

The
PENTECOSTAL
RAPTURE

Of the
CHURCH of JESUS CHRIST

By Jack W. Langford
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Acts 2:1,2

***"Now when the day of Pentecost had fully come,
they were all with one accord in one place.
And suddenly there came a sound from heaven..."***

As you can see by the title of this book, and by the simplicity of the passage quoted above, this is going to be a Bible study on the subject and meaning of the Day of Pentecost. In the narrowest sense, therefore, we will be studying Acts two, verses one & two. That may sound over simplistic to many Bible students. However, I believe you will find this very enlightening because, more often than not, God uses the simple things of His revelation to both illuminate the humble and to confound "the wise" in this world. Actually we will discover that an aspect of the truth of Acts 2:1 & 2 is going to be repeated at the very end of this present Age. In other words, when the antitypical "*Pentecost fully comes,*" there will be "*a sound from heaven*" and all the members of the body of Christ will once again be "*with one accord in one place.*"

Many are curious, I am sure, as to just what the day of Pentecost has to do with the subject of the Rapture of the Church. As we study carefully and in some detail this Feast day, we shall see that, according to the Pauline revelation, *Pentecost* was not merely the birthday of the Church of Jesus Christ, but it also was a God-given type of the *Rapture* of the Church. The Apostle Paul will speak of the future prophetic aspect of this Feast day very discreetly. We shall discover that *Pentecost*, according to Paul's revelation, stands as emblematic of the second "order" of the resurrection of the righteous, i.e., the Rapture of the Church. In addition, we shall discover that the subject of the Feast of Pentecost has been impregnated by the Holy Spirit of inspiration with a beautiful and complete picture characterizing the nature of the Church of Jesus Christ and the subject of its resurrection and ascension which takes place in an important and clear sequence of dispensational time. The vast majority of prophetic Bible teachers have been negligent or else oblivious to many of these facts.

One writer has stated the following concerning the subject of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture teaching—"The evidence has been sifted, the Scriptures that purportedly support pretribulationism proven scanty, and the arguments made. I believe there are no *hidden veins* in traditional pretribulationism yet to be mined" (Marvin Rosenthal, *The pre-Wrath Rapture of The*

Church, 1990). It is my privilege to present to you in this Bible study many “*hidden veins*” that are untouchable and irrefutable concerning the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church prior to the occurrence of “the Seventieth Week of Daniel” (Dan. 9:24 & 27).

Next to the glorious salvation experience of a repentant sinner trusting in the blood atonement provided through our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no subject to thrill the soul with more longing and anticipation than the “goal” of the “upward call” (Philip. 3:14 & Col. 1:5) of the Church of Jesus Christ. Any believer who becomes too self-centered and distracted with earthly pride and riches will not only lose that glorious purpose for living, but will also lose rewards when standing before Him.

B. Pentecost is to the Church What Passover was to Israel

In the history of the nation of Israel, the *Passover* event marked the birth of the nation’s existence under the Mosaic Law system, and yet, amazing as it may seem, in the process of time the Passover would also mark the termination of the Law system and the setting aside of Israel from a place of favor before God. The Passover event served as the birthday for the nation of Israel. However, we also know Christ died on *Passover* and the Law was then and thereby nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), and Israel was temporarily set aside in the overall perspective of God’s dispensational plan at that time. Therefore, we understand that the Passover served in at least a *twofold* capacity. It served as the birthday for Israel, but also for the termination of Israel’s position before God at that time. The primary prophetic aspect of Passover involved the death of Israel’s Messiah. The prophetic aspect of this Passover was fulfilled in great detail. I have previously written about this in my Bible study “Christ our Passover.” However, this particular Passover also meant the temporary setting aside of Israel’s standing before God.

Now we shall find that the same principle is true of the Church of Jesus Christ relative to the Feast of Pentecost. The Feast of Pentecost serves in a *twofold* capacity. It serves not only as the birthday of the church, but also for the termination of the church as to its existence here on this earth. This fact has been largely overlooked by Bible teachers. I can guarantee that if you are patient and are not fearful of a detailed Bible study, then you will discover many rich blessings as we cover this material.

Most Bible students should know that the Church of Jesus Christ was born on the day of Pentecost, as recorded for us in the early chapters of the book of Acts (the extreme dispensationalists, to the contrary, notwithstanding). This was the day and the hour that the Holy Spirit took up His residence upon the earth in the midst of His people, baptizing them “into one body” (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-2, 33; Eph. 1:13,14 & 18-23; I Cor. 12:13). This was not a haphazard accident of scheduling on God’s part. That idea should be the farthest thing from anyone’s mind.

However, most Christians I have talked to really don’t know what the day of Pentecost is, nor do all Bible teachers themselves know why God chose that particular day as the birthday for the Church. Those, who have carnally called themselves “Pentecostalists” today, are probably the most ignorant about just exactly what the day of Pentecost was and is! As we shall see in this study, there is a clear and unmistakable prophetic aspect to the Feast of Pentecost that is yet to be fulfilled. In fact, if one understands the Feast of Pentecost in its Biblical setting and usage, he will have no problem whatsoever in understanding the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

A. *Prophetic Lessons in The Liturgical Calendar of Israel's Feast Days*

On the other hand, most students of Bible prophecy know that there is a very important message for God's children in the liturgical calendar of Israel's Feast days. There are several reasons for this. First of all there is the very nature of the Feasts themselves. They were designated in the following manner—“*Three times a year you shall celebrate a Feast to Me*” (Exo. 23:14). And again—“*Three times a year all your males shall appear before Jehovah your God in the place which He chooses*” (Exo. 23:17 & Deut. 16:16). In addition, the celebrations of these Feasts are called “*THE APPOINTED TIMES OF THE LORD*” (Lev. 23:4, NASV).

From these statements three things become very obvious about these three Feasts that God wanted to accentuate. No. 1) These Feasts are designated as being “*TO GOD*” and “*before the LORD.*” That means that God is the chief participant in the Feast. It is, as it were, that God Himself sits at the head of the table during the celebration. This is a very sobering thought. It would most certainly mean that the people’s conduct at the Feasts would be most circumspect in light of Who was present. No. 2) God designates *the place* where the Feast will be held. This is perfectly proper since God is the originator of the Feasts. This also means that the place is special—God designated the location. No. 3) God designates *the time* the Feasts will be held. Each Feast has a precise time when it will be held. God has a calendar and on His calendar He has designated each of the Feasts in its own proper time. These are the “Appointed TIMES of the LORD.” In addition we can add a fourth ingredient; No. 4) Exactly what is done at each of these three Feasts is specifically spelled out in the Divine revelation given in the Mosaic Law. Each Feast will have its own *particular characteristics*. They will not all be the same or identical. They will have different offerings, different ingredients and different purposes.

The celebration of these Feasts would be the central attraction to the whole religious life of the nation of Israel.

It becomes clear from these passages that these Feasts are not merely a time for the cultural fellowship of the households of the children of Israel, but they are more specifically representative of “God’s Timetable or Calendar” of events. These are designated “times” when Israel would appear before God, Himself. All the liturgical offerings and celebrations done on these Feast days were to be done on this sequential timetable with a view of it being “the appointed Times of the Lord.” Therefore, the very nature of these Feasts is first of all related to the subject of specific “Times” and God’s calendar of events. It would therefore only be natural and logical and consistent to also envision in these Feasts a broader historical time sequence that they may be signifying.

Indeed, and secondly, the Hebrew prophets, themselves, would be inspired to see certain future prophetic significance in the first and last of these three Feasts. Isaiah the prophet looked to a future “*passing over*” wherein God would deliver and preserve Jerusalem and Israel—Isa. 31:5. Jeremiah likewise used the symbolism of Israel’s being delivered out of Egypt (at the Passover) as a picture of the greater future deliverance of Israel from all the nations on the face of the earth—read about it in detail in Jer. 23:7,8 & 31:31-34. At that future time Jeremiah indicated that Israel would not be looking back to their deliverance out of Egypt (the first Passover) and receiving the Old Covenant, but to their being delivered out of all nations and then

receiving the New Covenant. Indeed, at the time of Christ's last Passover celebration we are told that there was great expectation that at *this Passover* the Kingdom of God would appear and these promises would be fulfilled. See Luke 17:20; 19:11; 22:16-18 & 23:51. These references speak of a prophetic aspect of the Passover event that the people expected to happen at that time. I will have more to say about this later. The expected Kingdom deliverance for Israel did not come at that time because the nation had rejected their King. However, the first and primary prophetic aspect of Passover was spiritual and it did happen at that time.

As to the prophetic aspect of the Feast of Tabernacles, the prophet Zechariah tied in the acknowledgment of Israel's deliverance at that future time by all the nations on earth celebrating at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem—read about it in Zech. 14:16-21. What a spectacular celebration that will be! All the nations of earth will be represented at that yearly Feast.

A look at recent history will tell you that a certain Mr. Adolph Hitler had Satanic aspirations to be the world's messiah. He openly anticipated and bragged about introducing the "Thousand Year Reich (reign)." I have stood before a giant map painted by German soldiers depicting the world and all the nations which at one time they had conquered. Germany was in the center. In addition, I saw a copy of the architectural drawings depicting Nuremberg as the central headquarters for the world. Hitler's grandiose headquarters sat at the head of the magnificent broad pavement leading up to it. Along both sides were the buildings to house the representatives of all nations on earth. And then I looked around Nuremberg and saw the piles of rubble, and many districts that had not yet been cleared, the several districts of abandoned apartments and homes with nothing but cellars remaining, the lopsided bunker at the main train depot, etc, etc. And where was Hitler? Ashes, with a few bones collected by Soviet intelligence through which they could identify him by a dental record. Yes, Hitler's grandiose expectations were totally exploded. And the only thing left was the jaw bone from which his boastful claims were foolishly and arrogantly made.

Not so, will it be when the Lord Jesus Christ rules and reigns in majesty on earth. And what a celebration that future Feast of Tabernacles will be, with all the nations on the face of the earth represented in Jerusalem. And woe be to the nation that will refuse to show up for its celebration—Zech. 14:17-19. Can any of us imagine how spectacular that celebration will be? One feature of the Feast of Tabernacles is the escalation of rejoicing that like a great crescendo reaches its climax on the spectacular Eighth day.

"In that day 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD' shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the Lord's house shall be like bowls before the altar (giant in size). Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of Hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 14:20,21).

Therefore, both Passover and Tabernacles had future prophetic aspects attached to them.

In addition, when a Bible reader studies and sees the beauty and the detailed precision of Christ fulfilling the typology of the Passover lamb, selected on the 10th day of Nisan, sacrificed on the 14th day, not a "bone of Him broken" as demanded by the Law, and then resurrected at the precise time as the "Wave Offering of Firstfruits" three days later, he can only stand in amazement at the precision and glory of the outworking of God's divine time clock. Furthermore, we now add to this evidence the fact that the Church of Jesus Christ came into existence at the precise time, not merely of the Feast of Pentecost, but of the very morning of the

unique Offering of Pentecost.

As I stated, the Hebrew prophets attached a prophetic significance to the Feast of Passover and to the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast that dwells between these two Feasts is Pentecost. It is vitally important to recognize that the future prophetic significance of Pentecost is left up to the Apostle Paul to unveil. To Paul was specifically given the mystery of this Age of Grace (Eph. 3:1-13). It is therefore appropriate that the “mystery” concerning the Rapture of the Church also be revealed through Paul (Col. 1:24-27).

B. Observations by Bible Teachers

Consequently, some Bible students today are interested in the prophetic aspects of these Feast days. Often they have focused upon the fall Feast of Israel and its related High Days. These celebrations and observances very well point to significant truths that will occur in the time of the events surrounding the Great Tribulation and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

J.N. Darby is often said to be the one most responsible for the school of dispensational Bible teaching in the beginning of these last days. (I do not believe for one second that John Nelson Darby invented the Pre-Tribulational Rapture doctrine, nor did he design “Dispensational” Bible truth. If dispensational truth is found in the Scriptures, and it most certainly is, and especially in the Scriptures of the Apostle Paul, then we would have to assign the origin of the doctrine with Paul, no matter what blanks you may find in so-called “Church history.”) J.N. Darby, himself, in the midst of a revival of Pre-Millennial prophetic teaching (in approx. 1830) reportedly attended a conference where there was a keen interest in studying the Feasts in Israel's calendar, as revealed by Moses in the Law, for the purpose of considering their prophetic significance.

Again in very recent days several Bible teachers have reviewed the Feast days more carefully in order to align Biblical prophecies of the last days into some sequence. Some have done this very hastily, with a degree of erroneous presumption, usually leaving out the Rapture of the Church. I most earnestly pray that this Bible study will help clarify this aspect of the subject. I am going to very rigidly adhere to a literal following of Israel's liturgical calendar of the Feasts in this Bible study and I think you will appreciate it.

Most students of prophecy have recognized the Feast Days of Israel's calendar as being very important because the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were literally on schedule with various aspects of the Feast of Passover and the Offering of the Wave-Sheaf of Grain. And then, as we noted previously, the fact that the Church would be born on the very day of Pentecost added further confirmation to the prophetic significance of the Feasts. This has caused most Bible students to take a careful look at all the Feast days regarding their prophetic purposes. It appears that God has revealed a calendar by which He, in His sovereignty, is directing and scheduling all things. Thus in the Mosaic Law this calendar is revealed and presented to the nation of Israel and in the process of dispensational time, it is being unfolded and fulfilled in an important historical sequence.

A standard work on the book of Leviticus (1899) was by S.H. Kellog. As to the prophetic nature of the Feast Days, he said, "...all who acknowledge the authority of the New Testament will recognize a yet more profound, and prophetic, spiritual meaning. Passover and Unleavened Bread not only looked backward, but forward." Kellog further stated that, like Passover,

Pentecost was also "prophetic" (*Leviticus*, by Kellog, pgs. 458 & 460).

More recently J. Vernon McGee, of international fame for his "*Through The Bible*" radio program, has stated, "These days of holy convocation served a twofold purpose; a practical purpose and a prophetic purpose...The primary purpose of these feast days was to give a prophetic picture of all future time. Each one of these feasts has found or will find a fulfillment in time...Each holy season had a particular and peculiar emphasis. The complete, prophetic dealings of God with this world in time are given here. Each feast was typical of some great event in the program of God for the world." McGee goes on to say, "The typical meaning of Pentecost is not left to man's speculation... Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. It was fifty days after the resurrection of Christ that the Holy Spirit came. God was running according to His calendar and on time. They were to offer a new meal offering. That is a type of the Church. The Church is something new." (*Leviticus*, Vol. 2, pgs. 276-283).

Merrill F. Unger in his book, *The Baptism & Gifts of The Holy Spirit*, says on pages 155 & 156, "The Passover (Lev. 23:4-5) sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the first month speaks of the death of Christ, and the feast of First-fruits (Lev. 23:9-14) on the morrow after the Sabbath three days later portrays the resurrection of Christ. Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-21) fifty days later sets forth the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)...The ancient Hebrew feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:15-21), as a type of what happened in Acts 2...a new meal offering was to be presented to the Lord." Then Unger goes into more detail about the typology of that sacrifice as it relates to the Church which is Christ's body.

We can see, therefore, by these examples that an examination of certain prophetic aspects of these Feasts should not be some hasty speculation. Rather, it should be a wise and spiritual necessity, done with prayerful caution, asking for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, Who alone can "*Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things from Your Law.*" (Psalm 119:18).

C. Typologies of the Church From the Hebrew Scriptures

Certain others have objected and argued that since the Church was said to be a "mystery" not revealed in past ages, therefore we will not see any types of the Church in the Old Testament, and certainly not in the Feast days. It is true that the Church (and the Church Age) was a mystery not revealed in past ages (Eph. 3:4,5), but it is not true that there are no types of the Church in the Hebrew Scriptures. The fact is, there were many things stated in the Hebrew Scriptures that were typical of and applicable to certain aspects of the Church, though those living in Old Testament times did not recognize them as such. In other words, these types were also a secret not understood until the later revelations given to Paul and the apostles. We have the following types and figures given to us from the New Testament writers themselves that will serve as examples:

1. In Ephesians 5:30-32 the Apostle Paul reveals that believers are "members of His (Christ's) body, '*of His flesh and of His bones*'" (From Genesis 2:23). Paul also quotes Genesis 2:24, "*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*" This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." In this quotation and brief explanation Paul reveals that Adam and Eve were a type of Christ and the Church. Obviously, no one understood this typology until the Spirit of God revealed it through Paul.

The original story of Adam and Eve stands as a beautiful type of Christ and the Church according to the Apostle Paul. When we look back at that account by this strong suggestion of Paul we will see beautiful truth, which Paul calls "a great mystery" (Eph. 5:32). Adam was put into a deep sleep. From his side God took the substance from which He formed the woman. Then when Adam was awakened God brought the woman which He had made to him. In marriage they become "one flesh." This story was not a myth. It really happened! and antitypically it is still happening today! Yes, just as supernaturally as it happened at the beginning of time so it is still happening at this very moment! Adam is specifically said to be a "type" of Christ (Rom. 5:14). Again, Jesus Christ is said to be "the last Adam" (I Cor. 15:45). God placed His own Son into a deep sleep—the sleep of death. From Christ's riven side came the gospel of the grace of God, from which God created the woman, the Church which is Christ's body. We are members of His very body, "*of His flesh and of His bones*" (Eph.5:30). God the Father presents us to "the last Adam" (II Cor. 11:2). Those who are "*joined to the Lord [by faith] become one spirit with Him*" (I Cor. 6:17). Collectively, all believers form His present spiritual bride (Eph. 5:25-32). The Church forms the vital members of Christ's very body. Should anyone want to deny that the Holy Spirit initially inspired Paul to tell us that this beautiful event that took place in the garden of Eden was a type for the Church today??

2. In Galatians 4:21-31 the Apostle Paul says Isaac, the son of Abraham, was an "allegory" portraying believers today in this Age of Grace. Paul further contrasts the Church's sonship represented in Isaac with that of Ishmael as typifying Israel under the Law. One son was from a "bondwoman;" whereas the other was from a "freewoman." One was born "according to the flesh;" whereas the other was "through promise." One represents the Law from "Sinai which brings into bondage;" the other represents "the promise." The one represents earthly "Jerusalem in bondage;" whereas the other represents the heavenly "Jerusalem which is free, which is the mother of us all." In this "allegory" Paul concludes with the words, "*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.*"

3. In Galatians 3:8 the Apostle Paul says, "the Scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel to Abraham..." Surely, no one would like to argue that this is not applicable to this age of Gentile salvation.

4. Isaac is primarily a type of Jesus Christ as the well-beloved Son of the Father. We can look back in the book of Genesis to the story of Abraham obtaining a bride for his son Isaac and see a remarkable parallel with what God the Father is doing in this Church age in obtaining a bride for His Son. The whole setting of that story will spell out not only this dispensation of time, but its relationship to the ages on either side of it. In Genesis 22 Isaac was taken up on the hill to be a sacrificed. This is an incredibly clear picture of the death of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Isaac is received back as though he had risen from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). In the next chapter of Genesis (23) Abraham's wife, Sarah, dies as a picture of Israel being set aside after the death of Messiah.

Then in chapter 24 God finds a bride for Isaac who had typically been sacrificed and resurrected from the dead. Isaac will be "comforted" after the death of his mother (Gen. 24:67). What an amazing story about this bride! A messenger, the servant of Abraham (*like a gospel preacher*), is sent into a far country being led by a holy angel (*representing the Holy Spirit*). He meets a woman at the well (*illustrating man's thirst for real life*). The messenger gives the *good news* to the woman at the well, and shows her the jewelry depicting *the riches of the many promises of God*. She hears that this one is the heir (*much like Jesus Christ*) to all his father's

wealth, and he remains waiting to receive her if she will accept the invitation (*as is Jesus Christ*). Though she has never seen the bridegroom, nor has she ever heard his voice, and though she cannot touch him, and though to many this would sound as an idle tale—yet she believes, and says "Yes, I will go!" (Gen. 24:58). Hallelujah! She represents a *vast multitude* (Genesis 24:60). She leaves her own family and travels the long distance to finally meet the one she has accepted. And then finally, *at the close of a day*, she sees him coming out to meet her (verses 63-65)!

Chapter 24 is, therefore, completed. Now chapter 25 of Genesis takes up once again the story of Abraham, who receives another wife and has many children by her—representing the revival of Israel. Could some uninspired human author write out the story of this dispensational sequence any clearer—some 2000 to 4000 years in advance?

5. Three men who stand as the most prominent types of the Messiah who are recognized by both Jewish and Christian teachers are Joseph, Moses and David. Jewish rabbis refer to the Messiah as either "Messiah ben Joseph," or "Messiah ben David." Moses is a given because of the clear passage in Deut. 18:15-19 saying that a prophet like Moses would arise and Israel would be accountable to him. The first unique thing about all three of these men is that their appearance to Israel was in two clearly distinct stages separated by a period of rejection. During the first stage in which each of them presents himself to Israel, he is rejected and set aside into obscurity for an extended period of time. In the second stage they appeared in strength and power and rule over Israel. The second unique thing about each of these men was their relationship to the Gentiles. Both Joseph and Moses take Gentile brides in their period of isolation. David in his exile actually joins himself to Israel's enemies from among the Gentiles. This very clearly exhibits what will happen in the actual case of the Messiah Himself. Today He is calling out a Gentile bride.

6. In addition, the one book that contains very clear dispensational implications regarding the acceptance of the Gentiles is the story of the book of Ruth. However, I will comment more about this at a later time. This is the one book that is read by the Jewish people themselves in connection with the very Feast of the Firstfruits Harvest celebrated at Pentecost which we are studying at this time.

7. For many more references in the Greek Scriptures to applications from the Hebrew Scriptures, see the following examples: **Eph. 2:20**, Christ the "chief cornerstone" from Isa. 28:16; note also **I Pet. 2:6 & Acts 4:11**, "...which is become the head of the corner" from Ps. 118:22; see also **I Pet. 2:7** "...the chief cornerstone" & **2:8**, "a stone of stumbling and rock of offense" from Isa. 8:14; Paul in **Acts 13:47**, "I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles ...salvation to the ends of the earth" from Isa. 49:6; **Rom. 10:19**, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them which are no people..." from Deut. 32:21; **Rom. 10:20**, "I was found of them that sought Me not..." from Isa. 65:1; **Rom. 9:25 & 26**, "call them My people which were not My people" from Hosea 2:23 & 1:10; **Rom. 15:9**, "...confess Thee among the Gentiles..." from II Sam. 22:50; **Rom. 15:10**, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people..." from Deut. 32:43; **Rom. 15:11**, "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles..." from Ps. 117:1; **Rom. 15:12**, "rise to reign over the Gentiles" from Isa. 11:10; **Eph. 4:8-11**, "When He ascended up on high...and gave gifts unto men...and He gave some..." from Ps. 68:18, etc., etc.

It is evident from all these references that there should be no question about the fact that in many aspects the Church was typified, allegorized, and concerning it numerous applications were made from the Hebrew Scriptures. Of course, this is not to say that the very unique aspect

of the Church, of making “one New Man” (literally a new species) from both *Jewish believers* and *Gentile believers*, baptizing them into one body, was thus revealed, for it does not appear to be. However, to say that the Church, because it was a mystery, is never typified in the Old Testament is an overreaction to the "mystery" aspect of the Church and the Church Age. The facts are, some aspects of the Church were typified in different ways in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, these types were not known or understood until they came to light through the revelations given to Paul and the other writers of the Greek Scriptures. In other words, like the Church itself, the types were a mystery as well. They had to remain dormant in the Hebrew Scriptures until the time came when God wanted them revealed. In saying all of this, I am showing that we should not be fearful of recognizing that there can be a picture of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Feast of Pentecost.

D. Important Clarifications About The Feasts

One necessary clarification about the Feasts that Moses gave to Israel should be made. Many Christian preachers and writers, in telling about the prophetic nature of the Feasts, will characteristically say that there were "seven Feasts" given to Israel by Moses. This is not at all accurate! The Law very specifically says there were only "**three Feasts**" for the nation of Israel—Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18,22,23; Deut. 16:16 & II Chron. 8:13. In addition to these "three" Feasts, Moses revealed certain Holy Days and special Offerings all enumerated in Leviticus 23. The "Holy Days" and special "Offerings" were not always to be regarded as "Feasts." The Feasts (Hebrew, *haggim*), Holy Days and special Offerings all came under the designation, "Appointed Times" (*moàdim*). These were in addition to the regular seventh day Sabbaths. All these "Appointed Times" and special "Offerings" can be enumerated in the following manner under *seven sections* (see Leviticus 23), but only three of these sections are Feasts. Also remember that this calendar of events is not the same as Israel's Civil calendar which came much later in the history of the nation. The calendar that was revealed through Moses has sometimes been referred to as the "Liturgical Calendar" because it has to do primarily with the religious rites and celebrations throughout its year.

No. 1.

On the afternoon of the 14th day of the first month was the Passover sacrifice (Lev. 23:5). This day is actually called "*the Preparation Day*" for the Feast that began with the Passover supper at the conclusion of that day (see II Chron. 35:6, 10 & 16; Jn. 19:31, 42 & Lk. 23:54). Each day on the Jewish calendar begins with the setting of the sun and is marked from sunset to sunset. Thus, just after sunset closing this 14th day the Passover Supper was eaten.

No. 2. (1st Feast)

The 15th day through the 21st day of the same month was the "Feast of Unleavened Bread" (Lev. 23:6-8). The day began with the eating of the Passover Supper. In later years this whole Feast of seven days was also commonly called "*Passover*" (Hebrew, *Pesah*)—See Luke 22:1. This Feast had two special High Sabbaths, one on the 15th day and one on the 21st day.

No. 3.

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread (or Passover), on the morning after a regular sabbath that would occur during this week, the special "Wave-Sheaf Offering" of the "Firstfruit" samples of harvest grain was to take place. This was not a separate Feast but only a special offering to occur during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:9-14). At the time of Christ this

was done on a Sunday morning.

No. 4. (2nd Feast)

Counting fifty days after the "Wave-Sheaf Offering" came the "Feast of Harvest of First-fruits" (Exo. 23:16; 34:22 & Lev. 23:17). This is also commonly called "Feast of Weeks" (Hebrew, *Shavuot*, Exo. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:10) because of the seven weeks that transpire from the offering of the "Wave Sheaf" at the Passover celebrations. We will note later some of the other names given to this Feast. In the book of Acts it is called "Pentecost," because of its celebration on the 50th day (Acts 2:1). This was only a one day Feast. On this day was the special "*New Grain Offering*" in the form of two loaves of bread waved in the air similar to the waving of the "*Wave Sheaf Offering*" at Passover. This day was a special High Sabbath. (See Lev. 23:15-21.) This is the Feast day that we are going to focus upon during this Bible study.

No. 5.

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month was the "Blowing of Trumpets" or horns (Hebrew, *Shofar*). This is not a Feast day, but it is a special High Sabbath (Lev. 23:23-25).

No. 6.

On the tenth of the same month was "The Day of Atonement" (Hebrew—*Yom Kippur*). On this day was the special offering of the "Scapegoat." This day was a very special High Sabbath, but not a Feast day (Lev. 23:26-32).

No. 7. (3rd Feast)

On the fifteenth day of the same month began the "Feast of Tabernacles" (also called "Booths" (Hebrew, *Sukkat*). See Lev. 23:34-43. The Feast was also celebrating the fall harvest and was therefore also called "*Ingathering*" (Lev. 23:39) because at this time they had completed, or were completing, the final ingathering of the fruit of the land. This Feast was said to be seven days long. However, the eighth day was an important crescendo to the whole Feast and there was great rejoicing. This Feast had two High Sabbaths, one on the first day (15th), and one on the eighth day (22nd).

E. Note the Important Arrangement of These Feasts

All these "Appointed Seasons," special "Offerings" and "High Sabbaths" are clustered into three groups around the three Feasts. Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are in the first grouping and take place in the Spring at the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover). Numbers 5, 6 and 7 take place in the fall season and are clustered at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. That leaves Number 4, the Feast of *Shavuot* (also called *Weeks* or *Pentecost*), standing alone by itself (though it is related to the earlier offering of the Wave-Sheaf at Passover seven weeks earlier).

The Feast of Pentecost standing alone by itself is very suggestive of dispensational truth. Pentecost appears in this setting as *parenthetical* in nature, falling between the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. In addition, from a Jewish perspective, this Feast has recently been called a "*mystery*" festival (Jerusalem Post, May 26-June 1, 2006, "*What's in a name?*"). The reason given for referring to this Feast as a "*mystery*" festival was first of all because "the name (of the Feast) does not define its essence." The name Passover has reference to the Passover lamb whose blood protected the firstborn of all the children of Israel. In addition, the name Tabernacles has reference to the dwelling places of the Israelites during their wilderness journey. The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, on the other hand, only speaks of the *weeks or days* leading up

to the celebration. This says nothing about the Feast or its relationship to Israel.

In addition, the “mystery” aspect of Shavuot (Pentecost), as explained by the Jerusalem Post article, is not merely because of the name but primarily because it is *not connected* by Moses *to any historical event in Israel's early history* as are Passover and Tabernacles. Passover is in remembrance of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt. Tabernacles is in remembrance of Israel dwelling in tents or booths for 40 years in the wilderness. Pentecost being parenthetical in nature in its actual Biblical setting is not to be connected to anything in Israel's historic journey as are the other two Feasts. Much later in Jewish tradition this Feast day is connected with the giving of the Law from Sinai. However, this association is not indicated in the actual historical record of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Feast was only to be observed once Israel had entered into its promised land.

These factors have special significance to the prophetic aspect of this Feast as it relates to the truth that the Feast is typical of the Church of Jesus Christ. Dispensational Bible teaching has long pointed to the fact that the Church Age is “*parenthetical*” in nature. It falls between the first and second comings of Christ to earth as Israel's King. In addition, the Church Age is specifically referred to as a “*mystery*” period of time in the epistles of Paul (Eph. 3:1-7, etc.). In addition, the Church, and the Church Age are a “*distinct entity*” separate and apart from Israel.

F. The Relationship of Shavuot to the Law in Jewish Tradition

Rabbi Reskin who wrote the article above also explained that because of this unusual nature in the setting of this Feast a great controversy arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees in the proximity of the New Testament period. Though the Feast obviously has an agricultural significance, yet in an attempt to associate it with Israel's historic beginnings, the Pharisees came to view it as pointing to the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai which was approximately fifty days after the Passover. However, it is admitted that “the Bible never identifies Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) as the day of the revelation at Sinai” (*Shlomo Reskin, Jerusalem Post, June 6, 2003*). The Sadducees said that Shavuot is “relating not at all to the Exodus but only to the agricultural reality of the land of Israel...a thanksgiving for an agricultural rather than an historical reason” (2006 article, Jerusalem Post). Rabbi Reskin also points out in an earlier article that the giving of the Law actually “*followed*” the fiftieth day from the Passover in Egypt. (See also, *The Jerusalem Post, Shlomo Reskin, “Something doesn't add up,” May 21, 1999.*) In this 1999 article Reskin states, “Shavuot is merely an agricultural festival—the celebration of the first fruits—and biblically speaking it only coincidentally works out to fall on *the day before* the Revelation (from Sinai).”

Nevertheless, the oral tradition of the Pharisees came to prominence before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. This tradition of Shavuot commemorating the giving of the Law has remained ever since. Consequently, today, when the Jewish people celebrate Shavuot they do so with an emphasis upon commemorating the receiving of the Law from Sinai. However, the fact that in actual Biblical chronology the Law appears to have come just after the fifty days had transpired points to another aspect of dispensational significance in the typology. Immediately after the antitypical fulfillment of Pentecost in the Rapture of the Church, the Law will again be instituted. When one looks into the period called the Great Tribulation he will see the Law of Moses again being practiced. In Israel the Temple will have been *erected along with its services*, the animal sacrifices will be *reinstated*, Sabbath *observance*

will again be observed, etc., etc. (see Matthew 24). All these facts place the Feast of Pentecost in a very special light.

One final observation we should make in the present Jewish celebration of Shavuot is the fact that they encourage the reading of the book of Ruth at this specific season. This is an obvious carryover of the fact that *Shavuot* is indisputably related to the Firstfruit Harvest festival. The whole setting of the book of Ruth takes place during the *firstfruit harvesting season*. In addition, the story is a beautiful account of the Kinsman-Redemption of a Gentile who came to embrace the God of Israel. This story is loaded with dispensational significance as it is reflective upon the subject before us of the Pentecostal Rapture of the Church. In this connection the Feast of Pentecost or Weeks is related in a very beautifully and outstanding way to the theme of *GENTILE* redemption. I hope to have more to say about this later.

G. In Summary

In summary, concerning the particular arrangement of the *Shavuot* (Feast of Weeks or Pentecost) as it fits into the calendar of events of “The Appointed Times of The Lord,” I have made the following observations of significance: 1.) Pentecost stands *parenthetical* in nature, being a “mystery” festival, and falling between the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles; 2.) Pentecost is *not related to any event in Israel’s original historic creation* as was Passover and Tabernacles; 3.) Pentecost is not named after any offering or event, but rather merely *by the time* (50 days) of its celebration; 4.) Pentecost is consequently and properly referred to in Jewish literature as a “*mystery*” Feast; 5.) In the literal Biblical chronology, as observed by certain Jewish scholars themselves, the giving of the Law from Sinai actually would immediately *follow* the seven week time period and the celebration of *Shavuot* (Pentecost) on the fiftieth day, and 6.) The Feast is related by the inspired record of the book of Ruth to *Gentile salvation* where one, “without Christ,” and “alien from the commonwealth of Israel,” and a “stranger from the covenants of promise,” “having no hope,” and “without God in the world,” is “brought near” by the love of a “Kinsman Redeemer” (Eph. 2:11-13 & Ruth 2:20).

It should be observed that the six facts, as listed above, point very clearly to the Feast of Pentecost as being prophetically applicable to the present Church Age.

These Feasts, Holy Days and special Offerings should not be confused with the later Civil Holidays which came after certain events in Israel's history. These are: *Purim* (Lots), which originated in the days of Queen Esther; *Rosh Hashannah* (the Civil New Year), which was said to have originated in the days of Ezra-Nehemiah (Neh. 8:1-12); and *Hanukkah* (also called “Dedication” or “Lights”—John 10:22) which originated after the desecration of the Temple by the Greek king, Antiochus Epiphanes.

III. PRELUDE TO PENTECOST

A. The Offering of the Wave-sheaf of Firstfruits—Prelude To Pentecost

In my Bible study comparing the chronology of Christ's death with the annual Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, I draw your attention to the “Offering of the Sheaf of Firstfruits”

(Lev. 23:10,11). It would be helpful that you re-read that section at this time ("*Christ Our Passover*," pages 28-32).

Originally at the time of Christ, under the rule of the Sadducees, the ritual Offering of the Firstfruits of grain took place on the day after the regular Sabbath that fell during the Feast of Unleavened Bread or Passover. That meant it would always occur on a Sunday morning. Before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and in accordance with Pharisaic traditions, which had taken over the High Priest leadership in Israel, the offering of the Firstfruits came to be celebrated on the day after the High Sabbath of Nisan 15, and not after the regular sabbath that occurred during the Passover celebrations. Therefore, it only rarely occurs on a Sunday morning. Shavout (Weeks or Pentecost) is still celebrated in Judaism by this timing to the present day. This Offering consisted of a sampling or a handful of the early grain, either as a Sheaf (bundle) of freshly cut grain or as an Omer (measure—Exo.16:36) of threshed grain. Therefore it is also sometimes called "The Offering of the Omer." This was uniquely waved up in the air, as if it were to be directly received by God in heaven. After the offering the designated priest would take it for his own use.

As we have previously discussed in "*Christ Our Passover*," this was a beautiful type of Christ's bodily resurrection and ascension up to the Father. This Offering served as a token blessing of the greater spring harvest of Firstfruits to be celebrated fifty days later. As a first early sampling dedicated to God, this Offering of the "Firstfruits" *sanctified* the whole harvest to the Lord, and served as the *guarantee* of those blessings and fruitfulness which were to come.

The special Offering of the Wave-Sheaf of Firstfruits during the Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread is actually the *prelude* to Pentecost with its own special Offering. From the time of the Offering of these Firstfruits waved before the Lord, the Jewish people were to count 50 days till the Feast of Pentecost. This counting consisted of "seven weeks" (49 days) and then on the next day (the 50th day) the celebration would take place. These two special Offerings are, therefore, vitally connected. The Firstfruits Offering at Passover was a *sampling* of the full spring harvest to be celebrated 50 days later at Pentecost (Lev. 23:9-16) and exemplified by the special wave Offering of two loaves of bread in the same manner as the Wave-Sheaf.

The standard *Pentateuch & Haftorahs* which is read throughout the Jewish world today (edited by Dr. J.H. Hertz), says on page 521 concerning this relationship, "*The paragraph (Lev. 23:15-22) dealing with the Feast of Weeks has no introductory formula...such as we find in connection with the other Festivals, because it was conceived as the complement of the Passover, and not something independent of it. Its name in Talmudic literature is not Shavuot, but almost invariably 'The Concluding Festival' to Passover.*" The rabbinic name was *Hag ha-Azereth* or simply *Azereth* and it simply meant "The Feast of Conclusion."

Alfred Edersheim in his book "*The Temple, Its Ministry and Services*," (page 262) informs us that several of these names for the Feast such as "Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*)," "Pentecost (50th)" and the early Jewish traditional name of "Feast of Conclusion (*Azereth*)," "all bear reference to this interval (of time) from the Passover." In addition it should be noted that the other names for the Feast of Pentecost demonstrate a relationship to the "Firstfruits" offering at Passover as well. *Hag ha-Katzin* meant the "Harvest Feast" of the firstfruits harvest (Exo. 23:16). And *Yom ha-Bikkueim* meant "The Day of the Firstfruits" of the harvest (Num. 28:26). Therefore, all the names for Pentecost show its vital relationship to the Wave-Sheaf Offering at Passover.

B. “Christ The Firstfruits” (I Cor. 15:23)

In I Corinthians 15:23 the resurrection of Jesus Christ is specifically identified as the antitype fulfillment of the “Wave-Sheaf Offering” of the “Firstfruits” which took place at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover). Paul states twice in this passage that Christ’s resurrection was the fulfillment. In verse 20 Paul said, “*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*”

The prophetic meaning of the “Firstfruits Offering,” originally offered on a Sunday morning during the Feast of Passover, bears the following symbolism:

- 1.) The initial planting of the seemingly dead kernels of grain serves as a picture of death—“*except a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies...*” Christ said in John 12:24 (see also I Cor. 15:36);
- 2.) The springing up of the new stalks of grain and their harvesting in the Spring speaks of the resurrection of the dead—“*but if it dies, it produces much grain*” Christ added in John 12:24. In addition Paul said, “*What you sow is not made alive unless it dies*” (I Cor. 15:36);
- 3.) The ritual harvesting of the first early sampling of grain during the Passover Feast speaks of Christ’s resurrection from the dead as the “Firstfruit” *sample* of the greater full harvest of those to be also raised from the dead—“*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*” (I Cor. 15:20);
- 4.) The ritual waving of the first bundle of grain up in the air before God speaks of Christ’s *ascension* up to the Father in heaven. In the Temple ritual this offering is in no way sacrificed, destroyed or burned—it is simply waved up in the air before God as if to be taken by Him.
- 5.) This special offering stands as a *token guarantee* of the immediate greater harvest soon to appear and to be celebrated some 50 days later—“*But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you...we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit...wait for the redemption of our body*” (Rom. 8:11 & 23);

I do not believe that any serious student of the Bible would disagree with this basic understanding of the “Firstfruit Offering.” This offering actually represents the whole basis of the Christian faith and our purpose for service—I Cor. 15:14-19. “If Christ be not risen our faith is vain” (I Cor. 15:14). Certain commentaries confirm this understanding—

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, “The firstfruits—the earnest or pledge, that the whole resurrection harvest will follow...”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary (Dallas Seminary Faculty), “He is the *firstfruits*, an Old Testament word (Exo. 23:16,19) here used in the sense of a preliminary installment of what will be both an example and a guarantee of more to come (cf. Rom. 8:23)...As He promised (John 14:2-3) Christ will return for those who compose the church and the dead in Christ will be raised (I Thess. 4:16).”

Barnes, “The word, therefore, comes to have two senses, or to involve two ideas: (1) That which is first, the beginning, or that which has priority of time; and (2) that which is a part and portion of the whole which is to follow, and which is the earnest or pledge of that; as the first sheaf of ripe grain was not only the first in order of time, but as the earnest or pledge of the entire harvest which was soon to succeed...as the sheaf was a portion of the harvest itself; and He was so connected with them all, and their rising depended on His, that His resurrection was a demonstration that they would rise.”

The importance of this offering is demonstrated by the command in the Law that no bread, parched grain or even fresh grain was to be eaten at the beginning of this new year until the day of this special offering (Lev. 23:14). This illustrates for us the spiritual truth that there is absolutely no hope or reality of life, either spiritually or physically apart from the life imparted through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Concerning the fact that there was an actual measure or bundle of grain waved in the air in this offering it is very suggestive of the reality that at the time of Christ’s resurrection there were numerous other saints in the city of Jerusalem who were also raised from the dead to give verification of Christ’s resurrection—see Matthew 27:51-53. Their “graves were opened” at the time of Christ’s death, but they were not raised from the dead until after Christ’s resurrection. It is fitting that they formed a part of that bundle of grain waved in the air.

C. The "Counting of Days"

To continue the quote from the standard *Pentateuch & Haftorahs*, "*We count the days that pass since the preceding Festival, just as one who expects his most intimate friend on a certain day counts the days and even the hours. 'Unto you,' [in the text of Lev. 23:15]. From this addition, the rabbis deduce that each Israelite had the duty of counting for himself...The season between Passover and Shavuot...is known as Sefirah, Period of Counting.*"

"Indeed, the very command to count instructs us to establish a connection between the two periods," (Shlomo Reskin, *Jerusalem Post*, “Count on freedom”).

Beginning with the day of the Offering of the Wave Sheaf of Firstfruits (originally a Sunday) the people were to count seven Sabbaths equaling 49 days, and then the next day would be another Sunday, the 50th day on which the Day of Firstfruits (Pentecost) was held. I repeat again that this has also been called "Feast of Weeks" because of the seven weeks counted off. It has been more commonly called "Pentecost" (Fiftieth) in the Greek translation because it was celebrated on the 50th day.

Jewish tradition tells us that usually at the first meal of every day during those weeks the father would announce what day it was, such as "day one" or "day twenty," etc. In addition they would even announce the week. Sometimes there might be certain prayers and Scriptures read on each of these weeks. This counting process caused everyone to look forward to the Feast which was to come. Truly, the “Conclusion” was greatly anticipated after all this counting.

D. The Significance of the Number 50

The number 50 is also important in the Bible as to its spiritual significance. Obviously the counting of fifty days gave an aura of *mystery* and *expectancy* for this particular Feast. The

"countdown," so to speak, kept the attention and expectation of the people focused on the blessings of the early summer harvest. This was the only Feast that had such a "countdown."

The most popularly known use of the number 50 was in the great Jubilee year celebration. According to the Law, once the people of Israel came into their land they were to count off 49 years, and on the 50th year there was a great celebration and *release*. Those Jews who had sold themselves into slavery were automatically *freed* on that year. The lands of ancestral families, that had to be sold because of poverty, were sold with the amount of time remaining until the Jubilee year "*discounted*" or reckoned in the purchase price. Those who sold properties could thus *return to them* in the Jubilee year. Now the Hebrew word for "Jubilee" is derived from the idea of "a joyful shout or trumpet blast." This was because the Jubilee year was announced by the special sound of a trumpet. This trumpet was to be blown on the Day of Atonement of the fiftieth year (Lev. 25:8-17). (Interestingly enough, the fiftieth day, as it relates to the prophetic aspect of the Feast of Pentecost, will be announced by a *trumpet sound* as well—see I Thessalonians 4:16 & I Corinthians 15:52.)

The numerical value of 50 is derived by counting seven weeks (7 x 7) of years or days, whichever is in view. The number seven is generally recognized as the factor of "*completion*" as in the week of creation. In Genesis chapter two, verses one and two we read, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them were *finished*. And on the seventh day God *ended* His work which He had done..." The two words "*finished*" and "*ended*" give us the meaning of "*completion*." This seems to be the idea affixed to the spiritual implications of the use of the number "seven" in the Bible. This is illustrated again in the last book of the Bible where we have a series of sevens. There are "letters to the seven churches," "seven seals," "seven trumpets," "seven thunders" and the "seven bowls." Each of these "sevens" *completes* a section or a subject during the period of Great Tribulation as described in the pages of this book. So again the idea of *completion* in encompassed in the numerical value of seven.

In turn, seven sevens would simply represent "*Perfect Completion*." The added number of one to total 50 makes it representative of the "Divine (1), Perfect (7X), Consummation or Completion (7) of Time." Thus, the arrival of the 50th year or the 50th day was greatly anticipated as arranged and ordered by God. The 50th year or 50th day celebration simply commemorated the God-ordained *fullness* or *completion* of time for whichever purpose God assigned to it. Especially was this true for the first agricultural Harvest Feast celebration. So the number 50, as used in the Bible, simply signifies "*fullness*" or "*completion*," especially "*divine, perfect completion*." I will have more to say about this later in this study.

IV. PECULIARITIES OF PENTECOST

A. The Uniqueness of Pentecost

As has been stated before, it is noteworthy that the Feast of Pentecost, or "*Shavuot*" as it has been called by the Jewish people today, was different from the other two feasts in one distinctive way. The other Feasts were associated with a specific event in Israel's historic beginnings. As I stated before, the Feast of Unleavened Bread (or Passover) commemorated Israel's deliverance out of Egypt (Exo. 13:3, etc.). The Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles commemorated Israel's dwelling in booths for forty years during their wilderness journey (Lev.

23:42,43). However, the Feast of Pentecost was not connected to any historical event in Israel's history as it was revealed through Moses. It seems to simply be parenthetical in nature. Some Jewish writers who describe their Holy Days take note of this fact (see *Celebrating the Jewish Holidays*, a Friedman Group Production, page 116). As stated earlier, in much later tradition the Pharisees linked the Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost) with Moses giving the Law from Mount Sinai. However, this is not specifically indicated or stated in the Law of Moses. It is simply a much later tradition in an effort to connect the Feast to something tangible in Israel's history. It appears, therefore, that in avoiding the later Jewish added tradition, this Feast lent itself to a different time period altogether. In fact, this parenthetical setting makes the Feast of Pentecost all the more *applicable* to the present Church Age which is also *parenthetical* in nature.

B. "Now When The Day Of Pentecost Was Fully Come"

In the second chapter of the book of Acts we are to understand that the "counting of days" had been completed. Seven weeks had passed and at the evening meal beginning this day (remember, the Jewish day always begins with sunset in the evening), the heads of homes had usually announced to the household, "This is the fiftieth day."

The next morning "the Day of Pentecost (50th) had "fully come" (Acts 2:1). It is interesting to read the literal translation of this verse. The Greek word (*sumpleroo*) translated "fully come" is literally the word meaning specifically "*to be completed.*" The Greek word for "fully" or "fullness" is a synonym to *sumpleroo*, yet it is actually a different word (*pleroma*). Therefore, the literal translation of this verse should be "*When the Day of Pentecost was completed*" (see, The NASB Interlinear Greek-English New Testament). This translation does two things: first, it ties in the fact that the "counting of days" had been "completed"; secondly, it ties into the fact of the spiritual significance of the number 50, which as we pointed out before, signifies "completion" (Divine, perfect completion).

In addition, this translation also reflects upon the Jewish tradition of commonly calling this Feast "The Feast of Conclusion (*Hag ha-Azereth*)." This is the Feast that "concludes" or "completes" the earlier Feast of Unleavened Bread when they offered the "Wave Sheaf of Firstfruits." Jewish sages noted that the Feast of Tabernacles was said to be a Feast of "seven days" (Lev. 23:34). Yet there was an "eighth day" added to it which was also made a High Sabbath (Lev. 23:39). Therefore, these rabbis also thought that Shavout (Pentecost) should be considered as merely the "Conclusion (*Azereth*)," or the "eighth day" of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was actually the most common designation of Pentecost used by the Jewish people during the later Biblical period.

The first thing on schedule in the Temple was a "*New Grain Offering*" in the form of two loaves of bread to be waved up in the air, just as the handful of early spring grain was waved up in the air 50 days earlier. This day was a special High Sabbath. This was the second Feast on Israel's liturgical calendar where all the males, from 20 years old and upward, were required to be present in Jerusalem before the Lord (Exo. 23:14-17 & Deut. 16:16).

The Jewish brethren, who formed the early community of believers in Jesus Christ as God's Messiah, had also congregated for united prayer and Pentecostal celebration at or near the Temple area. It was about 9:00 A.M. Sunday morning (Acts 2:1 & 15). There was a suspense in their anticipation, for Christ had promised that the Holy Spirit would soon come! Would it be then???

C. The "New Grain Offering"

In the Temple court the priests were presenting the "New Grain Offering" which was customarily done the first thing in the morning. As we shall see, the very name of this Offering made it unique from all others. Actually this Offering was the highlight of this particular Feast. In addition there would be many other offerings to accompany this Offering. The instructions about this grain offering were followed with meticulous care. The spring maturing of the grain usually began with the barley (see Exo. 9:31,32 & Ruth 1:22). The first early barley that had ripened was usually taken for the "Firstfruit Offering" at the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Then the final early Summer harvesting of the grain that was celebrated fifty days later would usually take place either during or at the conclusion of the wheat harvest (Ruth 2:23). At the Feast of Pentecost the waving of the "New Grain Offering" was made. I will list the sequences in this Offering and give the spiritual symbolism.

1.) Of course, the kernels of grain had been planted many months before as the winter wheat or barley planting. The planting of these seemingly dead kernels of grain in the ground was a picture of death as stated by Christ, Himself (John 12:24). Now it speaks specifically of those who "have fallen asleep in Christ" (I Cor. 15:18 & 20).

2.) As stated before, the ripening and harvesting of the wheat clearly speaks of and symbolizes the resurrection of the dead "in Christ" (John 12:24 & I Cor. 15:23). I will add to this the testimony of I Cor. 15:35-38,

"But if someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?' Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain— Perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, And to each seed its own body."

3.) After the 49 days had been counted, the winter wheat planting was usually already harvested or being harvested. This crop is called the "Harvest of Firstfruits" (Exo. 23:16, etc.) of the year. Jewish custom indicates that just before the 50th day, a number of the priests certified that some of the best grain had been selected and prepared in a proper manner according to the Law. This grain would be an amount large enough to make two loaves of bread. This selected grain would represent the whole harvest of Firstfruits. In this case it would represent what has been called "the universal Church"—"the Church which is Christ's body" (Eph. 1:22,23). It would be in exact fulfillment of I Thess. 4:14—"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so (or in like manner) God will bring with Him (in resurrection) those who sleep in Jesus."

4.) After the stalks of grain chosen for the particular offering are harvested, they are not offered up in their raw natural state as was done in the earlier "Firstfruit Offering" at the Passover. In this case the grain is threshed or beaten out and ground into fine flour. The flour is all mingled and kneaded together into one large batch of dough. Kneading is defined as "to mix and work a substance into a uniform mass, by folding, pressing, stretching and shaping." This grinding of grain and kneading together into one batch was typical of the Holy Spirit's work of baptizing all believers together into "one body" and "one bread" (I Cor. 12:13 & 10:17), "whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free... male or female...for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28 & I Cor. 10:17).

- 5.) The addition of leaven to make the bread rise was normal in the process of making bread and simply speaks of rapid growth—in this case the “rising” and growth of the Church of Jesus Christ. (Many have supposed that since elsewhere leaven is used as symbolic of sin, the same must be the case here. This may or may not be true. I quite frankly doubt it, because this bread is offered up to God as the workmanship of the Holy Spirit in the believer during this Age. Naturally, this "bread" is not to be confused with mere "Christendom" with all its hypocrisies and characteristic blasphemies. Rather, it is the real "bread" of God's people saved during this present Age of Grace.)
- 6.) The “*New Grain or New Meal Offering*” (Lev. 23:16), as it is designated by the Spirit of God, speaks of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as a “*New Creation*” (II Cor. 5:17, and as becoming “*One New Man*” (Eph. 2:15).
- 7.) The large batch of dough was then divided in half in order to make two loaves of bread which simply speaks of *double fruitfulness*. (Some interpreters think this is representative of the Jew and Gentile believers in the Church. However, in Christ they are mixed altogether as one entity, making "one new man.")
- 8.) The baking of this bread in the fires of the oven speaks, of course, of the trials and testings which actually cause this bread to bake into a rich, wholesome food ready to be served. The Apostle Peter alludes to the value of the believer's testing "by fire" in his first epistle. Please see I Peter 1:3-9. Not every believer is exposed directly to the same amount of the fire. The outside edges are directly exposed to the fire or heat whereas the inside bears only the radiation.
- 9.) It was customary that in the morning of this High Sabbath of Pentecost the two loaves of bread, freshly baked, were taken into the Temple court for the presentation. During the ceremony these two loaves of bread are *waved from side to side and up in the air*, passing over the head of the priest. This speaks, as did the "Firstfruit" Offering 50 days earlier, of *ascension*—as it were, up to God!
- 10.) The whole ritual is said to be “*before the Lord*” (Lev. 23:20). That means it goes to God and is for God. It represents a special offering, ascending up to the Father in heaven. It is as if the Lord in heaven would reach down and take it from the hands of the priest.
- 11.) This Offering was accompanied by all the various sacrificial offerings that the Law demanded (see Lev. 23:18-20). These sacrificial offerings speak of the various, totally completed, and satisfactory works of our Lord Jesus Christ in His substitutionary death and resurrection for us. Christ's atoning work in all its various ramifications is the basis for our total salvation and presentation before the Lord.
- 12.) As we have testified before, this offering was made on the morning of the 50th Day. The number 50 signifies “*fullness*” or “*completion*.” (We will have more to say about the prophetic aspect of this number shortly.) At the approximate time this offering was made, the Holy Spirit took up His residence upon the earth (see *The Temple its Ministry and Services* by Alfred Edersheim, pages 266 & 267. Edersheim says, “For, as the worshippers were in the Temple, probably just as they were offering the wave-lambs and the wave-bread, the multitude heard that ‘sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind,’ which drew them to the house where the apostles were gathered...”). The sound as a “rushing mighty wind” was the outward sign or manifestation of the arrival of the Holy Spirit on earth, baptizing all believers into one new body—“The Church Which Is Christ's Body.” Thus God coordinated the birth of the Church

with the morning "New Grain Offering" of the Feast of Pentecost.

As to the fulfillment of the prophetic aspect of this offering, we can first of all remember that when the "*fullness of time*" (Gal. 4:4,5) came for Christ's redemptive work in His glorious resurrection, God coordinated that resurrection with the Sunday morning offering of the "*Firstfruit wave offering*." So it shall be, when the "*fullness of the Gentiles*" comes (Rom. 11:25), God will coordinate the Rapture of the Church with the perfect fulfillment of what the "*New Grain Offering*" typified. Please keep in mind that the number 50 symbolizes "*completion or fullness*," and when this happens for the church, it is not to be relegated or governed by anything in Israel's history. It is parenthetical in nature.

V. PROPHEPIC ASPECT OF PENTECOST

The Prophetic Application of This Feast to the Church by the Apostle Paul

A. First, in I Corinthians 15:20,23

"THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S— at His coming"

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits
OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP" (I Cor. 15:20).

The same as—"THOSE WHO SLEEP IN JESUS" (I Thess. 4:14)

Christ the firstfruits, afterwards THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S at His coming"
(I Cor. 15:23). This is the same as—
CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

This revelation was made to the Corinthians, and beyond them to "all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1:2), through the Apostle Paul. It was made about A.D. 56 as Paul wrote to the Corinthians from the city of Ephesus (Acts 19:21,22 & I Cor. 4:17). Apparently Paul wrote at the time of *Passover* (I Cor. 5:7,8). Paul tells the Corinthians that he intended to stay "*in Ephesus until Pentecost*" (I Cor. 16:8). Interestingly enough, the revelation that Paul gives in these verses above has the effect of telling the Church it will not leave this world until the prophetic fulfillment of Pentecost!

Sometimes the simplicity and brevity of the inspired words will allow us to read quickly and superficially, and consequently we do not appreciate the depth of meaning in what is being said unless we stop and *meditate* upon the Word as God wants us to. When we realize the basis upon which Paul is writing, the significance of the truth will illuminate our hearts. The truth that Paul gives in I Cor. 15:20 & 23 is clearly based upon the Law concerning the "Firstfruit Offering" of the "Wave Sheaf" and the following Harvest Feast called "Feast of Weeks" or "Firstfruits," better known as "Pentecost." This is found in Lev. 23:10-17—

"...wave the **sheaf of Firstfruits** before the Lord [*typical of Christ's resurrection and ascension*]...count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath...wave the **two wave loaves**...to the Lord [*typical of 'they that are Christ's at His coming'*]."

Christ's resurrection and ascension served as the "Firstfruits" token of the greater "Firstfruits" harvest to come. The resurrection and ascension of the Church of Jesus Christ is the

greater harvest to come. This is not a difficult passage to understand. It has been said, "Firstfruits implies community of nature with the 'harvest' to follow; i.e., Christ's resurrection promises the ultimate home-gathering of all Christ's people in this age.. The full harvest was foreshadowed and consecrated by the first sheaf brought as an offering on the day following the sabbath after Passover (Lev. 23:10f.)." *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, Eerdman's. (This is only one sample of what many commentaries observe.) The day of Pentecost is, therefore, prophetic of the resurrection and ascension of the Church of Jesus Christ—i.e., what we commonly call "the Rapture." The Church was born on this prophetic feast day—which as to its prophetic aspect is yet to be fulfilled.

I have gone into a detailed examination of I Corinthians 15: 20-28 in a study entitled "*The Three-Fold Order Of The Resurrection of The Righteous.*" I would encourage you to read that study as further complement and confirmation to this particular study.

B. Second, Lev. 23:17—Romans 8:11,23

"FIRSTFRUITS to the Lord...The FIRSTFRUITS of The Spirit"

"You shall bring from your dwellings 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).

"But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you...And not only that, but we also who have the FIRSTFRUITS of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:11 & 23).

Paul wrote this Epistle of Romans from the city of Corinth about A.D. 58, just before he left to return to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25 & Acts 20:3). On this occasion the book of Acts tells us that Paul hastened to be in Jerusalem for the "*Feast of Pentecost*" (Acts 20:16). It is obvious from reading Romans Eight that "Pentecost" is on Paul's mind in more than one way. This revelation from the Apostle Paul is double confirmation to the truths depicted before in I Corinthians 15 about a Pentecostal resurrection and ascension of the Church of Jesus Christ.

It is evident from this passage of Divine revelation that just as Christ was risen from the dead by the Holy Spirit of God, so the believer in Christ will be raised from the dead by the same Spirit of God. The resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the believer are *vitaly connected*. Christ's resurrection by the Spirit of God is the *guarantee* of the believer's resurrection by the same Spirit Who dwells in the believer. In Christ's resurrection He served as the "*Firstfruits*" guarantee of the greater "*Firstfruits*" resurrection harvest to come. The Holy Spirit Who dwells in the believers transfers the "*Firstfruits*" guarantee from Christ to the believers, so that the believers will benefit from the full blessings in the great "*Firstfruits Harvest*" resurrection of the Church of Jesus Christ. Thus, by the agency of the Holy Spirit all believers constitute the "*Harvest of Firstfruits*" awaiting the redemption of their bodies—i.e., the Rapture! Christ is represented by the "*Wave Offering of Firstfruits*" at the time of Passover and the Church is thereby represented by the "*Wave Loaves of the Harvest of Firstfruits*" celebrated 50 days later at Pentecost.

It is vital to remember that the special Offering of an early sample of grain during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (or Passover) bears the same designation or name "Firstfruits" as the "Feast of Firstfruits" that follows fifty days later (see Exo. 23:16; 34:22; Lev.23:17 & Num. 28:26). The special early Offering of the "Omer or Sheaf of Firstfruits" was the token guarantee of the full spring "Harvest of Firstfruits." Thus, I repeat again, the resurrection and ascension of Christ is typified in the "Offering of the Omer (or Sheaf) of Firstfruits," and the resurrection and ascension of the Church is typified by the "New Grain Offering" (two wave loaves of bread) at the "Feast of Weeks of Firstfruits," commonly called Pentecost.

C. Thirdly, in Romans 15:15 & 16 ***"The OFFERING UP OF THE GENTILES"***

"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister [lit. a serving priest] of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering [lit. in priestly service] the gospel of God, that the offering [as in the New Grain Offering] of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit [as with the anointing oil in the meal offerings]."
(Rom. 15:15,16—N.K.J.V.)

"...to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:16—N.A.S.V.)

In this beautiful passage of Scripture the Apostle Paul is inspired to describe his divine commission in terms of another figure or type—that of a *serving priest* in the Temple making an offering. In the translation of the Greek by the word "minister," the significance can be missed. In this passage the word for a "serving priest" (or a public servant) is used (*leitourgos*). Again, our usual English translation of "ministering" does not pick up the significance of what Paul is saying. Literally the word for "priestly service" is also used (*hierougin*). The word for "offering" (literally, *prophora* [*pros*, "to" and *phero*, "to bring"]) is used. It has reference to an offering such as would be presented to God in the Temple services.

In this case the Apostle Paul, in his priestly duties, makes an Offering of the Gentiles to be acceptable to God by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, because of the unusual nature of this offering being what is commonly considered unclean (Gentiles), it must be made "*acceptable*" and "*sanctified*" by the Holy Spirit—like oil mingled in the "grain offering" (Lev. 2:1). This whole description is a beautiful picture of the final offering up of the Gentiles at the end of this Age to God in heaven, much like that of the "New Grain Offering" in the form of two loaves of bread on that final (50th) Day of Pentecost.

So here we have an exact reference to the Rapture of the Church, spelled out for us by the apostle Paul, in terms of an "OFFERING" to God, by means of the "priestly service" of Paul, himself. Consequently, no one should be the least disturbed by the fact that the Pentecostal Offering is, indeed, a type of the Rapture of the Church at a future designated and appointed time.

That future *time* is itself a complement to this particular Offering. The celebration of Pentecost is designated by the truth of "*Completion*." A synonym to "completion" is "Fullness."

Paul himself has told us in the earlier passage of Romans 11:25 that the present blindness on the people of Israel will be lifted—when “the *fullness* of the Gentiles has come in” (Rom. 11:25). The “fullness of the Gentiles” marks the “Completion” or—Pentecostal Rapture of the Church.

D. Further Confirmation from Paul

There are many other Scriptures from the epistles of Paul that demonstrate the vital connection between Christ's resurrection and the collective resurrection of the body of Christ, the Church. These references have the effect of emphasizing the blessed truth of Pentecost being prophetic of the Rapture.

“And if Christ be not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (I Cor. 15:17,18).

“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philip. 3:10,11).

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philip. 3:14).

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body...” (Philip. 3:20,21).

“Now He Who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit.” (II Cor. 1:22).

“Now He Who has prepared us for this very thing is God, Who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee” (II Cor. 5:5).

“In Whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, (i.e., the resurrection of the body) to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:13,14).

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in like manner [even so] God will bring with Him [in resurrection] those who sleep in Jesus” (I Thess. 4:14).

“To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

Another added ingredient that Moses gave to the observance of the two Harvest Feasts, Pentecost and Tabernacles, was the command for “**rejoicing**” (see Deut. 16:9-14). The Jews received notoriety for their execution of this command. No doubt the Apostle Paul alludes to this fact when he expresses the supreme joy of the saints being raptured into the presence of the Lord.

*“Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord...You shall **rejoice** before the Lord your God...” (Deut. 16:10,11).*

*“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of **rejoicing**? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” (I Thess. 2:19).*

VI. PURPOSE OF PENTECOST

A. Why Was The Church Born On The day Of Pentecost?

The Church was born upon the Day of Pentecost for a threefold reason.

First, it has become obvious that Pentecost is a type of the Church. It is the *birthday* of the Church and thereby points to the typology. To put it another way—it is *the Church's Day!*

Secondly, the particular *offering* on that Day symbolizes the Church! The "*New Grain Offering*" represents the "*One New Man*," or the "*New Creation*" in Christ. The "*bread*" of the Offering represents the Church as the "*One Bread*" of I Cor. 10:17.

And thirdly, the Offering on that Day is designed to draw our attention to Pentecost as one primary *prophecy* of the Rapture of the Church!! Surprisingly enough, almost all Pre-tribulational Rapture expositors miss this very clear and simple testimony. However, it should now be obvious to us, that if the waving up in the air of the sheaf of "*Firstfruits*" was a type of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, then to be consistent, the waving up in the air of the "*New Grain Offering*" is equally typical of the resurrection and ascension of the Church of Jesus Christ. The first Offering is the basis for interpreting the second. As the first Offering of "*Firstfruit*" saw its final fulfillment at the climactic resurrection and ascension of Christ, so the second Offering must see its final climactic fulfillment at the Rapture of the Church. In consistency with this, the Apostle Paul has now directly applied the typology of the Feast to the Rapture of the Church in these several Scriptures that we have quoted.

B. "For if the Firstfruit is Holy, the Lump is also Holy..."

The fundamental principle that the Apostle Paul states in Romans 11:16 must apply. "*For if the Firstfruit (Christ) is holy, the Lump (the church) is also holy...*" What is true of the "*Firstfruit*" as a sample, must be true of the whole "*batch of dough*." The word "*lump*" (Greek, *phurama*), "denotes that which is mixed or kneaded, hence a mass of dough" (W.E. Vine). This principle that Paul states is perfectly illustrated in the subject before us. In Leviticus 23:10 & 11 we see the order for waving the "*Sheaf of Firstfruit*." Immediately following, in verses 16 & 17, we see the order for making the mass of dough into two loaves of bread and waving them before the Lord as well. What is true of the "*Firstfruit*" (Christ), is also true of the "*two loaves of Bread*" (the Church).

If this "*New Grain Offering*," of two loaves of bread waved in the air at Pentecost, is not a type of the resurrection and ascension of the Church, then neither is the earlier "*Sheaf of Firstfruits*" waved in the air at Passover a type of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ! However, if Christ's resurrection and ascension is typified by the "*Sheaf of Firstfruits*" waved at Passover—and the Holy Spirit says it is—then, of course, the Church's resurrection and ascension is typified by the "*New Grain Offering*" waved at Pentecost!! This sound conclusion is positively inescapable because of the very example of our Lord Jesus Christ!

C. Three Areas of Example

Notice how that each ingredient in the Passover celebration as to its Days and Offering has three specific areas of typical fulfillment: 1.) the substance or ingredients in the offering, 2.)

the action of the offering, and 3.) the timing of the offering.

No.1 The Biblical record reveals that 1.) **unblemished lambs** were to be 2.) **chosen and selected** on 3.) **the 10th day of Nisan** as the Passover lambs to later be sacrificed. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the 1.) **unblemished Lamb**, 2.) **chosen and selected** on 3.) **the 10th day of Nisan** (30 A.D.) to be the antitypical Passover Lamb for the salvation of the world (John 1:29 & 12:27, 32). (For four days He was examined and remained spotless and impeccable.)

1. The Substance—*the lambs* Christ as *The Lamb of God*.
2. The Action of *choosing* Christ, *Chosen by God and the multitude*.
3. The time—*10th of Nisan* Precisely on Schedule—*10th of Nisan*.

No.2 The Biblical record shows clearly that 1.) **the Passover lamb** (as a perfect type of Christ in His redemptive work for mankind), 2.) **was sacrificed**, on 3.) **the afternoon of the 14th Day of Nisan**. "*Christ our 1.) Passover (Lamb) was 2.) sacrificed for us*" (I Cor. 5:7) on **the 14th Day of Nisan** (30 A.D.). Everything in this area of typology was fulfilled to perfection in Christ:

1. The Substance—*the lamb* Christ as *The Lamb of God*.
2. The Action—*sacrificed* (Not a bone broken), *"sacrificed for us."*
3. The Time—*afternoon, 14th* Precisely on Schedule of the Passover.

No.3 The Biblical record shows clearly that 1.) the **bundle of grain** offering (the "Firstfruits"), was 2.) **waved up in the air**, 3.) **on the morning after the regular Sabbath** that occurs during this Feast. This was a perfect type of Christ. The Scripture says, 1.) "**Christ our Firstfruits**" (I Cor. 15:23), was 2.) **resurrected and ascended**, 3.) **on Sunday morning** on schedule. This typology was fulfilled to perfection in Christ's glorious resurrection from the dead, and His ascension to the Father.

1. The Ingredients—*grain* Christ *The Firstfruits*.
2. The Action—*waved up* Christ *Resurrected and Ascended*.
3. The Time—*Sunday A.M.* Precisely on Schedule of the Offering.

D. On Pentecost of 30 A.D. We Had a Preliminary Fourth Example

No.4 The Biblical record shows clearly that the Feast of Pentecost is a type of the Church in its resurrection and ascension—i.e., the Rapture (Rom. 8:11,23 & I Cor. 15:23). This aspect of the typology remains to be fulfilled at the Rapture of the Church. 1.) **the New grain Offering** (two loaves of bread) 2.) **waved up in the air**, 3.) **on Sunday A.M. 50 days** after the Passover "Wave sheaf" offering. 1.) The "**New Man**" being "**one bread**" (a spiritual Bread), 2.) to be **resurrected and ascended**, 3.) when "**the fullness (50th) of the Gentiles be come in**" (Rom. 11:23).

1. The Ingredients—*bread* The Church, the *"bread."*
2. The Action—*waved up* *Resurrection and Rapture* into heaven.
3. The Time—*50th day* To be Precisely on Schedule (50th).
The completion of the Age,
The "fullness of the Gentiles."

When one looks by faith at the breathtaking precision of God's calendar and its fulfillment thus far, we can only pray that our lives will be fully dedicated to God's will for us. God's appointed time for the Church to be resurrected, ascended and presented in the heavens, no doubt, draws increasingly near. At the "Completion" (50th, Pentecost) of the out-calling of the Gentiles the Rapture will take place. Pentecost, therefore, not only marks the birth of the Church, but more precisely its Rapture into heaven as well. Once it all happens, no doubt, we will all look back and wonder how it was that we so easily often forgot, during the busy-ness and problems of our earthly sojourn, the beautiful and guaranteed promises of God.

VII. PASSOVER AND PENTECOST

A. A Unique Feature of Passover

As was stated at the beginning of this study, it is an interesting fact that the Feast of Passover stands as a marker for both the beginning and the close of the Law Dispensation. This is very important to observe. With the first Passover in Egypt, Israel as a nation, congregation or church was called out of Egypt to serve God in the wilderness. This was when Israel was born as a nation. This was when the Dispensation of the Law actually began. Jeremiah would say concerning the Law Covenant, "*...the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt...*" (Jer. 31:32). The celebration of Passover was the first of the ceremonial Law observances to be given. Therefore, the first Passover in Egypt marked the actual beginning or birth of the nation of Israel and the beginning of the Law Dispensation.

However, the Passover was primarily prophetic in nature. It was to actually have its prime spiritual fulfillment in the death of Jesus Christ for the redemption of Israel and all mankind. This would happen when "*the fullness of time had come*" for the appearance of the antitypical Passover Lamb (Galatians 4:4). When the exact "*consumation of the Ages*" took place, Christ "*appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*" (Hebrews 9:26). Thus the final Passover in Israel's history, which would formally mark the spiritual fulfillment of the Passover subject and the legal termination of the Law Dispensation took place in 30 A.D. when Israel's rejected Messiah was sacrificed as the antitypical Passover Lamb. In the reckoning of God in heaven, this is when the Law was "nailed to the cross"—see Ephesians 2:14-16. Thus, Christ's Passover formally marked the (temporary) termination of the Law. This truth about the termination of the law was fully made known through the revelations given to Paul.

B. As To The Time Of The Rapture Of The Church

In a similar way, according to the Greek Scriptures through the Apostle Paul, we understand that the Feast of Pentecost marks both the beginning and the close of the Dispensation of the Grace of God. The Church was born on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem in 30 A.D. However, the Feast of Pentecost (like the Passover) is primarily prophetic in nature. But what is it prophetic of ?? Here is the mistake that most expositors have made in times past. Since the church was born on this Feast day they have merely understood that the Feast was prophetic of the birth of the Church. In reality this is only the beginning of the story.

As we have seen in this study, the Feast of Pentecost by its unique position on the calendar is actually prophetic of this whole present age. Pentecost, especially by the uniqueness of its offering, is also prophetic of the resurrection and ascension of the Church. It is true that the Feast bears all the ingredients that would symbolize the unique characteristics of the Church of Jesus Christ, and even of this Age of Grace. However, its prophetic perspective is specially pointed towards the Rapture of that Church. Therefore, Pentecost will actually have its total fulfillment at the time of the Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ. The totally fulfilled Pentecost will therefore, likewise, terminate the pilgrim journey of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. And, no doubt, the Church will be Raptured on schedule. The only question that any believer should ask is, “When will the *antitypical* 50th day (*the completion*) occur?” The determination of that “fullness” rests in God’s wisdom and timing. Very soon, we hope!

Great anticipation was generated when the Jewish households “counted the days” until the Feast. So it has been down through the centuries. Every generation of true believers has “counted the days,” as it were, when they refreshed their hearts with the promises of God towards that end. It is not accidentally called “The Blessed Hope.”

C. The Passover that Closed the Age of Law

The prophecy of Daniel, that after 483 years had transpired the Messiah would be cut off (Daniel 9:25,26), gave to the people of Israel a certain year to look for in their expectations. Perhaps the most difficult thing about Daniel’s prophecy was understanding what it meant that the Messiah would be “cut off.” Actually, the Passover that would take place in the 483rd year of Daniel’s prophecy would be most important. This was true for two reasons. First of all, that Passover would be associated with the conclusion of the 483 years in Daniel’s prophecy. In addition, as we stated at the beginning of this study, the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah had predicted the establishment of the New Covenant, and the deliverance of Israel in connection with a greater Passover celebration (Isa. 31:5; Jer. 23:7,8 & 31:31-34). Of course, not all the people fully understood these prophecies. Certainly the rulers of Israel seemed blinded to their meaning. Nevertheless, at the time of the final Passover when Christ was about to die, we are told that there was great excitement and expectancy in Israel, that possibly the Messiah and Kingdom were about to appear—Luke 17:20; 19:11 & 23:51. No doubt, this expectation was due to the fact of Daniel’s prophecy, and that of the other prophets who aligned Israel’s Kingdom hopes with a future “passing over” by God in executing their deliverance, and most certainly because of the ministry of John the Baptist and of Christ, Himself, both of whom said that the “Kingdom of God was near at hand.”

Actually the rulers of Israel had rejected the King and the Kingdom. Therefore, this Passover of A.D. 30 would not mark the establishment of the Kingdom of God for Israel, but rather it would mark the death of the Messiah as the antitypical Passover Lamb, and the close of the Law Dispensation, for at this time the Law was “nailed to the cross.” Christ had very soberly and sadly spoken of the fact that Israel, in the main, “knew not the time of their visitation” (See Luke 19:44), and they carnally could not “discern the signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3).

Apparently this same condition exists in our own day. Though there is a lot of expectancy among evangelical Christians, yet there is a lot of apathy and worldliness as well. This robs the Church of a great and sober opportunity for witness. In addition, the vast majority

of professing “Christendom” is totally indifferent to the issue.

D. The Antitypical “Pentecost” that Closes the Age of Grace

Obviously, the antitypical Pentecost (the Rapture of the Church) will bring to a conclusion this Church Dispensation. Obviously, it takes place at the end of this Age. However, God has actually not left us in the dark (I Thess. 5:4-6) as to when this age will close. It is Scripturally indicated by the inspired Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 11, that this Age or Dispensation of Gentile favor will end just like the Law Age ended. See my Bible study on the "Dispensational Comparisons," where I go into this subject in more detail. Both Dispensations follow a similar pattern at the beginning and *conclusion* of their time periods.

With this revelation from Paul in mind, we can look at the close of the Law Age and see that the culmination of Israel's "apostasy" involved a "crucifixion or *holocaust*," a "resurrection" and a "counting of days" until "Pentecost." Therefore, the antitypical Pentecost which will mark the Rapture of the Church may also take place after the culmination of Christendom's "apostasy" involving a "crucifixion or *holocaust*," a "resurrection" and a "countdown" until "the Rapture." That there are many signs which point to the fact that we have approached the end of this Age, there is no question by most conservative Bible believing teachers.

The Holocaust of Christ and the Holocaust of the Jews bear a striking resemblance. In fact the Holocaust of the Jews of recent history has been labeled—“The Crucifixion of The Jews” by Jewish, Catholic and Protestant writers (see the Appendix to my study, "The Gospel of the Holocaust"). In addition, both Holocausts are followed by a "resurrection" event. In our present generation there has been what has been called “the resurrection of the nation of Israel” after nearly two thousand years. After the resurrection of Christ there was the "counting of days" until Pentecost and the birth of the Church.

I say again, God has not left us without the necessary information and example. What happened to Jesus the Messiah has been duplicated on a social or national scale right in front of our eyes in these last days. After the "crucifixion of the Jews" and re-birth of the nation of Israel, we have a more significant "countdown," in the sense of expectancy, that leads right up to the approaching Pentecost.

VIII. PERFECTION OF PENTECOST

A. The "Counting of Days," or "Countdown"

The concluding days of the Church's Dispensation are absolutely sobering—if not almost unbelievable! What happened to Jesus Christ in terms of days has happened to Israel as a nation in terms of years. Christ's suffering began on the tenth day of Nisan when He was selected as the antitypical Passover lamb for death. Christ's physical suffering was culminated four days later at the exact time of the Passover sacrifice. According to the Word of God Christ died as a "holocaust" (whole burnt offering, Greek *holos* [*whole*] and *kaustos* [*to burn*])—Heb. 10:6-10) for the sins of the world. Three days later He was gloriously resurrected from the dead. There followed the "counting of days" (50) until Pentecost when the Church Age was inaugurated.

Now, the close of this Dispensation of time is following in the same precise pattern. The prophesied "apostasy" of Christendom culminated with the "crucifixion of the Jews" (their "Holocaust"). That Holocaust lasted for four years and ended in May of 1945. However, exactly three years later the nation of Israel was re-born—May 14th, 1948. This has been called "the resurrection of the nation of Israel." The Pentecost that will bring the Church into the presence of our blessed, long anticipated Savior will also, therefore, be at the conclusion of a "countdown" of fifty—in this case, not the literal 50, but the antitypical 50—meaning "completion." This completion must correspond with the time God in heaven deems "the fullness of the Gentiles" has come.

In plain language, this means at the resurrection of the State of Israel, the "countdown" in observing the signs of these last days truthfully began. The many Pre-Millennial Bible teachers who made this observation in and after 1948, I believe for the most part, realized the exactness of what they were saying. I remember hearing it with my own ears, as did many others! More recently the magazines have reminded us of this (see *U.S. News and World Report*, Dec. 19th, 1994 & Dec. 15th, 1997). And it is true! This "countdown" has been going on for many years.

B. A Human Blunder

As to a literal 50 years passing since Israel's restoration as a nation, the 50th year came with the 50th anniversary of the nation of Israel. The first Feast day to be observed just two weeks after the 50th anniversary date of the rebirth of the nation of Israel—was Pentecost on Sunday, May 31st, 1998. However, the literal 50th year was not the time the Church heard the Trumpet sound! And why not? Because, as I stated at the beginning of this Bible study (pg. 11) the Feast of Pentecost did not coincide with any historical event in the history of the nation of Israel, as did the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. Therefore, in the antitypical Pentecostal Rapture of the Church, it should never be made to happen 50 years from the date of Israel's restoration, and certainly not to coincide with Israel's 50th anniversary. Many people mistakenly thought that it would—myself included—since I failed to remember what I said on page eleven.

Furthermore, when we realize that the number 50 symbolizes "*fullness*" or "*completion*" we should never make it merely symbolize "50 years." As it relates to this church Age, it symbolizes the *fullness* or *completion* of God "*calling out from among the Gentiles a people for His name*" (Acts 15:14), and "*For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this **mystery**, lest you be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*" (Rom. 11:25). This is what it symbolizes!

Consequently, I am deeply ashamed of my careless mistake in doing the very thing I had said should not be done at the very beginning of this study. I related the antitypical Pentecost (the Rapture) to a historical event in Israel's history. I am sure that this was evidence of the sin of pride in my heart. I have asked God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of any of those that may have used my assumption at that time. However, I do not believe that my mistake should cloud the beauty of God's truth on the subject of "the Pentecostal Rapture of the Church." That truth will stand regardless of my failures to consistently minister it. I have studied carefully every detail of the Biblical truths encompassed within this area of revelation. My error was manifested, whereas the truth remained the same. Once I saw the "leaven" and extricated it, I therefore, finally decided to share the truth of this subject again. It is too beautiful and clear to

pass over because of a human error. In fact, I believe the truth will shine brighter than ever before.

I have made two mistakes in my life regarding the Rapture subject. The first, and by far the most dangerous, was early in my Christian life to swallow the teaching that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation and be raptured at the second coming of Jesus Christ. God and my Christian brethren have long forgiven me for this. I thank God for their patience. That took place back in the 1950s. The second was swallowing the suggestion that the 50 days were emblematic of "50 years" from Israel's establishment as a nation. The parallel of Christ's Holocaust and resurrection with the Holocaust and resurrection of the State of Israel should never be extended to the exact time of the Rapture of the Church.

C. The "Divine, Perfect Consummation of Time"

How many times has Romans 8:18-39 been read at the bedsides of saints who were struggling in the closing days and hours of their earthly sojourn?? A great many times I am sure! I have personally done so several times as I attempted to bring consolation to the spirits of those who would soon depart this life. There is hardly any chapter in the Bible that conveys the assurances of God to the hearts of His children as does this passage of Scripture. The comfort that these truths offer focuses upon the blessed promises of God for the ultimate Jubilee of liberation from the bondage of our mortal bodies to our receiving glorified bodies at that great resurrection time. Paul's words stir our souls in anticipation.

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Paul says the liberation and resurrection of the saints will be so glorious even the physical creation itself anticipates the curse being lifted afterwards from its own struggle in bondage and futility.

"For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God...because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious LIBERTY of the children of God."

In giving these promises, the Apostle Paul is utilizing the blessed 50th year Jubilee **release** as it was written in the Law of Moses. Like the Feast days themselves, so the Jubilee year as well looks forward to that blessed end time "proclamation of Liberty throughout all the land" (Lev. 25:10, Rom. 8:21). (See also *The Book of Leviticus*, by Kellogg, pages 512-514 and *Unger's Bible Handbook*, page 120.) The Jubilee not only spoke of liberty for those who were sold into bondage, but also the restoration of the land as well. Thus Paul's portrayal of the coming "glorious liberty of the children of God" from the "bondage of corruption" also speaks of the anticipated restoration of the earth which is now groaning in agony. Such glimpses of future glory are revitalizing to our souls—"for we walk by faith and not by sight."

Paul further ratifies this truth by a second typology of the same prophetic principle. We should remember that the calculation for the Jubilee year and for the Feast of Pentecost day is on the same basis—seven weeks plus one = 50. (See also the *Davis Dictionary of The Bible*, under Jubilee.)

"For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. And not only that, but we also who have the Firstfruits

of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

With these words Paul confirms the 50th year Jubilee resurrection truth by saying, in effect, the believers who possess the "Firstfruits" guarantee are spiritually counting off the 50 days until the "Harvest of Firstfruits," in anticipation of the glorious resurrection of our bodies. Thus, God's promise of our glorification, whether typified in 50 years or 50 days, will be wonderfully accomplished.

"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, then we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."

Therefore, there should be no question in our minds that the Resurrection and Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ are beautifully prefigured by the typology of Pentecost, and even of the 50 day counting until Pentecost, when the two loaves were waved in the air. Most certainly, whether in the principle of 50th day, or in the particulars of the ritual offering, the Rapture is prefigured by Pentecost. The question that stirs our souls is not, "Will there be?" but, "When will be the Pentecostal Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ?" In the context of Romans 8, the Spirit of God does not appear to be informing us that the antitypical Pentecost will fall upon a *literal* Jubilee year in Israel. It was true that the particular Pentecost that fell upon a Jubilee year in Israel was in 1998. As I have acknowledged, the Holy Spirit certainly did not set that date!

The Holy Spirit has set a date all right! But that date is the perfect timing when God knows that the "fullness (50th) of the Gentiles has come in." In turn, the Rapture of the Church will take place on schedule.

The reason this is true should be obvious to all! This particular Firstfruits Harvest Feast has literally been named by the exact Date of its observance—"Weeks" or "Pentecost (50th)." After the counting of seven weeks, on the fiftieth day they were to offer two loaves of bread as a "New Grain Offering," to be "waved" in the air before the Lord. The Date of its observance is a main feature in its observance and in the typology!

The Holy Spirit has further signified through the Apostle Paul that the close of the Dispensation of the Grace of God is parallel with and similar to the close of the Dispensation of Law. The factual observation of a very clear parallel, which has been taking place in these closing years, points to an antitypical "Pentecost" on our doorstep. The close of both Ages involves an "apostasy," a "crucifixion or holocaust," a "resurrection," a "countdown" and finally a "Pentecost." Therefore, the one primary purpose of this study is to examine the revelation about "Pentecost" and the potential of the soon coming "Pentecostal Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ!"

D. "The Dispensation of The Fullness of Times"

In Ephesians 1:7-10 the Apostle Paul uses the expression that designates an economy of time of God's dealing with mankind. The expression is "*The dispensation of the fullness of times.*" The meaning of exactly *which dispensation* the Apostle Paul has in view has been discussed by different teachers, usually in a friendly manner. It either has reference to the *present dispensation* or to the future dispensation of the Kingdom when Christ reigns on earth for one thousand years. I have most often seen it interpreted as referring to the future by

dispensational Bible teachers. Yet some of them are not at all confident of this. One older Bible teacher, whom I have deep respect for, always looked at the passage with a suspicious eye thinking that, in all probability, it does have reference to the present age of Grace. I have since seen several traditional commentaries which take it as a reference to the present “gospel age.” In this period of time it is God’s purpose to “head up all things in Christ.” Allow me to quote the passage here in a literal rendering:

*“In Whom we have redemption through His blood,
the forgiveness of trespasses according to the riches of His grace,
which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence,
making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure
which He purposed in Himself,
for the stewardship (dispensation) of the fullness of times,
to head up all things in Christ
the things in the heavens and things on the earth, in Him,
In Whom we were also chosen as His inheritance...”*

I now think that we can determine that the *present age* is very definitely in view by two facts: one, other statements in the immediate context; and two, by comparing it with a similar statement from Paul’s sister epistle to the Colossians.

First, the immediate context goes on to tell us what things we have “In Him” right now that are actually in compliance with the same terminology. “*In Whom we were also chosen as His inheritance*” (Verse 11). And that God has “*put all things under His feet gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all things*” (Verses 22 & 23). God has obviously made Christ “*Head over all things...to the church*” right now in this present age.

Secondly, Paul uses similar terminology in Colossians 1:19 & 20,

*“For it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell,
And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself,
Whether things on earth or things in heaven.”*

This present “fullness” of Christ is parallel to the Ephesian statement about the “fullness” of the age itself.

Consequently we can understand that in the present age God has indeed “*headed up all things in Christ,*” including the reconciliation of “*things in the heavens and things on the earth.*” In a very proper sense, therefore, the present age is in view, and is designated as—“the Dispensation of the *Fullness* of Times.”

This fact enhances my initial thesis that the Feast of Pentecost, which means “*completion or fullness*” is actually typical of the present Age—this age being designated as “*the completion or fullness of time.*”

E. As An Addendum

It is not a mere coincidence that the Jewish people today are customarily encouraged to read the book of Ruth in their celebration of Shavuot (sometimes called *Hag Habikurim*, "The

Festival of Firstfruits"). Not only does the setting for this story emerge out of the backdrop of a very sad and bitter tragedy, but the account unfolds into a most tender and beautiful love story that takes place during the barley and wheat harvest time in Israel. This is why it is usually read and studied at the time of the Feast of Firstfruits. It perfectly coincides not merely with the timing of the Feast, but most importantly with the prophetic substance of the story of Ruth. Reading the inspired book of Ruth is like dipping your hands into a small treasure chest of the most precious jewels. Volumes have been written about the many reflections of light as from sparkling diamonds of truth.

The story has been called "*The Romance of Redemption.*" There is a clear dispensational application to our own present age of Gentile salvation by this inspired story. The Apostle Paul was inspired to say, "*through their [the Jews'] fall...salvation has come to the Gentiles*" (Romans 11:11). In addition, it has been noted by certain Jewish writers that the experience of Elimelech and his family of Jews who left the promised land much resembles the present state of the Jews in the Diaspora. Quoting from Shlomo Reskin once again (*The Jerusalem Post international*, "The Joy of Anticipation," June 6, 2003) we have these words, "Elimelech...leaves the house of bread (Bethlehem)...ends up encountering a 'world of death and illusion.' The tale of Elimelech can be seen as a description of what happens to a Jewish family in the Diaspora." However, Reskin also adds, "Only when every Jew-by-birth recaptures the excitement, anticipation and preparation of the Jew-by-choice will the true Messiah bring redemption to the world."

This story climaxes in the *midnight hour of secrecy* when a most unlikely heroine, an accursed Gentile (typical of the Gentiles of this age), who had found grace in the eyes of a mighty Jew of wealth (typical of Jesus Christ), places herself at his feet to claim the right of kinsman redemption, and this virtuous woman is accepted. In turn, the precious fruit of their marriage becomes "*A Restorer of Life*" to Israel (Ruth 4:15 & Romans 11:31).

Hebrew scholars tell us that the phrase, "*[God] Who did not withhold His kindness,*" is only found in two places in the Hebrew Scriptures—the **story of Isaac and Rebecca** (Genesis 24:27), and the **story of Ruth and Boaz** (Ruth 2:20). Both of these stories, I believe, were designed of God to prefigure this present Age of Grace.

All praise, honor and glory be to God the Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. The Holy Spirit inspired James to write and make reference to the church of Jesus Christ as being "brought forth by the Word of truth so that we might be, as it were, the *firstfruits* among His creatures" (James 1;18).

THE END