in Deuteronomy 17:8-13. Here there was a judicial system to settle matters of controversy, primarily concerned with liability for damages and civil disputes (v.8). Three categories of people were involved in this, priests, Levites, and judges. Their judgment was binding, but it could not be arbitrary; it was to be based on the law" (v.11).

What about this question? In Exodus 18.13 we read, "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses SAT to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening." Now, let's be honest with the Word of God. Ron Dart makes a great "to do" over the fact that Moses sat, judging the people, implying that is the only authority conferred by the "seat of Moses," where the Pharisees sat.

Is this true? Let us read on, and see what ELSE Moses did, while he "sat" in his seat! Jethro was concerned that Moses would wear himself out, handling so many people's problems.

He asked him why he did this.

"And Moses said unto his father in law, 'Because the people come unto me to INQUIRE OF GOD: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I DO MAKE THEM *KNOW YHE STATUTES OF GOD, AND HIS LAWS*'" (Exodus 18.15-16). Do you see? Moses, in his "seat," TAUGHT THE PEOPLE THE LAWS, COMMANDMENTS, AND STATUTES OF GOD! He was a ruler and a teacher. He expounded and interpreted God's Laws, and helped people see HOW THEY APPLIED in specific, human and societal situations.

This was the primary function of those who later "sat in Moses' seat." This was what Jesus said plainly that the Pharisees were responsible for. He said they sat in Moses' seat, and He plainly said we are to do what they said and observe what they said, Notice His precise words again, and write them on your heart:

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: ALL therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that OBSERVE AND DO . . ." (Matt.23;1-3).

Clearly, their authority was to be obeyed so long as it was not used to contradict the very Word of God itself, or the express commands of Jesus Christ, the Word of God (John 1:1-3, 14). The apostles themselves ran into this situation, when the scribes and Pharisees commanded them not to preach in the name of Jesus. Peter responded, "We must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

The fact that the Pharisees, and priests of Jesus' day, sometimes abused their authority, did not give the people license to disobey their God-appointed office, in those matters where there was no conflict with the Word of God!

Let me reiterate this vital point: The fact that the Pharisees, and priests of Jesus' day, at times abused their authority, did not give the people license to disobey them when they taught the commandments of God, for those commandments did not originate with the Pharisees, but with GOD!

We all know that the Pharisees were hypocrites, and fools, in Christ's time (see Matthew 23), and had become a "generation of vipers." But that did not do away with their authority from God, as they "sat on Moses' seat," to teach the commandments of God! We know that they added many human "do's and don'ts" to the law of God, and human traditions, sometimes making the law of God of no effect -- such as the "washing of cups, pitchers and kettles" (Mark 7.4). These things they "added," however, were not binding upon the people. God never gave them authority to ADD TO His law -- merely to explain and interpret it!

Jesus rebuked them severely for this excess and abuse of their God-given authority. He castigated them for sometimes supplanting their own traditions of men for the commandments of God (Matt.5, 15; Mark 7). But He never once accused them of changing the day of a holy day, or counting Pentecost wrongly, or found fault with their calendar calculations!

Jesus very plainly said, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever THEY bid you observe, *THAT OBSERVE AND DO*" (Matt 23:2-3).

As the *Jamieson, Fasset and Brown Commentary* points out:

"In Moses' seat that is, *AS INTERPRETERS OF THE LAW GIVEN BY MOSES*.

"All therefore -- that is, all which, as *SITTING IN THAT SEAT*, and *TEACHING OUT OF THAT LAW*, they bid you observe, that observe and do. The word 'therefore' is thus, it will be seen, of *GREAT IMPORTANCE*, *AS LIMITING* THOSE INJUNCTIONS WHICH HE WOULD HAVE THEM OBEY TO WHAT THEY FETCHED FROM THE LAW ITSELF. In requiring *EXPLICIT OBEDIENCE* to such injunctions, He would have them to recognize the *AUTHORITY BY WHICH THEY TAUGHT* over and above the obligation of the law itself -- an important principle truly; but He who denounced the traditions of such teachers (chap. 15:3) cannot have meant here to throw His shield over these [traditions, and rules which were *not* "fetched from the law itself"] . . ."

In other words, "Moses' seat" meant authority to administer the *LAW OF GOD INCLUDING PASSOVER AND PENTECOST* -- the Law given by God to Moses. And, as long as they were administering that Law, they were to be *OBEYED*. However, this did not include their own humanly devised traditions, because such "traditions of me" were *NOT* given to Moses and were never part of the Law!

"What about the Septuagint?"

In previous articles, I have pointed out that Biblical scholars conclude that the early apostles often quoted from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, the first translation of the Old Testament, which was made into the Greek language in about 250 B.C. Jesus Himself must have been very familiar with the Greek translation.

Ron Dart is one of those who criticizes my use of the Septuagint in proving Pentecost should be counted from the day after the first holy day of Passover. He reluctantly admits that the gospel writers, and Paul, may have used the Greek text, the Septuagint. But he claims this is an insignificant fact, and does not provide evidence that the Septuagint was "inspired" by God, and he speaks of certain alleged "Jewish fables" concerning its origin.

What is the truth about the Septuagint? Shall we all just believe Ron Dart, and go home?

Of course, I recognize that just because the apostles often used the Septuagint, and quoted from it, does not prove that they endorsed every word of that translation! I never said such a thing. However, rather than argue about words, let's just read what *Unger's Bible Dictionary* has to say about the LXX:

"The Greek Septuagint. The Hebrew Old Testament enjoys the unique distinction of being the first book or rather library of books, for such it is, known to be translated into another language. This translation is called the Septuagint and was made in the third and second

centuries B.C. During this period the entire Hebrew Bible was put into the Greek language. It was in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (235-246 B.C.) that the Pentateuch was put into the Greek tongue. Originally the term Septuagint, abbreviated LXX, was applied to the Greek Pentateuch."

Concerning the origin of the LXX, Unger states: "THE SEPTUAGINT WAS THE BIBLE OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY before the New Testament was written. After the New Testament Scriptures came on the scene, they were added to the Septuagint to form the completed Scriptures of Christianity.

"Besides this momentous ministry, the Septuagint met the religious and liturgical requirements of Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt. This was the center of culture and learning of ancient Judaism."

Concerning the origin of the LXX, Unger states:

"Uncertainty attaches to the origin of the Septuagint and its beginning is enshrouded in legend. Its alleged seventy-two translators (six from each of the twelve tribes) is traditional, the number seventy apparently being an approximation for seventy-two.

"Representing a *PREMASORETIC HEBREW TEXT*, THE SEPTUAGINT IS ACCORDINGLY OF *BASIC TEXTUAL AND EXEGETICAL VALUE*. . ." (Unger, "Versions of the Scriptures," p. 1147).

How important is the LXX? Unger's goes on:

"Importance of the Septuagint. *The importance of the Septuagint from every angle CAN SCARCELY BE OVERESTIMATED*. This can be asserted despite its deficiencies and limitations. Religiously and spiritually the Septuagint gave the great revealed truths concerning creation, redemption, sin and salvation to the world. It released these from the narrow isolation of the Hebrew language and people and gave them to the Greco-Roman world through the divinely prepared instrument of the Greek language, the lingua franca of the Greco-Roman age (300 B.C. to A.D. 300). The Septuagint was a definite factor in the preparation for the coming of Christianity and the New Testament revelation. In making the Old Testament available in the same universal language in which the New Testament was destined to appear, it presaged the giving of the Holy Scriptures in one international and universal language of the period" (p. 1149).

Notice how important the Septuagint Version was! Who cannot see the Divine Hand of the Almighty God in its translation, origin, and preservation? The LXX is of incredible value! It should not be "dissed," dismissed, and deprecated by small-minded men of shrunken spirit who seemingly have nothing better to do than criticize!

Unger goes on:

"As the first translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into a foreign language, the

Septuagint gained great fame. The very fact that it was put into the language of culture and education of the day made its use wide. Philo of Alexandria used the Septuagint widely. Josephus depended upon it. *JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS QUOTED FROM IT* as well as from the Hebrew With the dawn of Christianity the Septuagint became *THE SCRIPTURES OF CHRISTIANS*. It was venerated and quoted and used in controversy. The Old Latin, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Gothic, Slavonic and other versions were made from it and it was used in early missionary activity" (*ibid.*).

As a translation, says the *New Bible Dictionary*, "The Pentateuch again ranks high. It is generally competent and faithful" ("Text and Versions," p.1259). This authority continues:

"It acts also as a linguistic and theological bridgehead between the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New; for it served as 'Bible' to generations of Greek-speaking Jews in many countries, AND IT IS OFTEN QUOTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. (Luke and the writer to the Hebrews use it most. . ." (*ibid.*).

The *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* says:

"The quotations from the O.T. in the N.T. are USUALLY CITATIONS FROM THE LXX, either verbatim or with unimportant verbal changes . . ." ("Versions," p.973).

Now Ron Dart may dispute the authority and usefulness of the Septuagint, and claim it was not important, but his private opinions are nothing more than that -- personal, private opinions.

Unbiased and open minded scholars, as a whole, have concluded that the Septuagint was of PRIMARY IMPORTANCE as the first major translation of the Scriptures into the UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE of the cultural, educated world of that time. It was used by Jesus, the apostles, and the early Church! Therefore, it has great importance for us in determining exegetical questions regarding the original Hebrew text, where there are questions of meaning -- such as the controversy concerning the "morrow after the Sabbath" in Leviticus 23:11, 15.

Perhaps that is why Dart refuses to give credence to the Septuagint. To do so would be "fatal" to his arguments against a Sivan 6 Pentecost! For notice, now, what the Septuagint has to say concerning this problem.

I quote from the Septuagint, in Leviticus 23. Remember, this was the Bible used by the EARLY, GREEK-SPEAKING CHRISTIANS and Jews. Notice carefully the pivotal Scripture concerning the counting of Pentecost, found in Leviticus 23, quoted exactly from the LXX:

"These are the festivals for the Lord -- holy, set days, which you shall proclaim in their set times. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, between the two evenings, is the Passover for the Lord. And on the fifteenth day of this month beginneth the festival of unleavened bread for the Lord. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. Now the FIRST DAY shall be a holy, set day for you. You shall do no sacrificial service, but offer whole burnt offerings to the Lord seven days, and the SEVENTH DAY shall be a holy set day for you. You

shall do no sacrificial service.

"Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say unto them, When you are come into the land which I give you, and are about to reap the harvest thereof, you shall bring a sheaf, as the first fruits of your harvest, to the priest, and he shall offer up the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you ON THE MORROW AFTER THE FIRST DAY, the priest shall offer this up" (Lev. 23:4-11).

How interesting and plain this makes this controversial verse of Leviticus 23:11, which some claim tells us to offer the wave sheaf on the day after the *weekly* Sabbath. *NOT SO!* The Septuagint very plainly says, "on the morrow after the FIRST DAY," and there is no way you can interpret the "first day" to ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST! It clearly does not refer to the weekly Sabbath -- the weekly Sabbath is the "SEVENTH DAY," *by its own definition!*

To be sure you understand this point clearly, notice that verse 7 of this chapter identifies the "first day" for us and plainly tells us "THE FIRST DAY" IS THE FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD!!!

This passage in the LXX, therefore, makes the truth incredibly plain and clear as crystal. It ought to END the controversy over Pentecost, and PUT TO SILENCE the obstinate voices of shrill critics. But will it? Let each individual look deep down into his or her own heart, and examine their own personal motives. Will we recognize and admit the truth? What does it take? How much "PROOF" is required?

Another "Honest" Objection Scrutinized

It is often claimed by some who cling to observing a Monday Pentecost, that the primary reason they do this is because they believe that God originally revealed the TRUTH to Herbert Armstrong, and they have held fast to that truth, even when the Church of God as a whole departed from it in the '70s. They often point out that the '70s was a time of corruption in the Worldwide Church of God, wholesale doctrinal changes began to occur, and the faith was "watered down."

Of course, to a degree what they say is true. I know. I was in Pasadena during the 60's, 70's, 80's, and 90's. The mid-seventies were a time of crisis, corruption, cover-up, and mishandling of sins. They were a time of doctrinal confusion, debate, and widespread apostasy. I know it to be true. But those who went off on their own, did so for all the wrong reasons! They "threw the baby out with the bath water." They did not "recapture" the truth of God. Rather, like a branch broken off from a tree, most of them soon died, and disappeared from the scene. A few hung on for dear life, but never amounted to anything. And *ALL of them persisted in fundamental errors taught by Herbert Armstrong!*

Those who claim God revealed all the basic, fundamental truth to Herbert Armstrong back when the Church began, in 1934, have a serious problem. Most of them have assumed that Herbert Armstrong, back in those halcyon days, observed Pentecost on a Monday.

But they are incredibly WRONG!

In a paper defending his personal belief in a Monday Pentecost, Raymond Cole, one-time evangelist in the Worldwide Church of God, who departed from the church in the mid-70's, to begin his own church, actually admitted the following earth-shaking, cataclysmic truth: He wrote, with astonishing candor:

"There were *SEVERAL YEARS IN WHICH ARMSTRONG WAS FOLLOWING THE RABBINIC CUSTOM OF SIVAN 6*, which meant that it could fall at various times, Sunday, Monday, Wednesday or Friday. Now it did so happen that Sivan 6 fell on a Sunday on one or two years *DURING THE TIME WHEN MR. ARMSTRONG ACCEPTED THE MODERN JEWISH RABBINICAL DATE FOR PENTECOST.*"

Raymond Cole goes on: "Converted and called in 1927, Mr. Armstrong was ordained to the ministry in 1931. He began keeping the Holy Days with others in 1934. Truth was revealed to him, as he has said, one doctrine at a time. A calendar was published in 1937 *SHOWING PENTECOST CORRESPONDING TO THE JEWISH DATE OF SIVAN 6*. But it must have been that very year that Monday observance was begun. For a diary of an early church member, Mrs. Lorinda (Stoneberg) Le Bleu (baptized in 1936 by Mr. Armstrong), shows that she did keep Pentecost on a Monday in the years 1937, 1940, 1941 and following."

Cole explains, "Jews sometimes keep both days, Sivan 6 and 7. So it may have been that the Pentecosts observed by Mrs. Le Bleu in 1937 and 1938 were still during the time when Mr. Armstrong *HAD ACCEPTED THE JEWISH RECKONING.*" Cole goes on to say that in 1939 the Jewish Pentecost and a Monday Pentecost would have been five days apart. Mrs. Le Blue's diary for that year shows a meeting on Monday, May 29, which he suggests is definite proof that by 1939 Mr. Armstrong had changed to a Monday Pentecost!

But so what? Just because he changed, doesn't mean he did the right thing! As we have proved conclusively, I believe, in this book, Pentecost *IS* and *SHOULD BE OBSERVED ON SIVAN 6 -- JUST AS THE JEWS OBSERVE IT, AND HAVE OBSERVEDS IT, WITHOUT PAUSE, FOR THE PAST THREE THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED YEARS!*

How much proof does it take?

Interestingly, Herbert Armstrong at first had it right. God did reveal to him the truth! And He did it at the beginning of the church era! But for some reason, in the late 1930's, he lost this precious truth! He forsook it, and got all mixed up in "counting." He forgot the lesson of *what day to count from!*

At this same time in his life, he was suffering from many personal problems. These have been identified in other articles and books, and have been thoroughly documented and verified. His own children have verified the truth of his incest, and moral lapses, which occurred during those fateful years. Need I say more? That is also the time when he was certain that Hitler and Mussolini were the "Beast" of Revelation, and that World War II would end up in

"Armageddon," and the return of Christ!

Herbert Armstrong made many mistakes, back then. But it is not my purpose to throw stones at the dead. He may well have repented of his sins, and failures, and could be in the kingdom of God. That is for God and Christ to judge.

However, the point I am making is that regardless of the reasons why he did it, Herbert Armstrong -- who had the truth about Pentecost, originally -- later changed his mind, and became convinced that the Sadducees ruled the Temple during Christ's day, and that their method of observing Pentecost was right -- *except he even disagreed with them on HOW to COUNT!* So he still wound up observing a day, Monday, which nobody in all history, ever observed, as "Pentecost"!

How incredible! When God allows "blindness" to occur to a person, He knows how to do it completely!

A Call to REPENTANCE!

We are fast approaching the END of this age. There is not much time left. God has revealed, in this very END TIME, the TRUTH about Pentecost. The question is, will we be willing to repent, and change, and "do the right thing"?

Will those who have been wrong, who have been observing the WRONG DAY, finally own up to their errors and mistakes, and REPENT BEFORE GOD, in humility and contrition, trembling before the Word of God (Isa. 66.2-3)?

Only they can answer that.

I would like to suggest the following: While Herbert Armstrong was being led of God, and His mind was open to God's truth, beginning in 1927, God did indeed reveal to him many startling, amazing truths. One of those was the key of the annual holy days. And God revealed to him THE RIGHT DAY to observe Pentecost SIVAN 6! And for many years, he and his wife alone observed the correct day. Then, even after the beginning of the "Philadelphia era" of the Work of God, for several years -- from 1934 until 1938 -- they still observed Pentecost on SIVAN 6!

Therefore, it was not a "Monday Pentecost" at all, but SIVAN 6, that was the original day God revealed to Herbert Armstrong and Loma D. Armstrong that should be observed!

The truth is, when Herbert Armstrong changed to a "Monday" Pentecost, departing from the practice of the Jews, HE WENT INTO ERROR! He began a long and checkered and grievous process of LOSING some of the truth which had formerly been revealed! And much truth God never did reveal to him. Why?

Why did Almighty God allow this to happen? Anyone familiar with the Armstrong legacy, knows that at about this time he also began going astray in Biblical predictions and

prophecy. But why?

Isaiah declares: "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. **BUT YOUR INIQUITIES HAVE SEPARATED YOU FROM YOUR GOD: your SINS** have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2, NIV).

It is a sad and tragic fact of history that during those latter years of the 1930's and early 1940's that Herbert Armstrong, for a period of ten years, as has been admitted by his own son who discovered the truth only in the 1970's, had succumbed to temptation, and had begun molesting one of his own daughters, over a period of many years, a heinous sin in the sight of God! He did this while carrying on as a minister, and the leader of what was then called the "Radio Church of God. "

No wonder, then, that God began to "embarrass" Herbert Armstrong, allowing Him to make vain and foolish predictions concerning prophecy, and allowed him to descend into error concerning various doctrines, including divorce and remarriage, the holy days of God, and particularly the calculation of Pentecost!

In 1974 the Church went through many changes. Some erroneous doctrines were changed, but in some cases the changes were worse than the original error! One of those was changing Pentecost from "Monday" to "Sunday," the day of Baal, the sun god of antiquity! In doing this, the Church began to embrace the doctrines of Catholicism, hierarchial-ism, and began rejecting the government and commandments of God!

Jesus said that if we desire to enter into life, we must "KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Mat 19:17). He said explicitly to the young rich man who asked Him what good thing he must do to get eternal life, "If you want to enter life, OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS" (Mat 19:17, NIV).

On another occasion, Jesus said to His disciples, His true followers: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the LAW or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, **NOT THE SMALLEST LETTER, NOT THE LEAST STROKE OF A PEN, WILL BY ANY MEANS DISAPPEAR FROM THE LAW** until everything is accomplished" (Matt 5.17-18, NIV).

God's commandments were ordained for our eternal good and welfare. They are the commandments of LIFE. They are the way of LIFE. It is very important, then, that we observe them correctly, and keep God's holy days as He originally intended and commanded -- on the precise day He set aside for worship!

If YOU do not observe Pentecost the correct day which God commanded, when you know better, then you will have no part in the Kingdom of God!

Furthermore, if you do not observe Pentecost on the correct day which God commanded, you will not receive the End-Time outpouring of God's Spirit to see you through these tumultuous, traumatic "last days"!

Those who stubbornly refuse to obey God, even when the truth has come to them, will be cut off from God, and receive the reward for disobedience -- eternal DEATH! Is that strong enough a warning?

Indeed, this is very serious business!

Remember the words of the apostle Jude, who wrote so vividly: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and EXHORT YOU that ye should EARNESTLY CONTEND for the faith WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED unto the saints" (Jude 3).

And remember God's words to the Philadelphia era of His true Church: "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do he; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

"Behold, I come quickly: HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN.

"Him that OVERCOMETH will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches" (Rev. 3:8-13, KJV).

Are YOU "contending earnestly" for the faith and truth ONCE DELIVERED? Are YOU holding fast to that original truth, so that NO MAN can *steal your crown*, laid up in heaven for you?

Consider well what you have read here. Consider well the importance of observing Pentecost on the right, God-revealed day. Consider well the proofs I have set forth in this treatise. Your salvation, and eternal life in the Kingdom of God, could very well be at stake for you. It could mean suffering Great Tribulation and the wrath of God, as "correction" from the Almighty, if you refuse to check into these things, and choose to put these things "on hold," out of your mind, procrastinating, and "waiting for a more convenient season," to investigate these matters.

Is your salvation worth checking up, going to a local library, and reading the available literature yourself? Is your salvation worth *searching the Scriptures*, and "proving all things" (I Thess.5:21), as Paul said? Do you "love" the truth of God?

It is your own decision to make. May God help you to pray over these things, and inspire you, to look to Him for guidance, and to make the right decision!