

Pentecost – Count Fifty

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Almighty God has appointed specific festivals that are to be observed by mankind. These festivals keep those who observe them in remembrance of the plan He is working out to restore every sinner's relationship with Him. In contrast, Satan the Adversary (1Tm. 5:14; 1Pet. 5:8) has his appointed times (1Kgs. 12:32; Dan. 7:25) that are contrary to God's law, and they focus on values that are important to him (Gal. 5:16-21). Currently, the majority of mankind follows the appointed times of the Adversary (Rev. 12:9; Jn. 8:44).

One of God's appointed times is called the day of Pentecost, which means "count fifty" (days). This holy day was kept in the Old Covenant and is to be kept in the New Covenant as confirmed by the early church that observed it after Christ's death and resurrection (Ac. 2:1, 20:16; 1Cor. 16:8). The count to Pentecost is to begin on the day following the first weekly Sabbath that occurs during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Pentecost was referred to as the Feast of Weeks in the Old Covenant because seven full weeks were completed before the day of Pentecost,

And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks... (Ex. 34:22).

And you shall count for yourself from the day after the Sabbath (weekly), from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering (during the Days of Unleavened Bread – Ex. 12:14-20, 13:6-7): seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath... (Lev. 23:15-16; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Also on the day of the first-fruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the Lord at your Feast of

Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work (Num. 28:26).

Consequently, for anyone to correctly count to and observe the day of Pentecost, they would have to know the correct timing of the Days of Unleavened Bread, which follow immediately after the Passover (refer to God's calendar on this website). As the day of Pentecost follows the seventh Sabbath, counting from the weekly Sabbath that occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread, it will always fall on the first day of the week, known as Sunday in the current secular calendar.

The early church of God was assembled at 9:00am for observance of this festival.

But Peter, standing up with the eleven (disciples, of Christ), raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. ¹⁵For these (people speaking in foreign languages) are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day (Ac.2:14-15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As the first hour of the day at this time in history was calculated from 6:00 am, it would have been 9:00 am by the third hour of the day.

The number fifty has great significance in God's plan of salvation, and is used to determine the year of Jubilee.

And you shall count seven Sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of seven Sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement (another of God's appointed festivals) you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate (set apart) the

fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants... (Lev. 25:8-10).

Almighty God uses the number fifty to denote freedom from all forms of oppression, and in the case of a Jubilee year all debts are canceled, land that was leased was returned to its owner, and Israelite slaves were set free (Lev. 25:10-17). Therefore, true freedom is one aspect of the day of Pentecost, and the number fifty is integral to it. This freedom from oppression is something that the Adversary does not offer in his counterfeit system of worship. Instead, he wants to keep all his minions ignorant about God's plan of salvation, and eventually he will give account for his crimes against humanity.

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! ¹³For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' ¹⁵Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. ¹⁶"Those who see you will gaze at you, [and] consider you, [saying]: '[Is] this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, ¹⁷Who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, **[who] did not open the house of his prisoners?**' ¹⁸"All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house; ¹⁹But you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, [like] the garment of those who are slain, thrust through with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a corpse trodden underfoot. ²⁰You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land [and] slain your people. The brood of evildoers shall never be named (Isa. 14:12-20; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As the number fifty is associated with freedom, it is important to identify how God associates freedom with the day of Pentecost. The first Pentecost, that was kept by an entire nation, occurred fifty days after Israel was taken out of Egyptian captivity (see footnote on calculations). Although they were freed from slavery in Egypt, God wanted to emphasize that their slavery to the Adversary would continue unless they changed their way of living, which had been contrary to His law. God then proceeded to teach His law to the nation of Israel (Ex. 20 – 23). During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ explained that obedience to his Father's law was the way out of "spiritual slavery" because obedience would bring true freedom, happiness, and prosperity.

...If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free** (from the deceptive ways of Satan) (Jn. 8:31-32 cf. Ps. 119:160, 172; emphasis added; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Jesus Christ explained that living contrary to God's law keeps an individual in slavery to the Adversary.

Jesus answered them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, **whoever commits sin is a slave to sin** (Jn. 8:34; cf. 1Jn. 3:4; emphasis added).

Christ went on to make the connection that sinners are slaves of their father the devil.

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it (Jn. 8: 44; emphasis added).

When the early church kept their first Pentecost, following Christ's death and resurrection (Ac. 2:1), many who were in attendance saw they had been deceived by the Adversary (Rev. 12:9). Having now recognized this as spiritual slavery, they wanted desperately to be freed.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God (our Father) has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren what shall we do?' The Peter said to them, 'Repent (of your sins), and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit' (Ac. 2:36-38; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Therefore, the first national observance of Pentecost in the Old Covenant, and the first international (Ac. 2:17) observance of Pentecost in the New Covenant, involved understanding the consequences of living contrary to God's law. Those who repented during both covenant periods would enjoy the freedom of knowing the truth.

Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and **Your law is truth** (Ps. 119:142; emphasis added).

...And all **Your commandments are truth** (Ps. 119:151; emphasis added).

As Pentecost falls in the middle of God's annual Holy Day sequence, it confirms that whatever this day pictures, it cannot represent the completion of God's plan to restore every sinner in their relationship with Him. Instead, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles pictures this. Therefore, Pentecost is part of a process that has not reached fulfillment yet. This is confirmed by a prophecy in the book of Joel.

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will (in the future) pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions; And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Jl. 2:28-29; Ed. note in parenthesis).

God's Holy Spirit came in a dramatic manner during the first Pentecost following Christ's death and resurrection, and Peter noted this fact (Ac. 2:14-21). However, it is clearly evident by conditions around the world today that mankind, as a whole, does not possess God's Holy Spirit. This fact alone shows the prophecy in the book of Joel has not reached completion yet.

Therefore, the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is an event that will occur at a future date, and Jeremiah explains what this will be like.

But this is the covenant that I (Almighty God) will make with the house of Israel after those days (following Christ's return), says the Lord: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts** (because writing it on tablets of stone had little effect); and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest **of** them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity (sins), and their sin I will remember no more (Jer. 31:33-34; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When this event occurs, Joel's prophecy will be fulfilled. Without God's Holy Spirit being available to everyone, mankind will not find true happiness because they will continue to walk contrary to God's law, and keeping God's law is the only way that leads to peace and happiness between God and one another.

Therefore, among other things, Pentecost is to remind us that this outpouring of God's Holy Spirit will continue until the period known as the second resurrection is completed (Rev. 20:1-6). Between now and then, everyone who has repented of sin, been baptized, and received God's Holy Spirit, should continue to bear witness to the truth, and pray that God's kingdom will return soon in order to remove the influence of the Adversary, and replace it with a sincere desire to obey God's law.

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days [that] the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. ³Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; **He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.**" **For out of Zion shall go forth the law,** and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isa. 2:2-4; emphasis added).

"Listen to Me, My people; and give ear to Me, O My nation: **For law will proceed from Me, And I will make My justice rest as a light of the peoples.** ⁵My righteousness [is] near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands will wait upon Me, and on My arm they will trust. ⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, And those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished. ⁷**Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart [is] My law:** Do not fear the reproach of

men, nor be afraid of their insults. ⁸For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool; but My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation" (Isa. 51:4-8; emphasis added).

Another aspect of Pentecost is its connection with the early summer harvest. Generally, Pentecost would fall between the months of May and June in the northern hemisphere. Compared to the barley harvest, which occurs between the months of March/April, the early summer harvest was larger in quantity and variety. However, even the early summer harvest is small by comparison to the largest harvest that occurs during the late summer/early autumn of the year (Sept./Oct.). These three harvests were designed by Almighty God to symbolize the three harvests of His creation that would be gathered progressively, beginning with His "harvesting" of the spirit-being now known as Jesus Christ. Christ's being "gathered" to his heavenly Father was pictured by the wave sheaf that was cut down during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and then "waved" toward heaven.

Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, **to be accepted on your behalf...** (Lev. 23:10-11a; emphasis added).

When Jesus Christ was accepted by his Father in heaven, three days and three nights after his death, it signified that his sacrifice would provide the means through which every repentant sinner could be restored in their relationship with Almighty God. Therefore, the First Covenant ordinance of the wave sheaf was fulfilled at the moment that Christ ascended to his Father. Just as Christ was cut down and died in the spring of the year; so the wave sheaf was cut down in the

spring, and both are pictured as being accepted on behalf of others. Because the timing of both occurred in the spring, they comprise the firstfruit harvest as described in the following scripture.

But now **Christ** is risen from the dead, and **has become the firstfruit** of those who have fallen asleep (died) (1Cor. 15:20; cf. 1Cor. 15:23; emphasis added; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As the harvest that occurs in the early summer is much larger than the spring harvest, it would consist of multiple "sheaves", symbolically speaking (Gen. 37:7). This process began with those in the early church, who repented of their sins.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³And not only they, but **we** (early church members) also **who have the firstfruit of the Spirit....** (Rom. 8:22-23a; cf. 16:5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added)

Of His own will He (God the Father; cf. vs. 17) brought us forth by the word of truth, that we (early church members) might be a kind of **firstfruit of His creatures** (Jas. 1:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Starting with the firstfruit of the Body of Christ in the first century CE, and continuing to the return of Jesus Christ, it appears that the number of firstfruit totals one hundred and forty-four thousand.

Then I (John) looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father's name written on their foreheads (Rev. 14:1; Ed. note in parenthesis).

These are the ones who were not defiled with women (symbol of false religious systems; cf. Rev.17:1-6), for they are virgins (having repented of sin). These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, **being firstfruit to God and to the Lamb** (Rev. 14:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So compared to the single wave sheaf that occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread, the next group of "firstfruit" is larger at one hundred and forty-four thousand. These are represented by the early summer harvest of Pentecost. Finally, the largest harvest is at the end of the year, pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles. This represents an innumerable multitude that will be gathered toward the end of God's plan of salvation.

After these things I (John) looked, and behold **a great multitude which no one could number**, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands (Rev. 7:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It is not a coincidence that "palm branches" are mentioned in Revelation 7:9 because these are an integral part of the First Covenant ordinances associated with the Feast of Tabernacles, which is the last festival of the year (Lev. 23:40).

Being the very last annual festival, the great multitude pictured with palm branches in their hands must represent the majority of those who have lived and died without knowing about God's truth. This is another confirmation that Almighty God is not calling everyone during this present evil age (Gal. 1:4). Consequently, there will be relatively few in the first resurrection, which Pentecost pictures.

For consider your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (well born), are called (1Cor. 1:26; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Christ refers to his true followers as a "little flock"; not a huge multitude of people.

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Lk. 12:32).

If it was Almighty God's intention to reveal His truth to everyone now, He would have instructed Christ **not** to speak in parables. However, Christ spoke in parables so that only a few, who the Father was leading to repentance, would understand (Jn. 6:44; 65).

And the disciples came and said to him (Christ), "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the hidden truths of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given (yet) (Mt. 13:10-11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And in them the prophesy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: "*Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; ¹⁵For the heart of this people has grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their heart and turn (repent), so that I would heal them* (Mt. 13:14-15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Therefore, among other things, Pentecost is a reminder that Almighty God is not calling everyone to repentance at this time. However, as the Feast of Tabernacles pictures, the vast majority of everyone who has lived and died will be resurrected and lead to repentance through

the action of God's Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:31-34; cf. Joel 2:28-32).

Before concluding this study, there is another symbol associated with the day of Pentecost that needs to be examined. Technically speaking, this symbol consists of two parts. These two parts are mentioned separately in the book of Revelation.

One part was the firstfruit who comprised the one hundred and forty-four thousand, mentioned in Revelation 14:4. As a reminder, these are the ones who were redeemed by God from the time of the early church until Christ's return. However, this does not explain what will happen to everyone who had God's Holy Spirit during the First Covenant period, and Scripture is clear that many did, including the patriarchs, prophets, elders, and even some kings like David and Solomon. To better understand how this First Covenant group fits into God's plan of restoring sinners to Himself, the remaining symbolism associated with Pentecost needs to be considered.

You shall bring from your habitations **two wave loaves** of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the Lord (Lev. 23:17; emphasis added).

The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest (Lev. 23:20).

Therefore, one of these loaves could represent the one hundred and forty-four thousand discussed previously, while the other loaf could represent those who had God's Holy Spirit during the First Covenant period. The majority of those who had God's Holy Spirit during the First Covenant would be from the twelve families that

descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. However, even during the First Covenant, Gentiles could be grafted into these families through the ordinance of circumcision (Ex. 12:48). With this in mind, it makes sense that a second group, also consisting of one hundred and forty-four thousand, would be mentioned in the book of Revelation.

And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand **of all the tribes of the children of Israel** were sealed (Rev. 6:4; emphasis added).

Just as the two loaves of Pentecost were to be equal in weight, so the two groups mentioned separately in the book of Revelation are equal in number and both received God's Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, by avoiding or ignoring the observance of Pentecost, Satan is able to continue deceiving mankind about their potential as resurrected children of God.

Footnote: The first national observance of Pentecost appears to have occurred 50 days after Israel left Egypt under Moses. Israel arrived in the wilderness of Sinai 45 days after leaving Egypt.

On the third New-Moon after the going out of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, on that (very) day they came to the wilderness of Sinai (Ex. 19:1, Schocken Bible: Vol.1).

Thy left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, and arrived at Mt. Sinai on the first day of the third month, which is a 45-day period.

On day 46, Moses went up to meet with the Angel of God (Ex. 19:3-6). It is important to note that no human being has seen or heard Almighty God. They have only seen or heard from one of His representatives (Jn. 1:18, 5:37; 6:46; 1Jn. 4:12).

On day 47, Moses came to the elders of Israel and reported all that he had received from the Angel of God and then relayed their response back to him (Ex. 19:7-9).

The people were then told to meet at the foot of Mt. Sinai on the third day (following from day 47), which would equal 50 days.

A second witness that the law of God was given to the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai on the day of Pentecost is confirmed by the symbolic association of fire with the power of God's Holy Spirit in Acts 2:2-3 and Exodus 19:18. Also, it is important to note that fire is associated with God's law in Deuteronomy 33: 2.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven (on the day of Pentecost), as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them **tongues as of fire**, distributed and resting on

each of them (Ac. 2:2-3, *Ed. note in parenthesis, emphasis added*).

Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord **descended upon it in fire** (Ex.19:18a, *emphasis added*).

The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from His right hand came **a fiery law for them** (Deut. 33:2, *emphasis added*).

Then the lord delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain **from the midst of the fire** when you were all gathered together (Dt. 9:10-11, *emphasis added*).

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