

What You Should Know *about Pentecost*

Was the Church of God founded on Sunday? What is the real meaning of Pentecost, and why have the churches lost it?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

PART II

IS THIS the *only* "day of salvation"? The worldly churches generally teach that all who die unsaved, or do not "get saved" before the second coming of Christ, can never thereafter receive salvation.

They assume there is a great contest in progress between Christ and Satan. They believe Christ came to save the world, and all these churches in the world are His churches, through which He is desperately trying to "get the world saved."

On the other hand, the clever deceptive devil is doing all he can to prevent people from being "saved." And they seem to believe there is a time-limit on the contest.

We are now near the time for the second coming of Christ, but when Christ returns to earth *in Person* He will find Himself helpless—utterly unable to save the world from Satan's clutch—because then "it will be too late." "Probation will be closed," as one denomination expresses it.

This paganized teaching represents Satan as far more powerful than God.

The Answer Revealed

The New Testament Church of God was not founded on Sunday. But it did start on the *annual* Sabbath-day called "Pentecost" or "Feast of First Fruits." Also called the "Feast of Weeks."

The New Testament Church continued, year after year, to keep this annual Sabbath, *Pentecost*, as we shall show.

And God gave this festival to His people in order to reveal, and to keep them continually informed, that the present dispensation is *only the first, preliminary* "harvest of souls."

As already explained, God's purpose in giving His Church His annual holydays was to keep His children constantly in true understanding of God's great PLAN.

To accomplish this, God took the yearly *material* harvest seasons in Palestine as the picture of the *spiritual* harvest of souls.

In Palestine there are *two* annual harvests. First, produced by the early rain, is the spring grain harvest. Second,

produced by the "latter rain," comes the main harvest—the much greater fall harvest. God intended His holydays to picture to His Church repeatedly year by year the fact that only those He Himself *calls* during this age can become His begotten children *now!* And we are merely the *first-fruits* of the great spiritual harvest!

The Wave-Sheaf

But let us continue the central passage which summarizes all the holydays—Leviticus 23.

Here we find *all* of God's festivals, proclaimed holy convocations, in the one chapter. First is the *weekly* convocation-day, the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Then, beginning verse 4, follows a list of the *annual* festivals, also *commanded* assemblies, "which ye shall proclaim *in their seasons*."

First of these is the Passover, followed by the days of unleavened bread with the two annual Sabbaths. Beginning verse 9, we find instructions for the wave-sheaf offering.

The Israelites were not allowed to harvest any of the early grain crop until this day (verse 14). Then, on the day following the weekly Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread, in a solemn ceremony of the Levitical priesthood (the rituals were mere substitutes and therefore not practised today) the first sheaf of grain was cut and brought to the priest. The priest solemnly waved it before the Eternal to be accepted for them.

This pictures—not the resurrection—but the *resurrected* Christ being accepted of God as the very *first* human to be actually *born* of God—the first fruit of the first harvest of souls! By comparing John 20:17 with Matt. 28:9, you will see that Christ presented Himself before the Father on the day *AFTER* His resurrection (I Cor. 15:20, 23; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18). This fulfillment of the wave-sheaf offering actually occurred on Sunday, the morrow after the Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread.

How to Figure Pentecost

Next comes Pentecost. The word

"Pentecost" is a Greek word, used in the New Testament, but not in the Old. It signifies "fifty," or, literally, "*count fifty*." In the Old Testament this feast is called "*Feast of Firstfruits*," and "*Feast of Weeks*."

Notice the properly translated plain instruction beginning verse 15: "And you shall *count* unto you *from* the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven WEEKS shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh WEEK shall ye *number fifty days*." And that *fiftieth day* is PENTECOST!

". . . And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a STATUTE FOREVER in all your dwellings *throughout your generations*" (Verse 21).

All other holydays or festivals come on definite days of definite months. But this one annual Sabbath must be determined by COUNTING. It is very simple and plain. Any child should be able to start numbering *from* a definite day and count fifty. Yet there are three little simple points which seem to confuse some few people so that they observe the wrong day.

It is of very grave importance we figure the right day. This day, and this only, is made HOLY by the Eternal Creator. Suppose at the 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!

Three Errors

The first of these three errors is figuring from the day after the first *annual* Sabbath. The erring Pharisees figured that way. That is why they no longer need to COUNT Pentecost. But the wave-sheaf was waved on the morrow after *the* Sabbath—the weekly Sabbath. Christ fulfilled that which it pictured on the day after the *weekly* Sabbath. So we always start by counting fifty days *from* a Sunday.

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Herbert W. Armstrong
Publisher and Editor
Herman L. Hoeh
Executive Editor
Roderick C. Meredith
Associate Editor

Address communications to the Editor,
Box 111, Pasadena, California.

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The second mistake made by some is in counting seven *Saturdays* instead of seven *WEEKS*. As Moses wrote this in Hebrew, the word "*Shabbath*" was used. This Hebrew word has more than one meaning. It means "*seven*," and "*week*" as well as "*rest*," and "*the Sabbath*" or seventh *day* of the week. Like the English words, "*saw*," and "*bear*," it has more than one meaning. Therefore we must put *other* Scriptures together with this to let the Bible itself tell us which meaning is intended.

In eight places in the New Testament this same Hebrew word was incorporated into the Greek language in the original writing to indicate the word "*week*," as in Mat. 28:1. In Deut. 16:9 we find another instruction for counting this day of Pentecost. Here, a different Hebrew word was written by Moses—"shabua"—which *never* means the weekly Sabbath, but *always* means "*week*." It says: "Seven *WEEKS* shalt thou number unto thee; begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the *Feast of WEEKS*." Also Num. 28:26—same Hebrew word. Pentecost is the day *after* these seven *WEEKS*—"after your weeks be out," and not the last day of those weeks. In Ex. 34, the very *NAME* of the Festival is Feast of *WEEKS*. Not feast of "*Saturdays*." The Moffatt and other translations translate Ex. 23:15 "seven *WEEKS* shall be complete." In view of these other Scriptures it *cannot* mean anything else, though in the King James translation the word "*sabbaths*" was incorrectly used. But the word "*sabbath*" is merely the English spelling of

this Hebrew word which means *WEEKS*.

Counting FROM

Now if on a given Sunday some friend arranges to go fishing or hunting with you "one week from today," you certainly would meet that friend on the next Sunday.

This brings us to the third error. Some start counting fifty days *from* the Sunday after the weekly Sabbath of unleavened-bread week, by numbering the very day they count *from* as "Number one," and then come out with Pentecost on a Sunday.

There are *TWO* ways to count "*Pentecost*." First, count seven *WEEKS* from the particular Sunday following the weekly Sabbath in unleavened-bread week, which brings you to the seventh *SUNDAY*, and then count even to the morrow *after* that seventh week, and you will correctly figure Pentecost to come on *MONDAY*.

Second, count *FIFTY DAYS* *from* this same Sunday, and that fiftieth day is Pentecost. It is very simple. One day from Sunday is Monday. Two days from Sunday is Tuesday. And so on until you count *fifty* days from Sunday, a Monday.

The simple little word "*from*" means, according to Webster's dictionary, "away out of." The day you count as number one day *from* Sunday is the very first day that is "*away out of*" Sunday. You cannot number Sunday as the first day from Sunday, because it is not away from it or out of it, but still in it.

Jubilee Settles It

Now the counting of the *JUBILEE YEAR* settles the matter. God's entire *PLAN* is a sabbatical plan. There were the seven days of creation—six of creation by *work*, and the seventh by *rest*. God's *PLAN* runs seven thousand years.

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There are seven annual Sabbaths. There was a sabbatical *YEAR*—every seventh *YEAR*. To count the Jubilee year, they began counting *from* (not with but *from*) the preceding Jubilee. Seven years from this year was the first Sabbatical Year. Seven of these Sabbatical years were counted. Then the very *next year* AFTER the seventh Sabbatical year—the *FIFTIETH* year—was Jubilee. Counting to the next Jubilee they never counted that Jubilee year as number one—but the year *following* it, or one year *from* it was number one. That is the way to count *PENTECOST*. It's ALWAYS on a *MONDAY*!

Meaning of Pentecost

Passover symbolized Christ's sacrifice for the remission of our sins, and the days of unleavened bread the putting away of sin. Pentecost pictures the *first* part of the Spiritual harvest—the calling out of the Church—the called-out ones—which, for the New Testament dispensation, began on Monday—Pentecost, June 18, 31 A.D. On that day the Holy Spirit *first* came to dwell *WITHIN* all flesh, as prophesied by Joel.

The two wave-loaves were brought out of the habitations of the congregation as the *FIRSTFRUITS* unto the Lord. So the New Testament *CHURCH* was gathered out of an apostate, Christ-rejecting congregation (church) of Jews, as the *FIRSTFRUITS* of His salvation.

Most Not Now Called

God has not cast away His people, Israel. But He blinded them *UNTIL* the end of Gentile Times, so that thru their fall salvation came to the Gentiles who, thru Christ, are individually *GRAFTED IN*, or spiritually *ADOPTED* into, the family of Israel.

This is the dispensation when God is calling a people for His name (Acts 15:14-17—study this anew!) to be a Kingdom and *PRIESTS*, reigning *WITH* Christ in the Kingdom during the thousand years (Rev. 5:10).

"After this"—after this dispensation of taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name—"I will return," promises the Eternal *What for?* "and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and *I* (Christ, not men) will set it up."

WHY? "*That the residue of men might seek after the Lord.*"

Tabernacle signifies worship. During this present Church age, the Jews and Israel are blinded. Their church "tabernacle" is fallen down. Israel is "in Babylon." After this Christ will return, and then *the rest of men*—blinded Israel, and Gentiles alike, *will seek after the*

Lord when Satan is chained, and Christ reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords!

Those of the **FIRSTFRUITS** of His salvation, made immortal, will then reign with Him, as kings and priests in the wonderful work of building a **NEW** civilization.

During this time Israel is mostly blinded **UNTIL** the fullness of Gentiles come in, *and so* (Rom. 11:26) *all Israel shall, then, be saved from sin*, for the **DELIVERER**, Christ, shall come out of Zion! This does *not* mean eternally saved. Israel shall all be brought to repentance and saved from sin—how? Because Christ turns ungodliness from *mortal* Israel by forgiving sin.

Now, in this dispensation, Israel has not believed, and the tabernacle of David is fallen down (Rom. 11:31-32), that, thru the mercy of the Gentiles and the small "Elect" in Israel, picked out in this age, acting as kings and priests with Christ, **THEY, ALSO**, then, may **OBTAIN MERCY!**

How **WONDERFUL** is God's great **PLAN** of redemption, when we understand it, as we see it pictured in these annual **HOLYDAYS!**

Only First Harvest Now

In Jas. 1:18, Rom. 8:23, for example, the saints of this dispensation are called the **FIRSTFRUITS** of God's salvation. This dispensation, and the picking out of these people to bear His name began on the **DAY OF PENTECOST**. This feast annually pictures this great event—this great "**MYSTERY**" dispensation—in God's redemption plan!

Notice, too, that these feasts, Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost, fell at the **BEGINNING** of the year, and the great events they pictured occurred at the **BEGINNING** of the dispensation!

The group of holydays coming at the **END** of the year all symbolize tremendous events in God's Plan of redemption to occur, yet future, at the **END** of the dispensation! They all come in the **SEVENTH MONTH**—and their fulfillment will commence in the **SEVENTH**-thousand year since creation!!

The churches of **BABYLON** today teach that it is the mission of the Church to **SAVE THE WORLD**. They teach that all who ever shall be saved are being saved, now, in this present dispensation. They teach that "**Probation ENDS**" at, or prior to, the second coming of Christ.

If this be true, what a failure is God's plan! Only a very, very **FEW** have been truly saved in this dispensation. One-third of all living on earth today have never even **HEARD** the *only* name where-by we may be saved!

Are they—the majority of all living,

eternally **LOST** because they never **HEARD**—lost and condemned **WITHOUT A CHANCE?** The common teaching is that God has cast away His people Israel, and they are eternally doomed and lost. Had they been **KEEPING** these annual holydays, commanded to be kept **FOREVER**—all kept faithfully by the New Testament Church as recorded in Acts and in church history—they would have understood God's wonderful **PLAN**.

We are not to **CONVERT** everyone in the world in this age, but to declare the Gospel—what Gospel?—the **GOOD NEWS** of the **KINGDOM**—the Good News of the thousand years of restitution of all things when Christ returns to reign in power and great glory!

Let us understand this. During this time Israel is blinded in part—but only **UNTIL** the completion of this Gentile dispensation. During this time, only the minority of Gentiles—Chinese, people of India and Russia—have even **HEARD** the name of Christ.

The Good News of the coming **KINGDOM** to be preached **AS A WITNESS**. Many have been called during this time, but only few actually chosen, and still fewer have remained faithful to the end.

They—the people picked out for His name—shall be made immortal and shall **REIGN DURING** the thousand years of the **Kingdom** upon earth. Then Israel's blindness will be removed. They were blinded **UNTIL** the end of Gentile times. The heavens received Jesus **UNTIL** these times of restitution of all things.

Those now gathered, since that day of **PENTECOST**, June 18, 31 A.D., are the **FIRSTFRUITS**, *only*, of God's Plan of Salvation. *This dispensation, then, is picking out ONLY the "firstfruits" of those to be saved.* And they are being tried and tested to qualify for positions as kings and priests in the Kingdom, to affect, **THEN**, the real salvation of the world.

When Christ Returns

THEN it is that God shall set His hand again the **SECOND TIME** to recover the remnant of **HIS PEOPLE**—Israel (Isa. 11:11).

THEN it is that "The Lord will come with fire, and . . . by fire and by his sword will the Lord **PLEAD** with all flesh . . . And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape (these plagues) of them unto the nations (Gentile) . . . *that have NOT HEARD* my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they **SHALL DECLARE MY GLORY AMONG THE GENTILES**" (Isa. 66:15,16,19).

Then it is that "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem," and the Gentile nations that have not **HEARD** previously "shall even go up from year to year to

worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and **to KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES!**"

Then it is that many nations "shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain (nation) of the Lord . . . and he will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for **THE LAW SHALL GO FORTH OF ZION**, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares . . . neither shall they learn war any more . . . *In that day*, **SAITH THE LORD . . . THE LORD SHALL REIGN OVER THEM** in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever." (Does "forever" **MEAN** forever?) (Micah 4:1-7). This does **NOT** apply to our Church, **NOW**—but to the glorious time of the **KINGDOM**, *after* Christ returns. What a wonderful **PLAN** of **REDEMPTION!**

Adam sinned. All have sinned. From Adam to now we behold a chronicle of man without God—of human suffering and failure.

And thus God, in His great wisdom, has permitted men to **PROVE** to themselves what sinners they are!—how **HELPLESS** they are, of themselves!

And finally we shall have to learn the lesson that it is only when **GOD HIMSELF** undertakes to save men—by sending **JESUS** to rule with a rod of iron, that the world can really be saved! And so, those now being saved are a **FIRSTFRUITS** of salvation, and will have the very great honor of being Christ's assistants in that wonderful Kingdom work of redemption!

THAT is God's true Plan of Redemption, as taught from Genesis to Revelation! And how contrary to the popular teaching! But it is the Plan, nevertheless, pictured in God's annual **HOLYDAYS**. And had the churches continued to **KEEP** these Holydays, they should never have lost sight of this **PLAN**, and come under the deception of Rome!

Pentecost Observed By New Testament Church of God

Just as we found the **True CHURCH OF GOD** continuing to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, so they continued to observe Pentecost. Read it: I Cor. 16:8; Acts 20:16.

Had they **NOT** been assembled in a **HOLY CONVOCATION** on the first Pentecost **AFTER** everything that was abolished had been **DONE AWAY**, we never could have read in our Bibles the sublime record of the second chapter of Acts!

Now a "**HOLY CONVOCATION**" means a holy **ASSEMBLY** of the **CHURCH**, convoked under absolute **AUTHORITY**. Look up the word "convocation" in the dictionary. (Please continue on page 8)

any of the Churches from the time of the Apostles until the Second Coming. It has but few ministers. Yet this Church has KEPT God's Word—repented where it was wrong—accepted the new knowledge now revealed—lived by the Word of God—and is also called by the NAME, The CHURCH OF GOD. Because this Church, physically small and weak, has KEPT GOD'S WORD with patient endurance, it shall be PROTECTED and PRESERVED from the hour of trial—the Great Tribulation, and Day of the Lord, soon coming on the earth! And THIS is the Church Christ *uses* as HIS INSTRUMENT in proclaiming His GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM—the GOVERNMENT of God—to the world. He sets before this Church an "OPEN DOOR," for the proclaiming of this Gospel to ALL THE WORLD. The meaning of this "DOOR" is explained in II Cor. 2:12-13. Paul said: "I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a DOOR was opened to me of the Lord." This was a means to preach the Gospel in EUROPE. Until then, for 19 years, the Gospel had been preached only in Asia!

For one 19-year time-cycle, God carried on the Gospel thru His Church to North America. He had opened the DOOR of radio and the printing press. Then, 19 years to the exact month, God OPENED THE DOOR for the Gospel to go to ALL EUROPE, and the very next year to ASIA. The same identical time-pattern of 19-year time-cycles is being fulfilled in God's work thru His Church today, as it was thru His Church in Apostolic days.

But SOME of those in the Church today will grow weary with well-doing. They will brag about being the true Church—thinking they are spiritually rich, when they are, in fact, almost spiritually destitute. Because they are indifferent to the real WORK OF GOD, lukewarm, lacking in zeal, Christ will spew them out of His mouth. THEY cannot be used

in His work! THEY shall lose the very salvation they boast of having unless they repent! God help *you* never to drift into the LAODICEAN church!

Ordained, and Under Authority

Finally, brethren, many may not realize that I personally was fully ORDAINED by the laying on of hands after fasting and prayer of those in authority in GOD'S CHURCH. It was in the summer of 1931. I had held a short evangelistic campaign for the Oregon Conference, Church of God (Stanberry, Mo.), six months before, after three and a half years of receiving instruction in the Gospel from Christ, thru His written Word. In the summer of 1931 those in authority in this Church of God asked me to enter the full time ministry, starting with a tent campaign in Eugene, Oregon. And for this ministry I was ORDAINED, by fasting and prayer and laying on of hands of the presbytery—those in authority in God's Church. This Church is now clearly identified, in the light of carefully documented historical research, as the "Sardis" era of the Church described prophetically by Jesus in Revelation 3:1-6.

An abbreviated account of those early years in the ministry—of being UNDER authority—of preaching where and when I was *sent* by those over me in authority—of being *sent* by them to the country school house west of Eugene, Oregon, in 1933, from where the present work and the "Philadelphia" era of the Church blossomed forth—was published in the December, 1953, GOOD NEWS, in Herman L. Hoeh's article "God Demands Teamwork."

There is not space in the present article to repeat this history of early experience—of being considered, and accepting the status, of the *least* of the ministers in the Church. Sometime later I hope to write an article filling in many interesting details and experiences of

those days—sketching in more detail the actual beginning of the Philadelphia Church—YOUR Church today.

God works thru HUMAN INSTRUMENTS! Of course God *could* carry on His work otherwise. God *could* carry on His work without relying on the riches and offerings of His children in His Church. He *could* supply all the money by direct miracle. But it is for OUR good that He gives every begotten child of His a *direct part* in His great work.

God *could* ordain those He has called to office and authority in His work secretly and direct, without the hand of man. But there is no instance in the history of His Church where He ever did! God *could* do all His work HIMSELF, direct, without using any ministers or human agencies at all! BUT THAT IS NOT GOD'S WAY! God did His work on earth thru the human body of Jesus Christ while Jesus was on earth. Now, according to God's own Word, HIS CHURCH, with its many human members, is CHRIST'S BODY thru whom God carries on His work. There is no example in the Bible where God carried on HIS WORK under the New Covenant by any single individual OUTSIDE OF, *independent of*, HIS ORGANIZED CHURCH AND HIS ORDER OF GOVERNMENT IN THE CHURCH. Anyone outside of God's Church is AGAINST God's Church!

Jesus said: "He that is not with me is *against me*; and he that gathereth not with me *scattereth abroad*."

Pentecost

(Continued from page 5)

tionary. It is an assembly where everyone is COMMANDED, under AUTHORITY, to be present. The Sabbath is a weekly holy CONVOCATION. We are commanded, therefore, to assemble ourselves together. Each of these annual days is an holy CONVOCATION. The early Church obeyed. Are we?

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