

# Pentecost Rediscovered

When should Pentecost be observed? How should the date be counted? Should we follow the Sadducee reckoning? Or that of the Pharisees? Or a different method altogether? Does it really matter how we count it or what day we observe, so long as we are sincere? What does God's Word say on this subject? Discover the TRUTH in this article – so you can KNOW the answer, and KNOW that you know!

William F. Dankenbring

For almost 20 years I have been thundering the message that the end-time churches of God are committing an egregious sin, and breaking God's LAW – by the way they count "Pentecost"! Few have been willing to listen, or to search the Scriptures, and to PROVE this issue, one way or the other. Some have gone so far as to accuse me of being a "false prophet" and admonished people to have nothing to do with me or this ministry!

Yet proof? They don't bother. They just hurl names and accusations. But as the old saying goes, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me!"

Once in a while, however, I discover someone who is really willing to search out the Scriptures, and history, and to study into these issues with an open, sincere mind.

It makes me so thrilled and happy to see people that stand up and do their own research. They take my challenge, look things up, they prove all things, they will go to the library and they will read and study for the glory of God. Solomon wrote, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings is to search out a matter" – to investigate and research it (Prov.25:2). Let's search out this matter, and find the truth!

I was praising and thanking God this morning as I was reviewing some literature on Pentecost which I have written over the past 20 years. My heart leaped, and I praised Him for revealing this truth and knowledge to me. I prayed, "Thank you, O Lord, my God, for this tremendous blessing. I just love to study your word and see the truth. How pleasant, remarkable and wonderful it is to see discoveries out of your law (Torah)."

No where in God's word does it say we should *assume* anything, or take anything for granted. Take nothing for granted, nor what any man or church organization says for granted. Remember Christ said we are to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God – that is scripture (Matt.4:4; Luke 4:4).

### *Historical Evidence*

In *The Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Wars of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, a Pharisee, and a Jewish general who lived in the First Century, we read about the Sadducees and the Pharisees. These two groups were the leading Jewish religious groups during the first century. The Sadducees counted Pentecost from the Sunday that followed the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread; the Pharisees counted from the annual Sabbath of the Passover holy day. Who counted correctly? Who did the PEOPLE of Jesus' day follow?

This was in the time of Christ in Judea. From *Antiquities*, book 18, part 1, section 4, we read: "But the doctrine of the Sadducees . . . is received but *by a few* . . . But they are able to do almost nothing by themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to do, **THEY ADDICT THEMSELVES TO THE NOTIONS OF THE PHARISEES**, because the multitude would not otherwise bear [endure] them."

Even if a Sadducee was the high priest, he had to do everything at the Temple in line with the notations and approved regulations of the Pharisees in order to stay in office. Further proof of this can be found in my article, "Who Controlled the Temple Services in the Days of Christ?" It shows that the Pharisees not the Sadducees controlled the Temple.

In *Antiquities*, book 13, chapter 10, and part 5, we read: "These [the Pharisees] have so **GREAT a POWER** over the **MULTITUDE**, that when they say anything against the king or against the high priest, they are presently believed." But as for the Sadducees, Josephus states, "the Sadducees are able to persuade none but the rich, and have **NOT** the populace obsequious to them, but the **PHARISEES HAVE THE MULTITUDE ON THEIR SIDE . . .**"

In *Wars of the Jews*, book 2, chapter 8, part 14 Josephus relates

". . . the Pharisees are those who are esteemed **MOST SKILLFUL IN THE EXACT EXPLICATION OF THEIR LAWS . . .** These ascribe all to fate (or providence) and to God, and yet allow, that to act what is right, or the contrary, is principally in the power of men, although fate does co-operate in every action. . . But the Sadducees . . . take away fate entirely, and suppose that God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil . . . Moreover, the Pharisees are friendly to one another, and are for the exercise of concord and regard for the public. But the behavior of the Sadducees one towards another is in some degrees **WILD**; and their conversation with those that are of their own party is as **BARBAROUS** as if they were strangers to them" (*Wars of the Jews*, II, viii, 14).

In *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity* by David Flusser, an esteemed Christian scholar, he says regarding Jesus' position on matters of Jewish law, it appears He generally accepted the more stringent authority of the Pharisees, the School of Shammai, in some areas, but on ideology he was closer to the School of Hillel in other areas, whose

motto was “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus formed a bridge between the schools of Shammai and Hillel. In general, Jesus went along with the teachings of the Pharisees as he said in Matthew 23:2-3, “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Seat. Whatever they command you to observe, that observe and do.” They had the correct basic precepts in keeping the holy days and the laws of God, and were dominant in the time of Christ in practices, rituals and customs of the Temple services. But, of course, in some matters they went too far, as we know from the gospel accounts.

Thus contrary to the assertions of some, Jesus did not condemn all the teachings of the Pharisees – He condemned only those things which they had changed and added to the Torah or Law of God – their “enactments,” and “traditions” which altered the basic principles of the Law!

*But He never once rebuked them for their observation of Pentecost, or declared that they kept the wrong day! Never!*

In fact, Flusser writes: “The truth of the matter, however, is that there is *NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VIEWS OF JESUS AND AUTHENTIC JEWISH TRADITION*” (p.25).

In *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, under “Festivals,” we read:

“The Jews, at least as early as the DAYS OF CHRIST, connected with the Passover, and commemorated on the *6th Sivan*, the giving of the Decalogue. . . . The *Pentecost* was essentially linked to the PASSOVER – that festival which, above all others, expressed the fact of a race chosen and separated from other nations – and was the solemn termination of the consecrated period. . . . It is therefore evident that the Jews, who during the second temple kept Pentecost fifty days after the 16th Nisan, rightly interpreted the injunction in Lev.23: 15-22” (“Festivals,” p.357).

Furthermore, in *The Temple, It’s Ministry and Services* by Alfred Edersheim, a Christian Jew in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, we read:

“The expression, ‘the morrow after the Sabbath,’ has sometimes been misunderstood as implying that the presentation of the so-called ‘first sheaf’ was to be always made on the day following the weekly Sabbath of the Passover week. This view, adopted by the ‘Boethusians’ and the Sadducees in the time of Christ, and by the Karaite Jews and certain modern interpreters, rests on a misinterpretation of the word ‘Sabbath.’ As in analogous allusions to other feasts in the same chapter, it means not the weekly Sabbath, but the day of the festival. The testimony of Josephus, of Philo, and of Jewish tradition, leaves no room to doubt that in this instance we are to understand by the ‘Sabbath’ the 15th of Nisan, on whatever day of the week it might fall” (p.257).

### *Joshua 5*

One of the really good Biblical proofs that Pentecost is Sivan 6 is based upon the story in Joshua 5:1-12. Israel is ready to invade the land of Canaan and they had to stop and circumcise all those who had not been circumcised. Circumcision had not been done during the 40 years in the wilderness. The best time for circumcision is the eighth day after birth (least pain). The children of Israel camped at Gilgal and kept the Passover on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> after the lambs were killed and roasted at the end of Nisan 14 and eaten on Nisan 15. Then “*on the day after the Passover* (the next day = Nisan 16), that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain”. Then the manna ceased the day after (Nisan 17), because now they had eaten the produce of the land. God commanded the Israelites not to eat of the (new) grain of the harvest UNTIL the “wave sheaf offering” had been presented to God on “the morrow after the Sabbath” (**Leviticus 23:14**).

Since the Israelites ate that grain on the morrow AFTER the Passover and remember, the Passover was slain on Nisan 14, but EATEN on Nisan 15; therefore, this “morrow” would have to be Nisan 16 after the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Unleavened Bread! Therefore the day after the Sabbath” of **Leviticus 23:11** must be the same day as the “day AFTER the Passover” of **Joshua 5:11**! So the “Sabbath” here was the annual Sabbath of Passover – the First Day of Unleavened Bread! This is further proof that we are to “COUNT” Pentecost from Nisan 16.

Now think about this! If Nisan 14 were a Monday, then the 1<sup>st</sup> holy day would be Tuesday (Nisan 15). The following 4 days of Wednesday through Sabbath would come *before* the “Sunday” on which the Sadducees said the wave sheaf offering was to be performed. That means FOUR days of the Feast would pass during in which NO *unleavened bread could be eaten* during the Feast of Unleavened Bread since, according to them, the “wavesheaf” wasn’t offered until that SUNDAY, and the grain from the spring harvest could not be eaten, according to them, until that very day!!

Yet God ALSO commands unleavened bread to be eaten ALL SEVEN days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! God declares, “SEVEN DAYS you shall *eat* unleavened bread” (Exo.12:15, NRSV).

God does not contradict himself. The only way to eat unleavened bread all seven day is for the wave sheaf offering to be performed IMMEDIATELY after the first HOLY Day. To postpone the wave sheaf offering for 4-5 days, until the WEEKLY Sabbath is past would break the direct commandment of God and wreck the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

### ***PROOF OF THE SEPTUAGINT***

The Jewish priests from Jerusalem who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek also understood Pentecost to be counted from Nisan 16. But why should the fact that the translators of the Septuagint Version understood it that way be significant? Just what was the Septuagint, anyway?

The Septuagint is the Old Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the earliest complete translation of them. It was called the Septuagint commonly designated LXX, because 70 or 72 translators were reputed to have been employed on translating the Pentateuch during the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 285-246 B.C.

According to Josephus, the king of Egypt made application to Eleazar, the high priest at Jerusalem, for 72 interpreters, 6 from each tribe, to make the translation of the Hebrew books of the law into Greek. They arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, were assigned a quiet house on the island of Pharos in the harbor, and transcribed and interpreted the law in 72 days (Antiq. XII,2,1-13). From Egypt the LXX spread to all parts of the Hellenistic-Jewish world. The entire Old Testament was completed by around 150 B.C.

Says *The Bible As History*, by Werner Keller, "Great celebrations were organized in honour of the visitors from Jerusalem, at whose wisdom and knowledge the king and his courtiers were greatly astonished. After the festivities they betook themselves to the extremely difficult task which had been assigned to them, and for which there was neither prototype nor dictionary. They set to work out at sea, on the island of Pharos off Alexandria . . . Each of them worked in a cell by himself. When the scholars had completed their work and the translations were compared with one another *all seventy-two are said to have corresponded exactly, word for word*" (p.312).

Obviously, God inspired the original translation of the Torah, or the Five Books of Moses, in the original Septuagint! The basic proof for this, however, is not the words of Werner Keller, but the fact that Christ and the apostles quoted from and used the original Septuagint in the vast majority of their quotations from the Old Testament! What better authority do we need? Says the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*,

*"The LXX became the O.T. of the Christians, who used it in their controversies with the Jews . . . The quotations from the O.T. in the N.T. ARE USUALLY CITATIONS FROM THE LXX, either verbatim or with unimportant verbal changes; in other cases the N.T. writers apparently themselves translated from the original Hebrew. The Ethiopian eunuch whom Philip met was reading the LXX (Acts 8:30-33)" (ibid, p.972).*

Jesus and the apostles usually quoted from the original Septuagint thus bestowing upon it authority as a good translation of God's inspired Word. This acknowledgment of its authority and usefulness on the part of the New Testament writers, under God's inspiration (II Tim.3:16), is additional strong evidence that the wave sheaf offering was to occur on the day after the first Day of Unleavened Bread, and not the weekly sabbath day. The Septuagint translates the original Hebrew in this way. Since the writers of the New Testament and early Christians all commonly used the Septuagint, this fact establishes the reliability and authenticity of the Septuagint, and its usefulness in areas of Biblical research, including the matter before us at this time.

Says *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, "Representing a PRE-MASORETIC HEBREW TEXT, THE SEPTUAGINT IS ACCORDINGLY OF BASIC TEXTUAL AND

EXEGETICAL VALUE” (“Versions of the Scriptures,” p.1147).

Visit a theological library at a college or university or seminary. Or a large public library. And obtain a copy of the Septuagint, translated into English. Look up Leviticus 23 and the verses dealing with the Holy Days, and the counting of Pentecost. If you do this, you will see plainly that the Pharisees were correct in counting from Nisan 16. But of course. Jesus Himself said so. For He said the Pharisees sat “in Moses’ seat,” and that we should do everything they bid us observe so long as it did not contradict or “add” to the Law of God.

*Jesus Himself kept Pentecost at the same time all the other Jews in ancient Judea did.* The Pharisees are the ones who created the synagogues throughout the land. And Jesus Christ ATTENDED synagogues, and preached in synagogues. If He had observed a “Sadducean Pentecost,” He would have been forbidden to attend the synagogues! He would have been cast out as a heretic from the beginning! Remember, He never once criticized their observance of Pentecost, as to the day of its observance! How would He have ignored such a great, fundamental SIN? Because in this respect, they were NOT SINNING AT ALL, but were keeping the correct day!

### ***Who Are “The Firstfruits”?***

A lot of ministers assume that the “wave sheaf” offering pictures Christ, and that He was the “first fruits” from the dead. We read in I Corinthians 15:20, “now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept”. The original Greek word is *singular* not plural and what it really says is “firstfruit”. Christ is ONE person.

The wave sheaf offering on the other hand that was waved before the Lord to be accepted by Him on behalf of the whole nation was an entire OMER of barley grain. According to the *New Westminster Bible Dictionary*, an omer is about 2 ½ quarts or 5.1 pints (50,000 individual grains). Alfred Edersheim in *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* tells how during Temple times the reapers cut this Passover-sheaf in public, accompanied by a Jewish throng, the evening before it was offered, and then processed it. It was passed through a sieve and then they parched each grain by the fire. This “omer” then was offered for 49 days, “counting the omer” each day until Pentecost, 50 days later.

This omer represents the “firstfruits” of the harvest and it was offered before the Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the **first** of the firstfruits. He was not the “firstfruits.” The firstfruits are the church of God. We are the firstfruits pictured by the omer offering before the Father to be accepted by Him because of what Christ did for us! Christ Himself is pictured as our high priest, holding and waving the first-fruits omer, and we are the omer offering. If these firstfruits of the harvest are accepted then the rest of the harvest will be accepted. If it is Holy, then the rest of it will be holy.

In James 1:18 we read that we should be a kind of “firstfruits” of God’s creatures. Paul in Romans 8:23 says that we are those who have “the firstfruits” of the Spirit. In the book of Revelation, the apostle John states: “A Lamb stood on Mt. Zion, and with him

144,000 having his Father's name written in their foreheads . . . these are they which follow the Lamb, where ever he goes. These were *redeemed from among men, being the FIRSTFRUITS unto God and to the Lamb*" (Rev.14:1-4). Christ is the firstfruit and we who are true members of the Church of God constitute God's true firstfruits redeemed through Christ's blood and resurrection and accepted by the Father. Read my articles, "The Secret of the Wave Sheaf," and "What Is the Wave Sheaf?"

### *Another Misunderstood Scripture*

Some claim that after Jesus arose from the dead, He did not allow Mary to touch Him for He had not yet risen to heaven; but later that same morning, He did allow the disciples to touch Him, so they think He must have gone to heaven in the meantime. Is this the true explanation of this passage of Scripture? Does this mean that Christ was the "wave sheaf" after all?

Matthew 28:9 does not say that Christ went to heaven immediately upon the resurrection to be accepted by the Father. Let's read what He really did Sunday morning! Yeshua told Mary, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

What is the meaning of this enigmatic verse which has puzzled many? When did Jesus "ascend to the Father"? The *Phillips Translation* has Jesus saying, "No! do not hold me now." According to Moffat, "Jesus said, Cease CLINGING to me." "Do not hold on to me," says the *Good News Bible*. Obviously, there was more involved here than mere "touching." The *Amplified Bible* says, "Do not CLING to me [do not hold me]."

*The Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary* points out, "Not knowing the change which had passed upon Him, she hastens to express by her actions what words failed to clothe: but she is checked. . . Old familiarities must now give place to new and more awful, yet sweeter approaches; but for these the time has not come yet. This seems the spirit, at least, of these mysterious words, on which much difference of opinion has obtained."

*Adam Clarke's Commentary* explains: "Verse 17. Touch me not. Cling not to me. *Apramai* has this sense in Job 31:7, where the Septuagint use it for the Hebrew *dabak*, which signifies to CLEAVE, CLING, STICK, OR BE GLUED TO. From Matthew 28:9, it appears that some of the women held him by the feet and worshipped him. This probably Mary did; and our Lord seems to have spoken to her to this effect: 'Spend no longer time with me now: I am not going immediately to heaven – you will have several opportunities of seeing me again: but go and tell my disciples, that I am, by and by, to ascend to my Father and God, who is your Father and God also. Therefore, let them take courage.'"

Shortly after this encounter, the disciples met Jesus and held Him by His feet and worshipped Him (Matt.28:9). But before this, Christ said to Mary, “Stop clinging to me” as she was hanging on to Him, not letting go. Later the disciples held his feet and worshiped Yeshua.

Between these two events, did He go to heaven to be accepted? Not at all. In the first instance, Mary was “clinging” to Him, and He did not want that. She had to let Him go and tell the other disciples that she had seen Him. It’s that simple!

To believe that Christ’s sacrifice was not “accepted” of the Father until many hours AFTER He had arisen from the dead makes no sense. When Christ died, an earthquake shook the ground, the lintel above the curtain of the Temple broke, the veil itself was ripped into two parts from top to bottom, and the bodies of many dead saints arose from the grave (recently deceased), to live out their natural lives (Matt.27:50-54).

Such awesome events indicate that Christ’s greatest sacrifice of all time was accepted IMMEDIATELY when He died! But to fulfill prophecy, He had to remain 3 days and 3 nights in the grave, as a “sign” that He is the Messiah (Matthew 12:40) and his death paved the way reconciling us to God. Scriptures only state and reveal that Christ ascended ONCE to heaven, after He had “Shown himself alive” after his death and resurrection by “many infallible proofs, being seen of them (the disciples) *forty days*, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:1-3). After giving final instructions to his disciples, “while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight . . . this same Jesus, *taken up from you into heaven*, shall so come in like manner *as you have seen him go into heaven*” (Acts 1:9-11).

Think about it! *If Christ had ascended to heaven that Sunday after the resurrection, then when He returned would have been His SECOND coming!* Does that mean we are now awaiting His THIRD coming?

How, then, did the Church ever begin observing a “Sunday” Pentecost? Believe it or not, the answer is dumfounding – amazing – incredible. The observance of a SUNDAY Pentecost stems from and is rooted in ancient PAGANISM!

### ***The PAGAN ORIGIN of a Sunday Pentecost!***

The real problem with a Sunday Pentecost is that it is pagan. Sunday Pentecost is figured by counting 7 weeks plus a day, from Easter Sunday and they called it Whitsunday. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Whitsunday/Pentecost is the Sunday that marks the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter.

Says the *Worldbook Encyclopedia*, “From at least the 200’s, Christians celebrated Pentecost on the *seventh Sunday after EASTER* as one of their greatest feasts. . . . Pentecost was later called Whitsunday, or White Sunday, because the newly baptized wore their white baptismal robes on that day, MARKING THE END OF THE JOYOUS EASTER SEASON” (“Pentecost”).

*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Pentecost," says, "Pentecost is traditionally represented as Sunday . . . Wieseler plausibly suggests that the festival was fixed on Sunday by the later Western Church to correspond with Easter. Among the Jewish Christians observance of the Hebrew feasts continued doubtless with fresh significance derived from the new revelation."

The apostate Roman Catholic Church changed the celebration of the Passover, replacing it with Easter Sunday, thus celebrating the ancient pagan festival of the sex goddess Ishtar, or "Easter." They then corrupted Pentecost, and put it on a Sunday, 50 days following Easter.

Will and Ariel Durant in *The Story of Civilization*, volume 3, "Caesar and Christ" say about a month after Easter the pagans celebrated another festival called the Festival of Floralia in honor of the goddess Flora of spring flowers. April alone had six festivals culminating in the Feast of Flora (Floralia). It continued for six days of uninhibited promiscuous revelry.

"April alone had six festivals, culminating in the Floralia; the Feast of Flora, goddess of flowers and spring, continued for six days of bibulous and promiscuous revelry" (p.65).

Says the *Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons*:

"Flora – Roman goddess of growing corn and blossoming flowers, originally worshiped by the Oscans and Sabines. In Rome, her feast (Floralia) was celebrated from 28 April to the beginning of May. It was an uninhibited and somewhat immoral popular revel; Flora herself was known as *meretrix* = WHORE, but the lasciviousness was probably intended to promote fecundity . . ." (p.119, Manfred Lurker, 1987).

The cult of Flora was introduced in ancient Rome during the age of Romulus. She was also worshiped as a goddess of love, like Venus. The name "Flora" means "The Flourishing One," and is merely another form of that ancient deity Semiramis, who herself was the goddess of love, fecundity, and spring.

Writes Barbara G. Walker in *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*:

"Annually honored at the May Day festival called Floralia. Lactantius noted with distaste that Flora was 'a Lady of Pleasure,' but she was prominent and important in Roman religion. Some said her name was the SECRET-SOUL NAME OF ROME ITSELF. Her festival was 'a licentious orgy of NUDE DANCING and promiscuous behavior'" (p.316).

The fact that she was 'a Lady of Pleasure' and extremely licentious also identifies her with that ancient prostitute and 'lady of pleasure,' Semiramis, wife and consort of Nimrod, shortly after the Flood. Hislop tells us of Semiramis:

"The Chaldean Mysteries can be traced up to the days of Semiramis,

who lived only a few centuries after the flood, and who is known to have impressed upon them the image of her own depraved and polluted mind. That beautiful but abandoned queen of Babylon was not only herself a paragon of unbridled lust and licentiousness, but in the Mysteries which she had a chief hand in forming, she was worshiped as Rhea, the great 'MOTHER' of the gods, with such atrocious rites as identified her with VENUS, the mother of all impurity, and raised the very city where she had reigned to a bad eminence among the nations, as the grand seat at once of idolatry and consecrated PROSTITUTION" (*The Two Babylons*, p.5).

Says the *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*:

"In primitive central Italy, Flora was the goddess of budding spring-time, of cereals, fruit trees, the vine and flowers . . . Her festivals, the *Floralia*, lasted from the twenty-eighth of April to the third of May and were rather licentious. ON THE TWENTY-THIRD OF MAY there was ANOTHER FESTIVAL IN HER HONOR, a rose festival" (p.210).

Notice carefully, now. The festival of this ancient ROMAN GODDESS, widely worshiped in ROME during the time of the early Church, fell before and at the very time of PENTECOST! The Biblical feast of Pentecost occurs 50 days after Passover, and varies in date from about the middle of May till early June. Thus the festival honoring Flora, the heathen goddess of licentious behavior – the WHORE – of springtime and flowers, fertility and whose rites included nude dancing and promiscuous behavior, fell RIGHT AT THE TIME SURROUNDING PENTECOST!

Will and Ariel Durant in "The Age of Faith" explain what happened to the Festival of Flora, as with so many other pagan festivals and say paganism survived in the moral sense. Notice!

"Paganism survived in the moral sense, as a joyous indulgence of natural appetites; as a religion it remained only in the FORM OF ANCIENT RITES AND CUSTOMS CONDONED, OR ACCEPTED AND TRANSFORMED, BY AN OFTEN INDULGENT CHURCH. An intimate and trustful worship of saints replaced the cult of the pagan gods, and satisfied the congenial polytheism of simple but poetic minds. Statues of Isis and Horus were RENAMED MARY AND JESUS; the Roman Lupercalia and the feast of the purification of Isis became the Feast of the Nativity; the Saturnalia were replaced by CHRISTMAS celebrations, **THE FLORALIA BY PENTECOST**, an ancient festival of the dead by All Souls' Day, the resurrection of Attis by the resurrection of Christ. PAGAN ALTARS were dedicated to Christian heroes; incense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments, hymns, which had pleased the people in older cults, were domesticated and cleansed in the ritual of the Church . . ." (p.75).

The Roman Catholic Pentecost is merely a dressed up version of the ancient PAGAN festival of Flora, goddess of spring and flowers, counted from the PAGAN Easter Sunday!

Read our article on “The Surprising Origin of Easter!”

### *The Insidious Plot*

The substitution of pagan holidays for God’s holy days began after the death of the original apostles, and was codified and enforced by the Roman Emperor Constantine, at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.

At the behest of Constantine, who sought to enforce “unity” upon the different factions of the Christian Church, the Biblical Passover was rejected in favor of Easter Sunday. In fixing the date for Easter, the Pagan Church also fixed the date for Pentecost 50 days after Easter Sunday, in place of the pagan Floralia festival!

In Constantine’s immortal words:

“It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul . . . Let us then have NOTHING IN COMMON WITH THE DETESTABLE JEWISH CROWD . . . Strive and pray continually that the purity of your souls may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the customs of these most wicked men . . . All should unite in desiring that which sound reason appear to demand, and in AVOIDING ALL PARTICIPATION IN THE PERJURED CONDUCT OF THE JEWS” (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3:18-19, NPNF, 2nd, I, pp.524-525).

The renowned scholar J. B. Lightfoot asserts that Rome and Alexandria adopted Easter-Sunday to avoid “EVEN THE SEMBLANCE OF JUDAISM” (J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1885, II, part I, p.88). The same would apply, of course, to the pagan Pentecost, counted fifty days from Easter Sunday! When Constantine convened the Council of Nicea, it was not to return to the faith of the Bible, the “faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) –it was to COMPEL THE WORLD TO ADOPT CHRISTIANIZED PAGANISM!

The Roman Catholic Church thus “baptized” the pagan Floralia, called it “Pentecost,” a Biblical-sounding name, and observed it seven weeks after Easter Sunday!

God condemns pagan worship and idolatry. But the Roman Catholic Church substituted PAGAN holidays and festivals for the Feasts of God as outlined in the Bible! And notice! They converted the spring festival of Flora into a Sunday “Pentecost”!

Keeping a Sunday Pentecost is keeping the day of a pagan prostitute goddess. God forbid. As the apostle Paul wrote, “Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (II Cor.6:14-16, NRSV).

What fellowship has light with darkness, or the kingdom of God with this world of the devil, or truth with error? God Almighty THUNDERS, “*Come out from them and be separate* FROM THEM, says the Lord, and TOUCH NOTHING UNCLEAN; then I will welcome you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” (vs.17-18).

### ***DOES IT REALLY MATTER?***

Does it really make any difference which day we observe? Is it all right for every man to decide for himself?

Or, if the Church of God selects a particular day, even if it is technically wrong, shouldn't we go along with Church authority in this matter?

The question boils down to this: Which is more important, a man's authority, or the authority of God's Word?

When the leaders of the Old Testament Church, the congregation of Israel, the Pharisees, commanded the apostles to do something contrary to the instructions of Christ, the apostles, led by Peter and John told them, “We ought to OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN” (Acts 5:29).

How important is it that we observe this holy day at the right time?

God expects us to do things as He commanded. To observe His weekly Sabbath on the wrong day – for example, on Sunday – is direct violation of God's Law. The wages of SIN – disobedience – is DEATH (Rom.6:23). The Sabbath day itself God set apart as HOLY TIME – not merely the idea of keeping any day. Particularly, God abhors the very idea of His people observing in honor to Him the PAGAN days of worship devoted to the pagan SUN GOD – SUNDAY!

When the original disciples were gathered together, as Luke records, “WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS *FULLY COME*, they were all WITH ONE ACCORD in one place” (Acts 2:1). They had the right time – the right day! They were of “one accord” – not some keeping one day, and some another, and others still another!

What happened on that TRUE day of worship? “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, and began to speak with other tongues (languages), as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4).

Now notice! If for some reason any of them had been mistaken as to the right day, and had NOT BEEN PRESENT, they would have *MISSED OUT* on receiving the Holy Spirit when God sent it on that particular day, that Pentecost, when it was “fully

come"! They would have been ABSENT. They would have missed the plane – missed the train – missed EVERYTHING!

If they had been observing Sunday that year, which fell on Sivan 8, when the true Pentecost fell on Friday, Sivan 6, *they would have missed out on the GREATEST DISPLAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in all history, all time, up to that time and to this present day!*

Some might think, "Well, Sunday was only two days off." Well, my friends, "close" doesn't count – except in playing horseshoes OR THROWING HAND GRENADES!

To God it is very important that we do things correctly, after His prescribed manner and according to His precise instructions. In the days of David, when the ark of God was being brought from the house of Abinadad in Gibeah, the ark was set in a cart pulled by oxen, contrary to God's command that it be carried by Levites. When a non-Levite tried to steady the ark when the oxen shook it, "God smote him there for his error; and there he died" (II Samuel 6:7).

It does make a difference to GOD!

### ***What About YOU?***

What about you? What are you going to do with this totally wonderful REDISCOVERED truth? Will you observe Pentecost on the correct, Biblical day this year? Or will you continue in error?

Herbert Armstrong wrote in a December 1976 *Good News* magazine,

"Wouldn't it be all right to compromise, 'just a little,' on some 'unimportant minor point'?"

He continued,

*"Nevertheless, if we begin to compromise with God's TRUTH, even in the smallest, slightest manner, we have allowed Satan to get a foot into the door of the Church, and soon he will push open the door (he is stronger than we) AND TAKE OVER THE WHOLE CHURCH."*

What a frightful warning those words are! Herbert Armstrong did not live to see that warning fulfilled. But because the leaders of the Worldwide Church of God rejected this TRUTH ABOUT PENTECOST, this prophecy has come to pass. They opened the door for Satan the devil to enter and gain a foothold; and today he has *pushed upon the door and TAKEN OVER THE WHOLE CHURCH!*

Since most Church leaders have proved that they will NOT repent, the end-time Churches of God are plunging into gross error and compromise.

That means, in order to remain faithful to GOD, and His WORD, there is *only one thing left to do* – when a church goes astray, into error, and refuses to repent – ANY

CHURCH – then God’s true people MUST *LEAVE THAT APOSTATIZING CHURCH AND FELLOWSHIP AND SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM THAT UNCLEANNESS AND IMPURITY* IN ORDER TO OBEY GOD! Their spiritual SALVATION is at stake!!!

Mr. Armstrong added,

“A little leaven leavens the WHOLE LUMP! I have been charged with the commission of KEEPING GOD’S WORD. Keeping it inviolate – NO COMPROMISE! I have never compromised with God’s TRUTH – regardless of the cost or the circumstances. *I never shall!*”

Herbert Armstrong did not understand ALL the truth. But in this matter, he had the right ATTITUDE!

Will YOU compromise, even a “little bit,” with the truth of Almighty God? A “little leaven” – SIN – soon leavens the whole lump of dough. The Truth has been proved. The Worldwide Church of God, the Living Church of God, the Philadelphia Church of God under Gerald Flurry, the United Church of God – and countless others too numerous to mention, and too small – have been PROVED TO BE IN ERROR.

Will you follow one of them in this major, basic, doctrinal error? Or will you stand up, and be counted, and come out of BABYLON, and OBEY GOD?

Will you COMPROMISE with God’s Word – or keep it faithfully – NO COMPROMISE!

Herbert Armstrong continued, “I will CHANGE whenever proved wrong. I will accept NEW TRUTH as often as PROVED to be new truth to me or to the Church. But I will not compromise with the truth! I never have! I won’t compromise – not even ‘just a little.’”

God says stubbornness is as idolatry and witchcraft. God inspired Samuel to tell king Saul, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (I Sam.15:23). Saul compromised. In his own eyes, it was “just a little.” And as a result, he was rejected by God, and lost the kingdom!

Beware! If we compromise, like Saul did, we also will be punished, only much greater – our punishment would be to lose out on eternal life and the Kingdom of God!

### *Nineteen Year Time Cycle*

I began preaching this truth in the summer of 1988. Thus far, after NINETEEN YEARS of proclaiming this truth, one complete Biblical 19-year calendar cycle, the overwhelming majority of ministers in the Worldwide Church of God, as well as the off-shoot churches of God, have totally ignored it, rejected it, shunted it aside, swept it under the carpet, refused to deal with it in an honest and open manner! Instead they revile me,

call me a “false prophet,” and warn people to have nothing to do with me! Shame, shame, shame on them!

Although I have proclaimed it boldly, and written about twenty articles on the subject, they continue to ignore the truth. I have patiently presented it to them, but they have still refused it, rejected it, and adamantly refused to repent! How much longer before the patience of God runs out? How much longer will He call them to repent? How much longer before He casts them into the Great Tribulation, or the lake of fire?

Many have shown by their fruits that they will NOT REPENT!

What is your excuse? What about you, yourself? Where will you stand?

As Herbert Armstrong wrote, many years ago – ask yourself these questions:

“[Am I] willing to admit being deceived or in error, and to reject it and accept truth new to me – when proved even though unpopular – even though it cuts me off from my family, friends, associates or club members – even though everything in my selfish and vain nature rebels against it? Am I willing to ACT *ON IT* – *OBEY the truth* no matter what the cost?”

These are very serious words! Mr. Armstrong continued:

“To find and live the TRUTH requires a HUMBLED mind. Did you ever know a person of great intellectual powers who did not have the kind of VANITY that shrinks from confessing he has been WRONG – and has misled others?”

Herbert Armstrong declared that throughout his life,

“I had to be willing, *continuously*, to confess being wrong, and to embrace truths constantly NEW to me.”

It is hard to admit error. It is TEN times harder to confess error, than to learn new truth! Regardless of what others may do, what will *YOU* do with the truth? Are you willing to accept new truth, and CHANGE, even though it may cost you your church affiliation? Would you even be willing to give up fellowship, if necessary, to embrace new proven TRUTH?

Is eternal life worth it? What about you? Are you going to grow in grace and knowledge and follow Christ?

Herbert Armstrong wrote, “I will change whenever proved wrong. I will accept new truth as often as proved to be new truth to me or to the church, but I will not compromise with the truth.”

He did not fully understand the truth about Pentecost. The churches which came up after his death have followed him, often like Nazi storm-troopers, following his every teaching – including the errors and mistakes he made. They refuse to admit error, or that

he could have been confused. They refuse to grow in grace AND KNOWLEDGE of Christ (II Pet.3:18).

What about you? Herbert Armstrong declared:

“God says, 'PROVE all things.' That means *you* are fallible. This means all the 'great' men are fallible! ALL are human. ALL can be wrong -- and nearly all are. The *whole world* is DECEIVED (Rev.12:9). . . .

“The very recognition of that fact is the *beginning of* right knowledge. We do recognize it -- that we ourselves could be wrong. That is the *first step* toward coming out of the fog of error and deception, starting toward truth.”

Herbert Armstrong went on,

“The second step, if you would know TRUTH, is to be willing to admit being deceived or in error, and to reject it and accept truth new to me -- when proved even though unpopular . . .” (January 1985, *Good News*).

Who are you going to follow – God, Jesus Christ, and the apostles, or your local minister and local church?

To find the truth, and live the truth requires a humble mind. We have to be willing to confess being wrong, and embrace truth constantly new to us. It is hard to admit error. Be willing to be a servant who rightly divides the word of God, and does not need to be ashamed.

Be like the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily to see whether Paul was teaching truth or not. “These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and *examined the scriptures EVERY DAY* to see whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed” (Acts 17:11-12). Be willing to change and stand alone to embrace truth as you learn daily.

Let NO ONE seize your crown of salvation, your hope of eternal life (Rev.3:11-12). Let’s “*earnestly contend* [fight] for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3, KJV).

As James wrote, “So any person who *knows what is right to do but does not do it*, to him it is SIN” (James 4:17, Amplified Parallel Bible). “For whosoever keeps the Law [as a whole] but stumbles and offends in one [single instance] has become guilty of [breaking] all of it” (James 2:10, APB).

Now you have read the truth. What are you going to do about it? The decision is now between you and your Maker.

