**Hope of Israel Ministries (Ecclesia of YEHOVAH):**

**PENTECOST -- The *Untold* Story**

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| New facts about the true date for observing the festival of Pentecost keep coming to light. It is important for the people of YEHOVAH God to thoroughly understand the TRUTH and the RIGHT DAY to observe this holy festival of YEHOVAH! |

**by John D. Keyser**

It will no doubt be surprising to many to learn that the New Testament mentions the Old Testament annual Holy Day of Pentecost THREE TIMES. These three times it is called "Pentecost" -- meaning "Fiftieth Day" (see Acts 2:1; 20:16 and I Corinthians 16:8). It is probably even more surprising to learn that the *first* Holy Day of Unleavened Bread is referred to as "THE DAY OF THE SABBATHS" (plural) in the Greek language. The Old Testament feast of Pentecost was also known as the "feast of harvest" (Exodus 23:16) and "feast of weeks" (Numbers 28:26 and Deuteronomy 16:16).

The Greek expression "the Day of the Sabbaths" (plural) clearly refers to the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15), yet has been misunderstood and mistranslated as "Sabbath" (singular) in most English versions. Why is this?

Most people have completely overlooked the fact that the apostle John reveals that there were TWO SABBATHS ON ONE DAY -- the weekly Sabbath AND the first high (holy) day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! Let's go to John 19:31 in the ***Jewish New Testament***, translated by David. H. Stern, and read what the apostle John has to say: "It was the Preparation Day, and the Judeans did not want the bodies to remain on the stake on Shabbat [the weekly Sabbath], since IT WAS AN ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT [WEEKLY] SHABBAT." What made this particular weekly Sabbath so important? The ***New King James Version*** makes it perhaps clearer: "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the [weekly] Sabbath (FOR THAT [WEEKLY] SABBATH WAS A HIGH DAY)." Now what "high day" could this be? My Bible references it to Exodus 12:16 -- the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

Now consider this -- if that day had been a *regular* week day, John would have said, "FOR THAT DAY WAS A HIGH DAY." But, instead, he said "for that SHABBAT was a high day"!

That the day after the Messiah's death on Nisan 14 was a weekly Sabbath can be clearly demonstrated by Luke 23:56, which reads: "On SHABBAT the women rested, IN OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENT." What "commandment" is this? The FOURTH COMMANDMENT of course! In reference to Luke 23:56 the ***Jewish New Testament Commentary*** makes this clarifying statement: "It is sometimes claimed that the New Testament says nothing about keeping the fourth commandment. This verse [Luke 23:56] contradicts that claim, so it is important for a Jewish understanding of the New Testament. ON SHABBAT [THE WEEKLY SABBATH] THE WOMEN RESTED, IN OBEDIENCE TO THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT (Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; also Exodus 16). Of course they did! They observed Shabbat EVERY WEEK" (David H. Stern, page 150). Obviously, the WEEKLY SABBATH is the focus of verses 54 and 56 of Luke 23.

Aside from the Bible, the fact that the weekly Sabbath (*Shabbat*) here mentioned was *also* the first high Holy Day (Nisan 15) of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is understood by numerous researchers. Writes Jack Finegan in the ***Handbook of Biblical Chronology*** (Revised Edition): "This day of Preparation for the Passover was also a day of Preparation for the SABBATH which, in this case, COINCIDED WITH PASSOVER DAY and thus was a 'high day' (John 19:31" (page 355, section 607). This is backed up by the fact that all four Gospels indicate that the day of the Messiah's crucifixion was a Preparation Day because they describe the following day as the *weekly Sabbath* (Mark 15:42; Matthew 28:1; Luke 23:56; John 19:31), and also because they state that the visit of the women to the tomb on the *next day* was on the first day of the week (Mark 16:2; Matthew 28:1; Luke 24:1 and John 20:1). Now since John 19:14 states that the day of Yeshua's trial and execution was "the day of Preparation for the PASSOVER," the next day had to be both the weekly Sabbath AND the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) otherwise the Bible contradicts itself!

Samuele Bacchiocchi is not ignorant of this fact when he writes the following in his series ***God's Festivals in Scripture and History (Part 1)***:

"It is interesting to note that in the particular year of Christ's death and resurrection, the two different methods of reckoning [i.e., the Sadducean and Pharisaic] concurred on the date of Pentecost. This is because, according to the Johannine chronology of the passion...Passover (Nisan 15) fell on a [weekly] Sabbath, and the offering of the wave sheaf on Sunday (Nisan 16)." (page 170).

H. L. Strack and P. Billerbec, in their book ***Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash*** (Munich, 1922-1928) state that in later Rabbinic literature the seventh-day Sabbath is regarded as a "high day" if it falls on Nisan 15, and they show numerous examples in support of this.

Furthermore, the Bible dictionary ***Insight On the Scriptures*** (article, *Passover*), noted the same fact --

"This word [*pa-ra-skeu-e'* -- "preparation"] seems to mark, not the day preceding Nisan 15, but the day preceding the weekly Sabbath, which, in this instance [year of the Messiah's death], was "a great one," namely, not only a Sabbath by virtue of being Nisan 15, the first day of the actual Festival of Unfermented Cakes, but *also* *a weekly Sabbath*" (page 583).

A plural form of the word "Sabbath" is found in Matthew 28:1, which is usually translated : "**After the sabbath**, when it was growing light on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to view the grave" (***The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures***). When *correctly* translated this verse should read -- "**After the sabbaths** [plural], when it was growing light on the first day of the week..." Also, the phrase "when it was growing light on the first day of the week" is translated from the original Greek, which *literally* says "to the [day] lighting up into one [first] of sabbaths" -- notice the plural form once again.

The phrase "into one [first] of sabbaths" is a reference to the first day from which the count to Pentecost starts -- which count is made up of seven Sabbaths or weeks plus 50 days. This count *always* begins on Nisan 16 -- which is *always* the First Day of the Week!

The exact same thing can be found in Mark 16:2 where the Greek literally says: "And exceedingly early to the one [first] [day] of the sabbaths they are coming upon the memorial tomb..." which in the usual English translation reads "And very early on the first day of the week they came to the memorial tomb..." (***The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures***). We have to be careful, the English renditions can mask the *true meaning* of these verses in the Bible.

The word "sabbath" is also in the PLURAL in Luke 24:1 and John 20:1, showing that this particular weekly Sabbath was also a high day.

The first place this expression ("the day of the Sabbaths") is used in the New Testament is Luke 4:16. The Sabbath referred to in this verse was (as we have just learnt) not only the first annual high Holy Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) but *also* the weekly Sabbath day! We read: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been reared; and, according to his custom on **the day of the Sabbaths**, he entered into the synagogue and he stood up to read" (***The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures***).This verse clearly demonstrates that Yeshua's custom was to observe the first Holy Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! He actually began his ministry, following his baptism, and temptation in the wilderness, which occurred just prior to the Passover, with this sermon delivered on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) in 28 A.D. This is deduced from the fact that the temptation lasted forty days, and travel time from the wilderness to Nazareth would have made up the rest of the time leading up to the first day of Unleavened Bread.

It was during the Passover festival, near Bethany, then, that John the Baptist called Yeshua "the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). After being tempted of the devil forty days, and returning to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, Yeshua began his own ministry on the first day of Unleavened Bread -- Nisan 15!

The connection between Pentecost and Passover is attested to by Jewish historical literature. Pentecost is often described there as the eighth day and connecting day to the seven-day Passover festival. Pentecost was called "Atzeret," as Josephus notes, which means "completion," in regard to the harvest which began at Passover and was completed at Pentecost (see Josephus, ***Antiquities***, 3:10). Likewise, the eighth and concluding day following the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles, is called "Atzeret" in Jewish literature.

The ministry of the Messiah demonstrated the close spiritual connection between Passover and Pentecost. The Messiah is the "firstfruits" from the dead, the beginning of YEHOVAH's spiritual harvest, the pioneer of our salvation. The rest of the first harvest, those who comprise the Church of YEHOVAH God, are symbolized by the Pentecost summer wheat harvest.

**"The Day of the Sabbaths"**

Now let's notice the other New Testament references to the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15). In Acts 13:14 we read: "They, however, went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia and, going into the synagogue on THE DAY OF THE SABBATHS, they took a seat. After the public reading of the Law and of the Prophets the presiding officers of the synagogue sent out to them, saying: "Men, brothers, if there is any word of encouragement for the people that you have, tell it." (***The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures***, verses 14-15).

Here we find Paul and his company celebrating the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) with Jews in a synagogue in a Gentile city.

The last place where the first day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) is referred to is Acts 16:13. Notice the account: Paul and his company came "to Philippi, a colony, which is the principal city of the district of Macedonia. We continued in this city SPENDING SOME DAYS. And on THE DAY OF THE SABBATHS we went forth outside the gate beside a river, where we were thinking there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women that had assembled" (verses 12-13).

Philippi was a colony-city which did not have a large Jewish population, hence it had no regular synagogue for the apostle and his entourage to meet with. Therefore, when the holy day came, they met instead at the customary place of prayer and religious convocation for the Jews in that region -- down by the river.

Now notice! They "continued in this city *spending some days*" (verse 12). During this time, when the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread came, they met with others celebrating the holy day down at the usual place of meeting at the river, outside the city walls. What is the significance of this fact? It was the custom of the apostle Paul to meet in the synagogues with the Jews on the weekly Sabbath days to preach the gospel wherever he went, so long as he was welcome (Acts 13:42-44). In this case, the Scriptures clearly state that they stayed in Philippi several days, during which time he MET ON THE FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (NISAN 15) which *also* happened to be the WEEKLY SABBATH!

This passage has great meaning to some today. A number of Churches, such as the Worldwide Church of God, Church of God, International, and the Global Church of God teach that Pentecost must always occur on a "SUNDAY", the day after the weekly Sabbath. One or two smaller groups insist that Pentecost must always occur on a "MONDAY." The Jews of today, however, observe Pentecost by counting from the day after the FIRST HOLY DAY during Unleavened Bread, which may fall on different days of the week in our Gregorian calendar of today. Only occasionally does it ever fall on a Sunday. So who is right?

Since many claim that Acts 13:14 and Acts 16:13 refer to the Day of Pentecost, they use Acts 16:13 to try and *disprove* a "Sunday" Pentecost. With a "Sunday" Pentecost the previous day has to be the assumed weekly Sabbath and, they claim, since the apostles spent some days in Philippi PRIOR to meeting together with the Jews, and since they DID NOT meet together to celebrate either a weekly Sabbath or an annual Sabbath until the Day of Pentecost itself, then this proves conclusively that Pentecost was counted from Nisan 16 -- the day after the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread! If Pentecost was counted from the day after an assumed weekly Sabbath, these detractors continue, then Pentecost would have fallen on the day *after* the weekly Sabbath and Paul and his companions would have observed TWO DAYS in a row with the Jews of Philippi. But Acts 16:13 clearly indicates only ONE meeting down by the river at this time, thus disproving the "Sunday" Pentecost theory!

However, since the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) fell *on* the weekly Sabbath, this whole argument falls flat on its face. The count to Shavuot (Pentecost), according to the Pharisees, would have started on the First Day of the Week (Nisan 16); and since this was the weekly Sabbath *within* the Passover season the count to Pentecost, according to the Sadducees, would have also started on the First Day of the Week (Nisan 16)! So Pentecost, incorrectly assumed by modern theologians to be 50 days later, would have fallen on the FIRST Day of the Week by either count!

While some think this Scripture is devastating to those who hold to a "Sunday" Pentecost it, in fact, does no such thing! The scripture does NOT say that Paul and the apostles stayed several days in Philippi BEFORE they met down by the river -- it only says that they spent several days *total* in the city -- during which time they assembled down by the river. When, during those "several" days, the meeting by the river occurred we cannot know for sure.

We could use the *same argument* to try and prove that the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread fell on the weekly Sabbath: Had the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread of Acts 16:13 *followed* a weekly Sabbath, there would have been two Sabbaths in a row, or close to each other, for which the Jews of the region would have assembled. Any weekly Sabbath right before, or right after, an annual holy day is of special significance to the Jews and would have been noted. But since Paul and his companions had to wait a few days before assembling on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, no such double Sabbath (in a row) occurred that year! But since we DO NOT know when, during the several days Paul and his companions were in Philippi, that they assembled by the river, this argument is entirely moot. However, since we know by other proofs that the first day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) fell on the weekly Sabbath that year, this proves *beyond doubt* or controversy that *Nisan 16 was the correct day to commence the count to Pentecost.*

It is clear, then, that the apostle Paul celebrated Pentecost counting from Nisan 16!

**The Correct Day for PENTECOST**

What day of Shavuot or Pentecost did the apostle Paul observe? What day did Yeshua the Messiah observe? Can we know the answer?

While history seems to reveal that the vast majority of the Jewish people during the time of the Messiah followed the teachings of the Pharisees, who taught Pentecost must be counted from the day following the first annual holy day, and thus could occur on various days of the week on our calendar of today, there is much conflicting evidence to be found. The small sect of the Sadducees supposedly taught a First Day of the Week Pentecost, counting from the weekly Sabbath day within or following the Passover feast. When Paul was brought before the council for judgment he cried out, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6). So how do we get around this dichotomy? When did Paul observe Pentecost? Did he keep it on various days of the week, like the Pharisees supposedly did?

The New Testament reveals that the early first century Christians, or followers of the Messiah, were mostly Jews, and their ministers were primarily Jews. The book of Acts tells us of them, that "all of them are zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20, NIV). These converted Jews were primarily from the party of the Pharisees. It included few of the Sadducees because, as a group, they rejected the basic truth of the resurrection from the dead, which was the focal point of the apostles' teaching. But did they really disagree with the Pharisees over the calendar?

Now, if Paul had stopped observing Pentecost on the same date the Pharisees observed it, he could not have made his appeal saying he was a Pharisee! Such an appeal would have caused the Pharisees to consider him a traitor, a hypocrite, a slime-ball worse than the Sadducees! But when he made his appeal, the Pharisees in the audience defended him to the hilt. The account continues: "There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. 'We find nothing wrong with this man,' they said. 'What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?' The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks" (verses 9-10).

On the other hand, consider. If Paul had switched from the day observed by the Pharisees, to that assumed to be kept by the Sadducees, then he would have made his appeal to the Sadducees, and they would have been the ones who would have defended him in the council!

If Paul had remained a Pharisee in most respects, but changed the day he observed Pentecost to the first day of the week, like the Sadducees, then both Pharisees and Sadducees would have condemned him viciously, considering him to be a traitor and heretic! So what is the answer?

When in doubt regarding questions of doctrine, we must always look within the pages of YEHOVAH's word the Bible for answers. As Paul said, "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, *for setting things straight*, for disciplining in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

Since we have just been discussing the apostle Paul, let's shift focus and take a look at his journey from Greece to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Pentecost/Shavuot. In Acts 20 we find that Paul had been in Greece and Macedonia for some months teaching and guiding the fledgling Ecclesia of YEHOVAH God. Although he kept the **first** of the three seasonal feasts -- Unleavened Bread -- there, Paul "had decided...to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16).

Because of the detailed account of Paul's travels with his companions, found in the next few chapters of the book of Acts, we are able to determine, with a great deal of accuracy, his day-by-day movements. Laying this out on YEHOVAH's monthly calendar will confirm the *total impossibility* of of a "count 50" Pentecost such as that observed by Jews and many Sabbatarians today.

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| **1 New Moon** |  | **First** | **Month** | **(Nisan)** |  |  |
| **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8**  **Sabbath** |
| **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **13** | **14**  **Passover** | **15**  **1st Day of** **UB** |
| **16**  **Wave Sheaf** | **17**  **In Philippi** | **18**  **In Philippi** | **19**  **In Philippi** | **20**  **In Philippi** | **21**  **In Philippi** | **22**  **Sabbath** |
| **23 In Philippi** | **24 In Philippi** | **25 In Philippi** | **26 Left for Troas** | **27 At Sea** | **28 At Sea** | **29 At Sea** |

**Acts 20:6** -- "But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in FIVE DAYS joined them at Troas, where we stayed SEVEN DAYS."

**Acts 20:7** -- "Now on the first day of the week [Greek: 'one of the Sabbaths'], when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart THE NEXT DAY..."

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| **1 New Moon** |  | **Second** | **Month** | **(Iyar)** |  |  |
| **2**  **Arrive in Troas** | **3**  **In Troas** | **4**  **In Troas** | **5**  **In Troas** | **6**  **In Troas** | **7**  **In Troas** | **8**  **Paul Preaches** |
| **9 Depart from Troas** | **10**  **Walks to Assos** | **11**  **Walks to Assos** | **12 Sailed 3 Days (Chios)** | **13 Sailed 3 Days (Samos)** | **14**  **Arrives in Miletus** | **15**  **Sabbath** |
| **16 Calls for Ephesus Elders** | **17** **Calls for Ephesus Elders** | **18**  **Elders Go to Miletus** | **19**  **Elders Go to Miletus** | **20 Meets with Elders** | **21** **Meets with Elders** | **22**  **Sabbath** |
| **23**  **Sailed for Cos** | **24**  **Arrived at Rhodes** | **25**  **Sailed for Patara** | **26 Located Ship for Phoenicia** | **27**  **Sailed for Tyre** | **28**  **At Sea** | **29**  **Arrived at Tyre** |

**Acts 20:13** -- Departing Troas, Paul walks the 25-mile trip to Assos in THREE DAYS.

**Acts 20:14-15** -- "And when he [Paul] met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and THE NEXT DAY came opposite Chios; the FOLLOWING DAY we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium; the NEXT DAY we came to Miletus."

**Acts 20:17-38** -- In Miletus Paul called for the Ephesus elders (40 miles away); arrival day, two days to notify, two days for elders to arrive in Miletus and three days meeting with them: 1 + 2 + 2 + 3+ = 8-9 days.

**Acts 21:1-3** -- "...when we had departed from them [from Miletus] and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the FOLLOWING DAY to Rhodes, and from there TO Patara. And FINDING A SHIP sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed for Syria, and LANDED AT TYRE..." 6 to 7 days.

**Acts 21:4** -- "And finding disciples, we stayed there SEVEN DAYS..."

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| **1 New Moon** |  | **Third** | **Month** | **(Sivan)** |  |  |
| **2**  **In Tyre** | **3**  **In Tyre** | **4**  **In Tyre** | **5**  **In Tyre** | **6**  **In Tyre** | **7**  **In Tyre** | **8**  **Sabbath** |
| **9 Departed from Tyre** | **10 Visited Ptolemais** | **11 Left for Caesarea** | **12 In Caesarea** | **13 In Caesarea** | **14 In Caesarea** | **15**  **Sabbath** |
| **16 In Caesarea** | **17 In Caesarea** | **18**  **In Caesarea** | **19 In Caesarea** | **20 In Caesarea** | **21 In Caesarea** | **22**  **Sabbath** |
| **23 In Caesarea** | **24 In Caesarea** | **25 In**  **Caesarea** | **26 In Caesarea** | **27 In Caesarea** | **28 In Caesarea** | **29**  **Sabbath** |

**Acts 21:7** -- "And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeting the brethren, and stayed with them ONE DAY."

**Acts 21:8-14** -- Paul arrives in Caesarea, stays with Philip for "MANY DAYS" (2-4 weeks).

**Acts 21:15** -- "And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem...on the FOLLOWING DAY Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present." The NEXT DAY began the SEVEN DAYS  of purification, after which he was seized by the Jews and taken by the Romans.

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| **1 New Moon** |  | **Fourth** | **Month** | **(Tammuz)** |  |  |
| **2 In Caesarea** | **3 In Caesarea** | **4 In Caesarea** | **5 In Caesarea** | **6 In Caesarea** | **7 In Caesarea** | **8**  **Sabbath** |
| **9 Left for Jerusalem** | **10**  **Traveling** | **11 Arrived in Jerusalem** | **12 Met with James** | **13 Began Purification** | **14**  **Purification** | **15**  **Sabbath** |
| **16**  **Purification** | **17**  **Purification** | **18 Seized by the Jews** | **19 Saved by the Romans** | **20 Appears Before Council** | **21 Jews Vow Paul's Murder** | **22**  **Sabbath** |
| **23**  **Sent to Caesarea** | **24 Travels Under Guard** | **25 High Priest Summoned** | **26 Paul Kept in Praetorium** | **27 Paul Kept in Praetorium** | **28**  **Feast of Pentecost** | **29**  **Sabbath** |

**Acts 23** -- Paul receives a vision telling him that he will testify in Rome, NEXT DAY the Jews vow to kill Paul; Centurian sends Paul under guard to Festus in Caesarea; High Priest at Jerusalem summoned.

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| **1 New Moon** |  | **Fifth** | **Month** | **(Av)** |  |  |
| **2 Paul Kept in Praetorium** | **3 Paul Kept**  **in Praetorium** | **4 Paul Kept in Praetorium** | **5 Paul Kept in Praetorium** | **6 Paul Kept in  Praetorium** | **7 High Priest Goes to Caesarea** | **8**  **Sabbath** |

**Acts 24:1** -- "Now after FIVE DAYS Ananias the high priest came down [from Jerusalem] with the elders..."

What is VERY CLEAR from Paul's travel schedule is that there is NO WAY he could has compressed all that he did into 50 days to observe a Sivan 6 or 9 Pentecost! In the course of his long journey from Greece he spent part of the time as follows:

FIVE DAYS at sea  
SEVEN DAYS in Troas  
THREE DAYS walking to Assos  
THREE DAYS sailing to Miletus  
SEVEN DAYS in Miletus  
SIX DAYS getting to Tyre  
SEVEN DAYS in Tyre  
TWO to FOUR WEEKS in Caesarea  
SEVEN DAYS in purification after arriving in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.

After Paul's arrest by the Jewish authorities and the Roman intervention, a vision from the Messiah to carry his name to Rome was followed by the Jewish plot to kill him; and it appeared that Paul spent the Feast of the SUMMER WHEAT HARVEST (Pentecost) under house arrest in Caesarea while waiting some FIVE DAYS after the Feast for the high priest Ananias to finish his duties concerning the Wave Loaves Offerings.

There is absolutely NO WAY that Paul could have reached Jerusalem early in the third month of Sivan.

He DID intend to keep the Feast of Shavuot/Pentecost in Jerusalem after his arrival in the FOURTH MONTH -- and had almost completed the purification rites in the week BEFORE the Feast was held on the TWENTY-EIGHTH or TWENTY-NINTH day of the month. Paul's itinerary for his journey from Greece to Jerusalem is a powerful argument for the fourth-month summer feast as outlined in the Book of Exodus.

**Fourth Month: Twenty-Eighth or Twenty-Nine Day -- Which and Why?**

It was the Messiah's custom -- as it was for thousands of devout Jews throughout the region -- to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for YEHOVAH's Feast Days. This he did in their respective seasons -- THREE TIMES in a year. The Messiah was obedient to the command found in the following Passages:

**Deuteronomy 16:16:** "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles..."

**John 2:13:** "Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

**John 5:1:** "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

**John 7:2, 8, 10:** "Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand....'You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come'....But when his brothers had gone up, then he also went up to the feast..."

Here we see the Messiah keeping Passover/Unleavened Bread (**John 2**) and the Feast of Tabernacles/Sukkoth in **John 7**, so it would seem that the middle reference to "a feast of the Jews" must refer to the Feast of Shavuot/Pentecost (**John 5**). This would be in keeping with Deuteronomy 16:16.

It should be noted here that the King James Bible translators went out of their way to NOT refer to Shavuot in the New Testament by its CORRECT and original name(s) -- instead their preference was to use their modern, related "festival" of "Pentecost." The English mistranslations of Leviticus 23, John 5 and three uses of the word "Pentecost" in the Greek scriptures collude to minimize the modern significance of the SUMMER WHEAT HARVEST FEAST with its "FIRSTFRUITS wave loaves" offering.

A further examination of John Chapter 5 will reveal the scope and importance of the SECOND "50-day" count -- notice!

**John 5:1:** "After these things there was a FESTIVAL OF THE JEWS, and Jesus WENT UP TO JERUSALEM."

**John 5:5:** "But a certain man was there who had been in his sickness for thirty-eight years."

**John 5:8:** "Jesus said to him: 'Get up, pick up your cot and walk.'"

**John 5:9:** "With that the man immediately became sound in health, and he picked up his cot and began to walk. NOW ON THAT DAY IT WAS A SABBATH."

**John 5:10:** "Therefore the Jews began to say to the cured man: 'IT IS SABBATH, and it is not lawful for you to carry the cot.'"

**John 5:16:** "So on this account the Jews went persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things DURING SABBATH."

Putting all these verses together it's CLEAR that the "FESTIVAL OF THE JEWS," that the Messiah "WENT UP TO JERUSALEM" for, was the Feast of Shavuot or Weeks, and that he healed the man on the cot on the same day -- which John says "THAT DAY IT WAS A SABBATH"! It now becomes easy to see WHY the King James English translators could not allow the Feast of Shavuot -- which was elsewhere CLOAKED as "PENTECOST" -- to be on the same day as the Sabbath!! On the Roman, and later Gregorian Calendars, Easter was always on SUNDAY -- after the weekly so-called Saturday "Sabbath." So, in the translators' minds, Shavuot could NEVER fall on the weekly Sabbath, hence they HID IT in the vague expression "a FESTIVAL OF THE JEWS."

Although hidden and veiled in mystery for centuries by those who value the traditions of men over obedience to the commandments of YEHOVAH God, the Feast of Shavuot *COULD* and *DOES* sometimes FALL ON THE WEEKLY SABBATH as it did in John chapter 5. What determines when it falls is the LENGTH of the THIRD MONTH -- does it have 29 or 30 days?

**1)** If the THIRD MONTH (Sivan) contains 30 days, then the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) falls on the 28th DAY of the FOURTH MONTH, but

**2)** If the THIRD MONTH (Sivan) contains 29 days, then the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) falls on the 29th DAY of the FOURTH MONTH -- the FOURTH WEEKLY SABBATH of the month of Tammuz.

In this year of 2013 it appears, based on monthly predictions, that the Feast of Shavuot will fall on the 29th day of the FOURTH LUNAR MONTH -- which day happens to be a weekly Sabbath. But just like every viewable month -- when we LOOK closely to determine the New Moon and weekly Sabbaths -- so we must also COUNT fifty days from the morrow after the seventh Sabbath to determine the Feast of Shavuot and the Firstfruits of the Wheat Harvest.

**Further Proofs**

**1)** YEHOVAH god said that the firstfruits of the WHEAT harvest would be THAT WHICH ISRAEL HAD SOWN in the field -- notice!

"Three times a year you shall hold a festival for Me...and THE FEAST OF THE [WHEAT] HARVEST [SHAVUOT], of the FIRSTFRUITS of your work, OF WHAT YOU SOW IN THE FIELD....The choice FIRSTFRUITS OF YOUR SOIL you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God" (Exodus 23:16, 19).

According to Joshua, the Israelites did not arrive in the Promised Land until Nisan:

"The people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day OF THE FIRST MONTH, and encamped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho" (Joshua 4:19).

Then, at Joshua 5:10-12, we read --

"Encamped at Gilgal, in the steppes of Jericho, the Israelites offered the passover sacrifice *on the fourteenth day of the [first] month*, toward evening. On the day after the passover offering, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the country, unleavened bread and parched grain [barley]. On that same day, when they ate of the produce of the land, *the manna ceased*."

In order for the Israelites to be able to offer a "NEW [WHEAT]" offering at the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) FROM THAT WHICH THEY THEMSELVES HAD SOWN IN THE FIELD, they would have had to plant SPRING WHEAT -- which matures in the SUMMER -- after they arrived in the land in the first month (Nisan). It is physically impossible for wheat to mature in 50 days. The EARLIEST that the Israelites could have had wheat THAT THEY THEMSELVES HAD SOWN would have been LATE IN THE FOURTH MONTH OF TAMMUZ!

**2)** The Bible continually associates the WHEAT HARVEST with the GRAPE HARVEST -- both taking place in the SUMMER. The "new wine" mentioned in Acts 2 simply would NOT have been available in the third month (spring). Notice Acts 2:3-4, 13 --

"Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one 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….Others mocking said, ‘They are full of NEW WINE.”

According to ***The New Strong’s Dictionary of Words***, “new wine” denotes sweet “new wine.”

Speaking on the Day of Pentecost Peter said the following:

“But this what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days’ says God, ‘That I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams and on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:16-18, NKJV).

Here Peter is quoting from the Old Testament book of Joel – notice!

“The threshing floors shall be FULL OF WHEAT, and the vats shall overflow with NEW WINE and oil….And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My spirit in those days” (Joel 2:24, 28-29).

The Bible continually associates the WHEAT HARVEST with the GRAPE HARVEST – both taking place in the SUMMER. Notice also Nehemiah 13:15; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Jeremiah 8:20; Jeremiah 40:10; Daniel 2:35; Micah 7:1; Judges 15:1-5 and Haggai 1:11.

**3)** In Exodus 32:28 we read that the

"sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about THREE THOUSAND men of the people fell that day."

This occurred on the Feast day of Exodus 32:5 -- which we have shown to be the Biblical Feast of Shavuot or Weeks. "About three thousand men" die as a result of idolatry on the same day that Aaron "somehow" knew to proclaim a "feast to the LORD" -- exactly seven Sabbaths complete plus 50 days. Now, if we go to Acts 2 we read:

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about THREE THOUSAND souls were added to them" (verse 41).

"About three thousand souls" are called by YEHOVAH God as a result of the pouring out of His holy spirit -- on the same day that thousands were gathered together in Jerusalem because the Feast of Shavuot or Weeks "had fully come" (Acts 2:1).

**4)** Another interesting parallel can be found in Exodus 24:12 and Exodus 32:15-16:

**12** "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of STONE, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

**15** "And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written.

**16** "Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets."

At the end of the FOURTH month, when YEHOVAH's Feast of Shavuot or Weeks had fully come, Moses returned from the mountain with the tablets of STONE -- and with the intention of teaching the words thereon to the people of Israel (Exodus 24:12, last part). When Moses came close to the camp and saw the people polluting YEHOVAH's Feast Day, he "cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain" (Exodus 32:19).

While here at the mountain of YEHOVAH God His law was written on "tablets of STONE," in Acts 2 we find a fulfillment of the prophecy found in Jeremiah 31:33 -- notice!

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their HEARTS; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

This is referred to by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:16. At Sinai the law was written in stone due to the stiff-necked and rebellious people of Israel; but at Jerusalem in 31 A.D. the law was written "on their hearts" due to the 3,000 obedient Israelites who received YEHOVAH's spirit on that day.

**Who Were the First Converts?**

Who were the first converts to the new faith and truth brought by Yeshua the Messiah? Since Yeshua affirmed the truth of the resurrection, and it was central to his teaching, the Sadducees did not accept him or his teachings. But since the Pharisees did believe in a resurrection from the dead, as well as in an angelic world, and the spirit of prophecy, they were far more open minded than the Sadducees to the new faith.

Paul, who was a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:8), had been taught by Gamaliel, a scholar of the law "honored by all the people" (Acts 5:34). Paul himself affirmed: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was THOROUGHLY TRAINED IN THE LAW of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today" (Acts 22:3).

Therefore, if Paul had kept a Pentecost observance in Jerusalem (Acts 20:16) that was contrary to that practiced by his mentor, his appeal in the Sanhedrin as a Pharisee would have contradicted his own observance and his defense would have been a falsehood (Acts 24:14-15). But Paul did not contradict himself. To the Philippians he wrote, "If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the Church; AS FOR LEGALISTIC RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAULTLESS" (Philippians 3:4-6). Therefore, since Paul observed Pentecost after counting seven Sabbaths PLUS fifty days after the Spring Wave Sheaf Offering, and was "in regard to the law, a Pharisee" and "as for legalistic righteousness, faultless," then Pentecost at the summer wheat harvest must have been the CORRECT way of observing this feast!

**That First Pentecost**

Now notice something very interesting. On the first Pentecost after the Messiah arose, and ascended to heaven (Acts 1:7-10), the disciples were assembled together, keeping the day Yeshua had always kept -- the "day of weeks" (Exodus 34:22). This day was called that, historically, because it was determined by COUNTING the "weeks" and days from Nisan 16 (Leviticus 23:15; Deuteronomy 16:9-10).

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place" (Acts 2:1). They were observing the correct day! "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the *whole* house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT and began to speak in other tongues as the spirit enabled them.

"Now there were staying in Jerusalem GOD-FEARING JEWS from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language" (Acts 2:2-6).

Notice in Acts 2:1 that they were "all with one accord *in one place*." What "place" was that? There was, in fact, only ONE PLACE in the city of Jerusalem where devout Jews, of whatever sect, would have congregated on the Day of Pentecost. And there is only ONE PLACE where the events recorded in Acts 2 could possibly have taken place. That place was the TEMPLE -- not an "upper room"! Read our article, ***Where in Jerusalem Were the Disciples Assembled On Pentecost?*** for more information. A careful study of the Bible reveals the fact that it was *in the Temple* that the holy spirit of YEHOVAH God came "suddenly" upon Yeshua's disciples, and that *from the Temple* the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God began to go forth into all the world!

Since Acts 2:1 proclaims the fact that they were "all with *one accord*" they didn't have one group observing SIVAN 6, another observing a "MONDAY" or "SUNDAY" Pentecost while another group observed a SIVAN 9 Pentecost -- all in YEHOVAH's Temple! During the time of the Messiah Pentecost was observed at *one time*, and *one time only*. There were NO differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over determining Pentecost at this time.

In his sermon to those gathered in the Temple, some people argue that Peter continually stressed the truth of the resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:29-36). Since the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection (Matthew 22:23-32), this would have fallen on deaf ears if they had been in the crowd, observing their Pentecost. So, follows this line of reasoning, this message was directed to PHARISEES, who were the overwhelming majority in the crowd, who BELIEVED in the resurrection from the dead! What are we to deduce from this? That Sadducees were totally incapable of repentance? That YEHOVAH God favored Pharisees and no one else? What rubbish! Acts 6:7 puts to rest this perverted reasoning -- notice!

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a GREAT MANY OF THE PRIESTS were obedient to the faith" (RSV).

Since the priesthood was made up of Sadducees, this passage plainly shows that many of the Sadducees were "obedient to the faith." The fact that Peter stressed the resurrection of the dead in his sermon may have been because there were a number of Sadducees in the audience and he wanted them, *in particular*, to clearly understand it!

Of these Pharisees AND Sadducees, and their followers, and probably many other groups or sects, three thousand that day were converted, and became the foundation of the New Testament Church of YEHOVAH God (Acts 2:41). Both the Pharisees and the Sadducees were present at the Temple on this Day of Pentecost since the Sadducees made up the officiating priesthood and the Pharisees controlled the Temple services, and the Sadducees had to carry out their wishes. If, as Acts 6:7 indicates, these Sadducees were converted and "obedient to the faith" then a message about the resurrection would have been greeted by them with total belief and understanding!

Here, then, is further proof that this "day of weeks," or SHAVUOT, was the traditional Jewish day -- counted according to the reckoning of both the Pharisees and the Sadducees -- the same day Yeshua and Paul observed!

**The Direct Command of the Messiah**

Yeshua the Messiah, very plainly told his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must OBEY THEM and DO EVERYTHING THEY TELL YOU. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach" (Matthew 23:2-3).

What did Yeshua mean by this statement? Notice that he did not say that the Sadducees, who were doctrinal heretics and Hellenistic sympathizers, sat in Moses' seat. But that the Pharisees did! ***The Critical Experimental Commentary*** makes the meaning clear:

"Saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit. The Jewish teachers stood to read, but sat to expound the Scriptures, as will be seen by comparing Luke 4:16 with v. 20.

"in Moses' seat -- that is, as INTERPRETERS OF THE LAW GIVEN BY MOSES.

"3. All therefore -- that is, all which, as sitting in that seat and teaching out of that law, they bid you observe, that observe and do. The word 'therefore' is thus, it will be seen, of great importance, as limiting those injunctions which He would have them OBEY to what they fetched from the law itself. IN REQUIRING IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO SUCH INJUNCTIONS, HE WOULD HAVE THEM TO RECOGNIZE THE AUTHORITY WITH WHICH THEY TAUGHT OVER AND ABOVE THE OBLIGATION OF THE LAW ITSELF -- an important principle truly; but He who denounced the traditions of such teachers (ch.15:3) cannot have meant here to throw His shield over these."

Clearly, Yeshua acknowledged the authority of the scribes and Pharisees, concerning matters of the laws of Moses! This would clearly have included the interpretation concerning the right day to observe the annual holy days, and their calculation!

The ***Adam Clarke Commentary*** adds:

"By the seat of Moses, we are to understand authority to teach the law. Moses was the great teacher of the Jewish people; and the scribes, etc., are here represented as HIS SUCCESSORS.

"Verse 3. All therefore whatsoever -- That is, all those things which they read out of the law and prophets, and all things which they teach consistent with them...."

The Pharisees were the successors of Moses in that they had authority to interpret and teach the laws of YEHOVAH God. The Sadducees, who were an apostate religious/political party, deriving from the Hellenizers of the Maccabean period, when even the high priesthood went astray after Antiochus Ephiphanes, never received authority from YEHOVAH God to teach and interpret the law. They were so apostate, Yeshua himself says, that by the time of the Messiah he said of them:

"You are in ERROR, BECAUSE YOU DO NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURES OR THE POWER OF GOD" (Matthew 22:29).

The Sadducees had strayed so far from the paths of YEHOVAH God that they did not even admit the existence of angels or spirits, let alone the truth of the resurrection from the dead (Acts 23:8)!

The Pharisees, however, were not much better! While they had authority from YEHOVAH God to teach all things CONSISTENT WITH THE LAW AND PROPHETS, Yeshua warned about their many shortcomings. Notice!

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye SHUT UP THE KINGDOM of heaven AGAINST MEN...ye make (a proselyte)...TWOFOLD MORE the CHILD OF HELL than yourselves....ye BLIND GUIDES...Ye SERPENTS, ye generation of VIPERS, how can you escape the DAMNATION OF HELL?" (Matthew 23:13-33).

Not much of a reference!

The bottom line is: Since the Pharisees had authority from YEHOVAH God regarding matters of the law and prophets, and since they were in charge of the Temple services and rituals, the Sadducees had to bow to their authority. However, there was evidently no conflict over the dating of Pentecost during the time of the Messiah because both groups adhered to a calendar that always placed the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) on the weekly Sabbath.

**An Important Issue**

It is interesting that after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. the Jewish scribes sought to renew their efforts to preserve the original Hebrew Scriptures. It appears that the Masorete scribes were considerably more diligent and faithful in preserving the Old Testament than the Alexandrian Jews who had authored the Septuagint. The Masoretes faithfully preserved the *mi-mohorat ha-shabbat* of Leviticus 23:11 and 15, meaning "from [on] morrow of [after] the Sabbath" -- **the** weekly Sabbath. It is a fact that the Septuagint eventually became so corrupt that the Jewish authorities forbade Jews from using it.

If you still wonder about this issue, and have questions or doubts, then you should do what all those who sincerely seek to know the truth do: You should PERSONALLY take nothing for granted, or the words of any minister or any other man. You should PERSONALLY go to your local library, and look up "Pentecost" in various Bible dictionaries, and similar helps. You should look up such references as "Pharisees," "Sadducees," and even books on Jewish history dealing with that time. You should get a copy of Josephus' ***Antiquities of the Jews***, and check the index, and look up "Pharisees," "Sadducees," and "Pentecost." And, above all, you should use the ***Bible*** as the final arbiter on this subject. You should go on a personal CAMPAIGN to learn and to know and to prove to yourself THE PLAIN TRUTH!

Don't take any man's word for it! Check it out for yourself! If you will simply DO THIS, you will be AMAZED!

In this brief article we have only covered a few points concerning the Pentecost issue -- parts of the story which have remained untold until now. But for a full grasp of this pivotal truth of YEHOVAH God, you should write for and read the articles ***Pentecost -- the MYSTERY Solved!***, ***New Understanding on Observing the Correct Day of PENTECOST***, and ***Have We Been Observing the Sabbath At the Wrong Time All These Years?***

The truth about Pentecost is not a "bogus" or unimportant issue. It is a very vital matter, which concerns salvation itself for many. To knowingly disobey this commandment of YEHOVAH God is to be a stubborn heretic, equivalent in YEHOVAH's sight to practicing witchcraft! YEHOVAH says, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Or as the New International Version has it, "FOR REBELLION IS LIKE THE SIN OF DIVINATION, AND ARROGANCE LIKE THE EVIL OF IDOLATRY" (I Samuel 15:23). YEHOVAH God said to ancient king Saul, "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king" (same verse).

The prophet Hosea writes a bitter prophetic lament, which applies directly to these last days in which we live. He wrote:

"My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have REJECTED KNOWLEDGE, I ALSO REJECT YOU as my priests; because you have IGNORED THE LAW of your God, I also will ignore your children" (Hosea 4:6, NIV).

The issue concerning the right day and manner of celebrating Pentecost is not something which Church leaders can ignore or sweep under the carpet, as they are accustomed to doing. It will not go away. It will come back to haunt them, and to be a nightmare in their dreams.

YEHOVAH GOD MEANS BUSINESS! The Almighty means what He says! The apostle Paul wrote in no condescending manner, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7). Those who disobey YEHOVAH, and teach contrary to His truth of Pentecost, deceiving thousands, are sowing the wind. YEHOVAH God thunders: "They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

The YEHOVAH God Almighty thunders, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (I Kings 18:21).

What about you? Whom are you going to follow? Baal? And the modern priests and ministers of Baal, who seduce you with false doctrines and erroneous teachings? Or the plain truth of YEHOVAH God and His Word?

Over three thousand years ago, Joshua challenged the people of Israel with these words:

"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness...But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then CHOOSE FOR YOURSELVES THIS DAY whom you will serve.... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:1415).

I know whom I am going to obey. As for me and my house, we will follow the commandments of YEHOVAH God! But what about you?

Whom will YOU obey?

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