

Spring Holy Days

Part Three Counting To Completion

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Scriptures from the KJV

In my last couple of messages, I have been addressing the Spring Holy Days, trying to not only understand their meaning better, but also trying to be sure that we are keeping them properly, according to God's instructions.

We know that God's Holy days, or feast days are planned around the agricultural seasons, *or maybe better put*; the yearly agricultural harvests are symbolic of God's spiritual harvest of mankind.

There are a lot of things we know about the feast days and the agricultural seasons that compliment each other.

We know that the fall harvest is the larger harvest that comes at the end of the year, and we know from keeping the fall feasts days that they pertain to the world in general. (They affect the entire world.)

We have Trumpets, which pictures war, with Christ returning to this earth with His Holy Angels and His Saints overpower the Beast, as the Beast attempt to make war with Him.

Then, the Day of Atonement, picturing the day when the "Evil One" "Satan," the deceiver of the whole world will be locked up for a thousand years & restricted from deceiving the world.

And then the Feast of Tabernacles, picturing the thousand year reign of Christ, a time when the whole world will begin to live in peace & prosperity.

Yes, the fall feasts pertain to the world in general, and the events that they symbolize are yet ahead of us.

But the spring feasts, the spring harvest (pictured by the spring Holy Days) which begin with Passover, and end on Pentecost) pertains generally to God's church, His first-fruits, and is a smaller harvest.

Now First-fruits come first - They planted first, they grow first, and they are harvested first.

But before they can be harvested, they have to be "ripe" they have to be "mature" they have to be what the Scriptures call "Complete"

Yes, His first-fruits have to be complete "perfect" (if you will) and that perfection comes before the day of Pentecost.

(I'd like to turn to Lev 23:15 to begin today's message.) (And we're going to return back there occasionally.)

Lev 23:15: *"And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave-offering, seven Sabbaths shall be complete.
16: "Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall you number 50 days."*

My message today is not going to focus on the "last day" of the count, which is day 50, the day of Pentecost.

My focus today is going to be on the "**completion**" that comes before the "last day" before the day of Pentecost, and how one has to be "**actively involved**" with his calling, in order to reach that completion.

"Seven Sabbaths shall be **Complete**" and then comes the "last day", day 50, the day of Pentecost.

There's a lot of significance for all of us in God church concerning that 8 letter word "Complete" in verse 15, and I hope to bring that out in today's message, because that completion has to do with us His church.

The title of today's message is "**Counting to Completion**"

In my previous message, we were discussing how the Feast of Unleavened Bread (also called the "Passover") has been misunderstood, and incorrectly taught from many pulpits in the COG.

We tried to put the Passover & Feast of Unleavened Bread into perspective, showing that it is a seven day feast, not an eight day feast.

We've discussed how the Israelites sacrificed the unblemished lamb at the end of the 14th day, at the same time that our Lord & Savior (The unblemished Christ whom that Passover lamp symbolized) was later crucified on the stake, at the end of the 14th day, as the sun was going down.

We also discussed how the "Wave-Sheaf Offering" was an omer, a "sheaf" that was pre selected from a field of grain, and put through a rather lengthily process of beating & sifting, until a portion of the grain was purified to a point where all of it lumps & all of its imperfections were removed.

We noted that "Although one ephah, or ten omers of barley was originally cut down, only ONE omer "qualified" and was "chosen" (if you will) to be offered as the wave sheaf offering.

We conclude that message in Eph 1:4 where it says:

"According as He had chosen us (speaking of the church) in Him before the foundations of the world, (His little flock, pre selected just like that omer) that we should be holy & without blame before Him in Love. In whom we have redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

(That redemption wasn't valid until His death, when the harvest began.)

That harvest continued for seven complete weeks, ending on the day before Pentecost.

Pentecost is also called the feast of weeks in the Old Testament, and is the only Holy Day which was not designated to fall on a particular day of the month.

Pentecost, which means “count fifty” in the Greek, was to be determined by counting 50 days from the time the wave sheaf was offered during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

That sounds simple enough, but the difficulty that arises is when to start and end the count.

(So before we move on, we need to take a look at that, because knowing when to start & end the count to Pentecost is important, and it will help us to comprehend the significance of the count.)

And there's no hidden meaning to it..... Or maybe I SHOULD SAY there's nothing about this “count to Pentecost” that we haven't already been taught.

Let me clarify that, counting to Pentecost involves the same lesson plan that our Creator has been teaching from the time He first called us, to come out of sin.

We come into this world as sinners (Transgressors of His wonderful ways) but we have been called to repentance, to walk this earth as he walked.

The Spring Feasts (from Passover to Pentecost) have to do with coming out of sin, Changing our ways, Changing our walk, yes, Changing our entire nature.

And changing ones nature, is not an easy task to do, it's a process. It's like making bread, you need the proper ingredients to make a good loaf of bread (including leaven when it comes to the Loaves that God is making) and you need to work the dough by kneading it and beating it, and allowing time for its nature to change.

Now when it comes to changing the nature of bread, that happens relatively quickly, but when it comes to changing man's nature, with our stiff necks and hearts of stone, it takes a little longer to complete.

God gives us a week to complete the job (*a prophetic week if you will*.)

And time is of the essence here, because there's this “counting” along the way, and a deadline to contend with, in reaching the proper completion.

Now the count to Pentecost has been a controversial issue for thousands of years, including contention over it between “Pharisees” & “Sadducees”.

And for us today, there’s no shortage of Scriptures on the subject that can be used to try and support ones own reasoning.

But the Truth of the matter is there, and can be rightly divided by searching the Scriptures, and believing what they say.

Almost all will agree that the 50-day count to Pentecost begins within the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The controversial passage which explains how to derive the date of Pentecost is found in Leviticus 23:

One of the primary sticking points has been the meaning of the word “Sabbath” referred to in verses 11, 15 & 16.

(Lets read them please, and lets start in Lev 23:10.)

Some say Pentecost must be counted from the weekly Sabbath, while others say it must be counted from the High Sabbath (1st day of UB.) The former insist that the word translated "Sabbath" in Leviticus 23:16 cannot refer to "week," or be translated that way, while the latter insist that it can.

Lev 23:10 *“Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, when you come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest.”*

11: *“And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”*

15: *“And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete;*

16: *“Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, shall ye number 50 days.”*

Some claim that the "Sabbath" referred to in verses 11 & 15 is the weekly Sabbath which falls within the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and that the "Sabbath" mentioned in verse 16 is the seventh weekly Sabbath from the Feast. (The majority of the C'sOG reason that way, and keep a Sunday Pentecost.)

Others believe that the "Sabbath" referred to in verses 11 & 15 is the First Day of Unleavened Bread, The "High Sabbath", and that verse 16 should actually be understood as "week".

Now I believe that this is correct, and that there is a lot of evidence to support it, (but before we move on, while we're here in Leviticus, let's read one more verse.)

Lev 23:14 "And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that you have brought an offering unto your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."

(Now let's go to the book of Joshua, Joshua 5:10 please)

I believe this **passage of Scripture in Joshua 5:10 confirms that the 16th day of the 1st month (the day after the 1st day of UB, is the proper time to begin the 50-day count to Pentecost:**

JOSHUA 5:10 I'm going to read this from the ESV: "*While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho "*

(And we know that word "kept" is speaking here of the "sacrifice" the killing of the lamb as the sun was going down at the end of the 14th day)

V 11 *And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 And the manna ceased the day after*

they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Now we just read in Lev 23 that God told Moses that when the Israelites came into the Promised Land, they were **NOT** to eat of the produce of the land **until** they had offered a sheaf of the firstfruits of the land as an offering (Lev. 23:9-14) (No controversy there)

That offering, **which was to take place** AFTER a Sabbath, also began the count to Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-16).

The only way that the Israelites could have eaten the produce of Canaan on "the day after the **Passover**" is if Passover was "the Sabbath" referred to in Leviticus 23: 11 & 15. (And we know that the term "Passover" could very well mean that, because sometimes the word "Passover" is used to refer to the First Day of **Unleavened Bread**.)

(The historical works of Josephus, also confirm this.)

(I'd like to read something here from Josephus': "Antiquities of the Jew"

In the month of *Nisan*, the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the sun is in Aries, (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians,) the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice which I before told you we slew when we came out of Egypt, and which was called the *Passover*; and so we do celebrate this passover in companies, leaving nothing of what we sacrifice till the day following. The feast of unleavened bread **succeeds** that of the passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread; on every one of which days two bulls are killed, and one ram, and seven lambs. Now these lambs are entirely burnt, besides the kid of the goats which is added to all the rest for sins; for it is intended as a feast for the priest on every one of those days.

But (and I'm still quoting) **on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them.**

And while they suppose it proper to honor God, from whom they obtain this plentiful provision in the first place, they offer the first-fruits of their barley, and that in the manner following: "They take a handful of the ears, and dry them, then beat them small, and purge the barley from the bran; they then bring one tenth deal to the altar, to God; (we previously read in detail from "Alfred Ed-er-sheim" about the process) casting one handful of it upon the fire, they leave the rest for the use of the priest. And after this it is that they may publicly or privately reap their harvest. They also at this **participation** of the first-fruits of the earth, sacrifice a lamb, as a burnt-offering to God. And when a **week of weeks** has passed over after this sacrifice, (which weeks contain forty and nine days,) on the fiftieth day, which is Pentecost, they bring to God a loaf, made of wheat flour, of two tenth deals, with leaven; (p. 96, 3.10.5-6, *Antiquities of the Jews*)

(so according to the writings of Josephus, the count started the day after the first day of unleavened bread, the 16th of the 1st month.)

The Jewish Scriptures, the *Ta-nakh* reflects this same understanding of seven weeks being complete in its translation of Leviticus 23:9-11, 15-16.

(Remember, those supporting a "Sunday" Pentecost insist that the word translated "Sabbath" in Lev 23:16 cannot refer to "week" or be translated that way.) (Well it's translated that way again here.)

(I'd like to read those verses from that translation) LEVITICUS 23:9 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. He shall elevate the sheaf before the LORD for acceptance in your behalf the priest shall elevate it **on the day after the sabbath**. And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering - **the day after the sabbath** - you shall count off **seven weeks**. They must be complete: 16 you must **count until the day after the seventh week** - fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD. (*JPS Tanakh.*)

Not only does the *Ta-nakh* render these verses this way, but also the *Septuagint* -

"And ye shall number to yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day on which ye shall offer the sheaf of the heave-offering, seven full WEEKS: until the morrow after the last WEEK ye shall number fifty days, and shall bring a new meat-offering to the Lord."

The word "Sabbath" can be translated "week". (Even though those pushing a Sunday Pentecost say it cannot.)

(Let's go to Mat 28:1 please and see that.)

In Matthew 28:1, we read, *"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the WEEK came Mary Magdalene"*

The Greek word for 'week' here is the EXACT SAME WORD TRANSLATED 'SABBATH' in the first part of this very verse! (Sabbaton – Heb 7676) (And same exact word in the Hebrew used in Lev 23:15.)

"The emphasis of Pentecost is on 'weeks.' It is called in the Scriptures, the 'Feast of Weeks.' The emphasis is not on 'Sabbath days' at all, but WEEKS! As God instructed the Israelites.

(Num 28:26 reads: "Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, AFTER YOUR WEEKS BE OUT, ye shall have an holy convocation...")

The NIV say it liked this:

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

In Leviticus 25:1-4 we read of the Sabbath year of rest for the land, even as the seventh day is a day of rest, God also ordained that year of rest for the land, so farmland is not worn out or depleted. Notice!

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

"But notice verse 8:

"And thou shalt NUMBER SEVEN SABBATHS OF YEARS unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven SABBATHS OF YEARS shall be unto thee forty and nine years".

"Here we clearly see that the word 'shabbat' in the Hebrew can also refer to WEEKS -- in this case, WEEKS OF YEARS! Seven Sabbaths, or weeks, of years, would total forty nine years -- as this very verse clearly says!

In their commentary on Lev 23:11, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown concur with the traditional Jewish viewpoint, and they write this concerning what it says in verse 11:

(first I want to read that verse again, being its such an important verse for us: “**Ye shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you on the morrow after the Sabbath.**”

(Pretty important instructions, considering they are direct commands from God Himself, and it has to do with us (His First Fruits) being accepted.)

They write this: “The day after the Sabbath, not the weekly Sabbath, but the day after the first day of the passover week, which was observed as a Sabbath.” (p. 497, vol. I, *A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical* .

Now, just one more (Deut 16:9 please) and then we’re going to take a little trip this morning. We need to take a trip over to the Promised Land and see something that might be quite relevant to when the count begins.

(First Deut 16:9. This verse also speaks of 7 “weeks” that precede Pentecost, and when to begin counting those 7 weeks.)

Deut 16:9 “*seven weeks shall thou number unto thee, begin to number the seven weeks from the time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.*”

(So far everything we have looked at shows the count beginning the day after the 1st day of UB – Not the day after the weekly Sabbath.)

Now, let’s take that little trip over to Cannon, and see something.
(No passport needed.)

We often hear someone asking “well, how did Jesus and His disciples do it?”

Wouldn’t it be nice if we had one of those “**Time Machines**” where we could go back in time and see what was taking place, for ourselves?

Maybe we could *get back to the faith that was once delivered to the saints*, before all those changers with all their changes crept in, bringing about all this confusion?

Thankfully, Our Lord & Savior “Changes Not” He’s the same yesterday, today & forever... And “fortunately” we do have a working “**Time Machine**”

(Let’s go to the book of Luke please) (Let’s go back in time and have a look at something.

We need to find out how they were counting back then? Were they starting the count the day after the High Holy Day Sabbath (the 16th of Abib?) Or were they waiting until the day after the weekly Sabbath to begin the counting?

Now we’ve all seen enough movies to know how these “**Time Machines**” work, you have to select a date that you want to go back to.

O, I know, why don’t we go back to the weekly Sabbath during the feast of Unleavened Bread.... Being that’s the Sabbath that many have been using to calculate the count to Pentecost.

If we could locate Jesus and His disciples on that particular day, it might shed some light on when the sheaf was waved, when it was permitted to begin eating the new corn, and when to begin the count.

(Luke 6:1 please.)

(Where’re looking for the weekly Sabbath during the feast of Unleavened bread.)

Luke 6:1 “And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first” (This is believed to be the weekly Sabbath during the feast of Unleavened Bread) (The 1st Sabbath being the 1st day of Unleavened Bread) (The second Sabbath the weekly Sabbath during the feast of UB.)

(Now let’s see what the disciples were doing on this particular weekly Sabbath.)

Lk 6:1 "He went through the corn fields, and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands."

If this was the second Sabbath after the first, during Unleavened Bread, The only way the disciples could be plucking & eating corn on this day, was if the wave sheaf offering had already been waved on the day after the High Sabbath of Unleavened Bread.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not basing my belief on this verse alone, but I do believe that no matter how you cut it, the more you study this subject, the more the Sunday Pentecost doesn't fit with the Scriptures.

(Let's ask a question here?)

Why the "count" to Pentecost in the first place?

"Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, seven Sabbaths (or seven weeks) shall be complete."

I mentioned earlier that there's a lot of significance concerning that 8 letter word "Complete" for all of us in God's church.

(And we are instructed to "count" to reach that "completion".)

(Lets try to put the feast of Weeks into perspective.)

Remember, Pentecost is "our" feast, it's the Feast of "Firstfruits"

This is not the "feast of sabbath days" this is the "Feast of Weeks" the "Feast of Firstfruits" according to the Scriptures.

We're the "Firstfruits" Those seven weeks represent us, God's "Firstfruits" His church. (All seven of them!)

What is this count all about? And remember, were not just counting to "Pentecost".... There's a distinct & important separation in the count between the "seven weeks" and the "Last day" day 50.

(There is a milestone that has to be reached "first" before the "last day.")

In the past (ever since I've been in the church) seems we didn't pay much attention to the "**count**" (I can remember in WCG that occasionally on Sabbath, the "Song Leader" would make some mention to it, but that was about it. (The count seemed kind of "insignificant".)

(The "**count**" may seem a bit insignificant (to us) but it's far from being insignificant to God, especially when you considering the "Rich Meaning" of the Hebrew word translated count.

The word "count" means "**to score with a mark as a tally or a record.**"

(God keeps a record – a book of life & a book of remembrance.)

The word also means: "To count a flock."

"To Enumerate" (That means to: "name one by one"

That's what our Creator does with the stars in the sky as they come out at night, He counts them, and names them "one by one" Those stars in the heavens represent us. This counting is nothing to take lightly.

This counting is a continuation of what we learn from keeping the feast of UB.

The feast of Unleavened Bread lasts seven days.... It pictures us, coming out of sin. It has to do with us becoming like Christ.

It starts with the Passover Sacrifice, (The sacrifice of an “unblemished Lamb”) Christ dying in our stead, so that we might live.

During the week long feast of unleavened bread, we’re commanded to de-leaven our houses, a physical lesson with much spiritual meaning, it teaches us to put sin out of our lives.

If we stumble across some leaven during the week of UB, we know what to do, we take it and put it off of our property, and we know that we are to do the same with transgressions.

(When we find ourselves doing something wrong, we have to change and do it right.)

We are also commanded to eat “Unleavened” bread each day during the seven day feast.... Picturing us putting “Christ” into our daily lives.

Now at the end of the 7 day feast of UB, we can go back to eating “leavening” but we can’t go back to “sinning.”

The seven week count to “completion” is just a continuation of what the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread is all about, coming out of Egypt, coming out of sin.

Changing our ways, changing our walk, changing our natures.

Our journey started at the time we accepted Christ’s sacrifice, and took the plunge at baptism and had “hands.” Hands, where we receive God’s Holy Spirit, the only thing powerful enough to change our sinful natures.

For many of us, that’s been quite some time now... Let us not think that time is not running out. Especially now, as we SEE the day approaching.

Early in His ministry, Christ took His disciples on a long walk; all the way to the coast of “Caesarea Philippi” That is where He made the statement:

“I will build my church” (it’s a house that he is building, A Spiritual House, A Spiritual Temple.

And this counting that we are instructed to do, concerns the building of His house, the building of His Temple.

Now we are all well aware of the process of building a house – there are blue prints involved that show exactly how the house is to be built, and exactly what the house will look like at completion.

And there are deadlines to contend with concerning progress that has to be made along the way before there can be a “closing” where the new owners can move in.

But before you can have that “closing” before the new owners can take ownership and move in, the house has to be “Complete” first.

(The realtors have their own terminology for this; they call it “**Turn Key**” condition.)

Do we think that God doesn't have a closing date for the house that He began to build 2,000 years ago?

Do we think there are no “deadlines” for us to contend with along the way?

No progress needed to be made?

No active involvement to be concerned about to reach the “growth” that he requires of us?

Mt 11:12 please. (One cannot drift into the Kingdom of Heaven)

Mt 11:12 : *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”*

God does have “blue prints” for the house that He is building, it's the Scriptures.

And we do have to follow His instructions to the T. (including the count, we have to do it His way) – and there are deadlines to contend with – including that “Turn Key” condition that has to be achieved before closing... Before the “Last Day” the day of Pentecost.

He calls that “Turn Key” condition “Complete” according to the “count” that we are instructed to do in Lev 23:15.

Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering (Seven Sabbaths) (Seven Weeks) (Seven Churches) shall be Complete.

That word “complete” is an important Hebrew word; it’s normally used when referring to “Christ” our chief corner stone.

It’s used in Ex 12:5 where it says “*your lamb shall be “Without Blemish”* (speaking of Christ) (That’s the same word for “Complete” used in lev 23:15)

And in Nbrs 19:2 where it speaks of a Red Heifer being “without spot” “without blemish” also speaking of Christ.

(The Jews are looking for that “perfect” Heifer – God is looking for that “perfect” man.)

But in Lev 23:15, its referring to us His church, being “without spot” “without blemish” And according to the “count” that perfection comes “before” Pentecost, we are rapidly approaching that day of “completion” now.

Are we “actively involved” with our calling brethren? Or does the cares of this world “hinder” our involvement?

(Are we studying, rightly dividing the Word of truth?) (Quick to hear what others have to say, like the Noble Berean’s were? (and then searching the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so?)

Or are we “complacent” drifting and headed for destruction?

(One cannot drift into the Kingdom of God.) (it’s upstream, and requires a lot of effort to qualify to be there.)

(Eternal Life is a free gift, but God is not going to grant that free gift to sinners, He makes that very clear from Gen to revelation.)

(And for us, His firstfruits, He requires us to come out of sin now, and be “complete” now.

Let's conclude in 1 Kgs 6:7 and read the first part of that verse. (The completion of the building of God's house (His church) is rapidly approaching) (And the time allotted for us to be "complete" is running out.)

1 Kgs 6:7 *"And the house (God's Church – His Spiritual temple) was built of "Stone" (Those stones are us) Made ready (complete – perfect) before they were brought Thither (That word "Thither" means the other side.)*

(The Israelites reached the "other side" when they crossed the Jordan River and entered the promised land – All two of them "Joshua" & "Kalob."

The point I trying to make in these messages that I been giving concerning the Spring Holy Days, is that we are His "firstfruits"

Firstfruits are Planted First – they Grow First and they will be Harvested First.

And according to the Scriptures, according to the "Count" That time for growing is running out, and the deadline for "Completion" is rapidly approaching.

And that word for "Completion" has to do with "Perfection" it means "Unblemished" "Unspotted."

And according to Christ, He says that He is going to present to Himself a glorious church, not even a wrinkle.

So we need to have our calling (our High Calling) on the front burner of our lives.

And if it's not on the front burner, then we need to put it there, and not allow anything or anyone hinder our growth.

Caesarea Philippi

(2nd Sabbath after the 1st)

Jamerson Faucet & Brown Says:

Second Sabbath after the first, occurring here only, generally understood to mean, the first Sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread. The reasons cannot be stated here, nor is the opinion itself quite free from difficulty.

(Barns also seem to agree!)