

CHAPTER 7

PENTECOST: EXEGESIS OF LEVITICUS 23 and DEUTERONOMY 16

*“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little.” ~ Isaiah*

God’s Words are precious wise guides (Ps.119:105). Each of them conveys important valuable knowledge for us to learn and live by (Deut.8:3, Luke 4:4). To read God’s Words without picking up the detail, is like an unarmed army going to battle – they are unprepared, so they are routed. It’s like a man lost – though he has a detailed map, he does not use it! It’s like following a blind guide and shame will result (2 Tim.2:15). But it need not be so. But to the diligent, there are great rewards (2 Pet 1:10).

For quick reference and to help the lay student, the concordance by James Strong, LL.D., S.T.D., has numbers assigned to each of the words used in the Bible. Many *root* words will have more than one number assigned to them. This has been a helpful way to quickly locate, list, and reference the words of the Bible. *Strong’s Concordance* even has a mini-section near the back that gives a brief summary meaning for each word by number – like a mini-dictionary. I liken the dictionary portion of these handy concordances to a student’s quick reference pocket dictionary. It’s handy, but it’s not usually as complete or thorough as a full dictionary, lexicon or complete word study. By assigning Strong’s numbers to various words, some have not understood that various uses of the same root word can have different numbers assigned to it. Having more than one number assigned to various uses or forms of the same **root word** has misled some who did not realize the significance of this. A more accurate and complete form of scholarship is to look at the Hebrew or Greek root word used within the syntax of the language, and by seeing the word in its various applications, and in context.

Some words are simple and have a very limited range of meanings. Other words, however, have widely divergent meanings, according to their usage. Some words have meanings that can be understood **ONLY** within their context! For example, what does the word “wave” mean? Is it a greeting

gesture made with the hand? Is it the motion of the water in an ocean or a lake? Is it the shape of something? Let's consider the word "plane". Does "plane" mean: A carpenter's tool? or does it describe when a boat gets up to speed and rides on the surface, as opposed to plowing through the water?, or does "plane" mean an airplane? or does "plane" simply mean a flat surface? The fact of the matter is that "plane" means all of the above. "Plane": One word – with more than one meaning. Many words are this way. Is a "store" a place where you purchase something, or where you store it? The context tells you. Many times a word has a primary meaning – which means that the various contexts in which the word is most often used, does not appreciably alter its meaning. But, when that word is used occasionally in a particular way, it has a totally different meaning! For example, most of the time the word "dog" means canine, a dog, a pet, a domesticated *canis*. However, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, and in accordance with other usages that we have all heard of the word "dog," it also is used to refer to a bad play, an unattractive person, or even a tool with dog-like jaws that is used to pick up other things. I have a dog (canine) and also a plate dog for lifting plate steel. There are other types of "dogs" for picking up other materials as well. I, too, have been to a play or a concert that was a real "dog." So – you get the point concerning the multiple meanings of words according to the context in which they are used. I'm sure you, dear readers, can see this also happens with words contained in your Bibles. The meaning and focus of each word is dictated by the structure and context that it is used in. This is known as the syntax of the language.

Thus you can see why Paul taught Timothy to carefully "break down" the words of God (Holy Scripture) in careful study:

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly **dividing** the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15)."*

The literal Greek of the phrase "**be diligent**" (rendered "study" in the KJV), means doing one's best to **earnestly study**, while the Greek word translated "**dividing**" means to **skillfully cut or divide** – to **DISSECT CAREFULLY** – **God's Word of Truth**.

Paul was admonishing much more than a mere reading of the Scriptures. To dissect something is to break it down into its parts and understand each of them. It is reading with careful analytical study, i.e., the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures. Without doing this, we expose ourselves to harm by those

who blindly try to lead us, and the result is that we often end up with error and shame for not doing what God's Word teaches us – to **STUDY AND LEARN TO *RIGHTLY DIVIDE* GOD'S WORD!**

Although Paul said he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and was acknowledged by the twelve original apostles, when did Paul ever say HE (Paul) was “God's main apostle?” Did he ever proclaim himself to be like an “arch-bishop,” “Chief,” “Pope” or claim to be the highest ranking minister? Answer: NO. He did not constantly *qualify himself* with vain, self-exalting pompous statements. Nor did Paul proclaim authority to change or “interpret” God's Word on behalf of others! Paul did not try to convince the public, or the churches of God, that following HIM was the only way to be a part of the only truly “viable place” God was working. Nor did he claim that HE sat at the helm of what everyone was taught to refer to as “HEAD QUARTERS”, or the “spear point”! **Instead, Paul taught Timothy to STUDY God's Word himself!**

Which would YOU, dear reader, rather have? **A minister who sought supportive “loyal” followers of HIMSELF – people who would “loyally” adhere to his governance? *Or***, would you prefer a faithful minister of Jesus Christ who taught *YOU* to **STUDY GOD'S WORDS** and to **THINK**, thereby helping equip YOU to learn to rightly divide God's Word yourself, so that you could help spread God's beautiful Word of Truth? Which approach is **Biblical?** Which approach will better enable you to participate in spreading the Good News of the Kingdom of God? **Which will best build you** as a disciple of the Lord and as a saint? The strongest most lasting form of loyalty and unity within the Church of God comes from a kindred spirit of *love* based in God's Truth – not from fear and control, nor from the deceitful comforts of the status quo.

So let's begin our analysis of God's pure words, having the respect and understanding the value that each of God's Words deserves. It is deeply fulfilling, exciting and truly informative.

EXEGESIS OF LEV 23:4-21 REGARDING PENTECOST:

Lev 23:4 'These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.

5 On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover.

6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

7 On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

8 But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.'"

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

The word translated “sheaf” in verse 10 is the Hebrew word “omer.” It means a dry measure of a little over two quarts of grain. It does NOT mean a single bushel of grain still on the stalk! “Omer” was a considerable measure of grain from many different stalks that had been harvested, threshed to remove any chaff, and measured. The instructions on bringing a sheaf (omer of grain) from the best of the harvest, and presenting it to the priest is given in the context of the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread (verse 6-10) – not the weekly Sabbath.

Notice also WHO God said is to bring this omer, and from where it was to come: “*Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest...*” This omer of firstfruits was something the children of Israel brought **TO** the priests; it was **not from** the priests.

In verses 12-13, God’s instructions are to the priests regarding the special offerings and sacrifices. Let’s pick up the story flow in verse 14, and see what else God is teaching His people concerning how to number Pentecost:

Lev 23:14 'You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

15 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.

16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.'

According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the Bible*, the Hebrew verb, *sabat* is the root of *Shabbat* or "Sabbath," as is used in Lev.23:15. This is the passage where many have gotten confused as to which Sabbath is meant – the weekly Sabbath or the one mentioned in the context, namely the first Holy Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. ***Vine's and other works show this Hebrew root word *sabat* (Sabbath) being used to refer to both the weekly Sabbath as well as the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Tabernacles and 8th day (Last Great Day) – and also a week, and 7 weeks.***

How do we know if Lev.23:15 is referring to counting from the weekly Sabbath or from the annual Holy Day Sabbath? Do we know by looking at which numbers James Strong (author of *Strong's Concordance*) chose to attach to the various applications of the same word? Hardly! It is in the context in which we find the word *sabat*, as well as through the study of other verses on the same subject, that we find an accurate path to the true meaning of the words – as intended by God and the inspired authors of the Bible. Here, the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread is clearly the Sabbath referenced in the context of Lev 23:15.

Now let's see more of the meanings of this word that is usually translated "Sabbath." According to the *Complete Word Study* by Warren Baker, D.R.E. and Eugene Carpenter, Ph.D., also according to *Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon* and many others, the word translated "Sabbath" in Lev.23:15, can mean: 1) Sabbath, 2) the Day of Atonement (as in Lev.16:31, 23:32), 3) Sabbath year (as the year of release – Lev.25:4), and 4) week or weeks (as in Lev.23:15, 25:8, 28:8; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 18:12; Matt.28:1).

While the best rendering of *sabat* or *shabbat* is usually "Sabbath," obviously all renderings of this word are not referring to the 7th day of the week. Each differing usage of a word is made clear by the context in which it is used – just like the previous examples of words with varying meanings: "wave" "dog" "plane" and "store." The context dictates and clarifies the intended meaning of the words being used. Also, by comparing other

similar passages, a person will often find further clarification and confirmation of the meaning of a word or passage. This we will do together very shortly in the book of Deuteronomy. This, my friends, is how we learn the exegetical form of studying Holy Scripture, bringing all things together, so that we cannot be led around by the nose and deceived. This is clearly the form of studying that Paul was telling Timothy to do when he told him to carefully dissect the Words of God.

Another important point in understanding the meaning of this word translated “Sabbath” in Lev.23:15 is to note the context of it being seven complete Sabbaths. Many have made issue of the count being seven Sabbaths from the weekly Sabbath, thus the count would always fall on a Sunday. Some claim that the “*ha*” in front of the word “*Shabbat*” always makes it the weekly Sabbath. But such supposed “rules” my Hebrew-speaking Jewish friends from Israel do not recognize. More importantly, neither have the many scholars who historically have translated “*ha-shabbat*” other than the weekly “Sabbath” at various times – such as in Lev.23! Perhaps those who claim that this word is never translated as anything other than “Sabbath” know more than the many past and present Bible translators who have and will continue to translate this word *ha-shabbat* other than as a reference to the weekly Sabbath – such as in Lev.23:15 and on various other occasions? Perhaps they know more than the scholars of *Vine’s Expository*, and *Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Lexicon*? Perhaps they know more than all the well-known scholars and more than anyone? But perhaps not!

It is critically important to understand if Pentecost is to be counted to the day after seven full weeks from the morrow after first Holy Day of Unleavened bread – OR – if it is to be counted to the Sunday after the seventh weekly Sabbath! The person who concludes that Pentecost is always counted 50 days from a weekly Sabbath and thus always falls on a Sunday would have **no guidelines as to which weekly Sabbath one was to begin the count from! It has been an assumption!** The very SYNTAX of this passage dictates that it cannot be referring to a weekly Sabbath as the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread is the Sabbath that is mentioned. Thus, if the weekly Sabbath is insisted upon, since the year is full of weekly Sabbaths – and thus the context is ignored – there would be no way of knowing which weekly Sabbath was meant! One must **ASSUME** which weekly Sabbath to count from! The Scripture DOES NOT say, “on the morrow after the weekly Sabbath that falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread!” Therefore, only the syntax and context of the

language is left as the guide. That being the case, only the first annual Sabbath – the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread logically makes sense as being the Sabbath that is to be counted from, since it is the only Sabbath referred to in the immediately preceding verses! Notice the critical explanation of the syntax of the Hebrew text by the Hebrew SAGES of ancient times, correcting those who believed that the weekly Sabbath was meant:

2 R. Jose says. On the morrow after the Sabbath means on the morrow after the Festival. You say that it means on the morrow after the Festival, but perhaps it is not so, but rather on the morrow after the Sabbath of Creation! I will prove it to you. Does Scripture say, ‘On the morrow after the Sabbath that is in the Passover week’? It merely says, ‘On the morrow after the Sabbath’; and as the year is full of Sabbaths, then go and find out which Sabbath is meant. (Talmud - Mas. Menachoth 66a:2)

Men who maintain that the weekly Sabbath is meant have simply *ASSUMED and IMPUTED* that Sabbath is the weekly Sabbath during Unleavened Bread, while others maintain that it is the weekly Sabbath just PRIOR to Passover, and yet others, that it is the weekly Sabbath AFTER the Days of Unleavened Bread. Such confusion! This confusion is because the *context* has been ignored and only **assumption and guessing** is left to interpret scripture, as no one could know which weekly Sabbath was meant! **If any weekly Sabbath was meant, then the syntax of the language would not govern, and which weekly Sabbath was meant could not be known!** Does it make sense that now a couple thousand years removed, many would set aside the commentary of the historical figures of the day *thinking they know* it means the weekly Sabbath? Many erroneously *think* they are following the Sadducees whom they were taught counted Pentecost as they do, while others just accept it however they are taught by their church. Yes and the world is still flat, because a church said so – right? Indeed, the brilliant Galileo was tried as a heretic and imprisoned for many mathematical and astronomical truths he proved. Yet **those proven truths were rejected by many in favor of believing the** accepted church teachings. Being *blind sheep* is totally unnecessary and harmful. Let’s open our eyes and learn to study and prove all things, as God’s Word teaches each of us (1 Th.5:21, 2 Tim.2:15). Let’s not allow our walk and worship of God to be based upon blindly following the doctrines and “*rules taught by men*” (Isa.29:13). God is our Strength, Truth and Life.

Again, the context of Scripture helps determine its meaning for us. Consider: How can one count off seven weeks of time without having one or more of the Sabbaths that was counted being “complete”? How could the passing of this time produce an incomplete Sabbath? How do you have an incomplete Sabbath within the cycle of seven weeks? It’s impossible! Either each of seven Sabbath days passed completely or they did not! However, one can have an incomplete WEEK! Whichever day the count begins from, there must be seven full complete weeks of seven days each counted off, and *then* it is the morrow after the seventh full WEEK, that is the High Holy Day (50) – the Feast of Firstfruits - Pentecost!

Those who claim that the “*ha*” in front of the word “*Shabbat*” always makes it the weekly Sabbath discredit themselves and show their ignorance. Here are some more instances where many well-known and respected scholars have translated this root word “*Sabat*” or (“*ha-shabaat*”) in Lev.23:15 as “week,” “Day of Rest” and “Sabbath:” (Emphasis mine throughout.)

*Lev 23:15 "From the day after the **Sabbath** (“ha-shabaat”), the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off **seven full weeks** (“ha-shabaat”). (NIV)*

Notice the translators translated the word “ha-shabaat” as Sabbath in the beginning of this verse and the same word “**ha-shabaat**” is **then translated “weeks” in “seven full weeks”** at the end of the same verse! **Each is the same word, but translated differently, according to the context!**

This is done again and again by many respected translators. In the following examples, for clarification, the Hebrew word “ha-shabaat” has been added in parentheses () whenever the preceding word “Sabbath,” “weeks” or “Day of Rest” is translated from the same Hebrew word (“ha-shabaat”):

*Lev 23:15 And ye shall count from the morning after the **Sabbath** (“ha-shabaat”), from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering, **seven weeks** (“ha-shabaat”); they shall be complete (Darby).*

Lev 23:15 'You must count for yourselves seven weeks (“ha-shabbat”) from the day after the Sabbath (“ha-shabbat”), from the day you bring the wave offering sheaf; they must be complete weeks. (The NET Bible®)

*Lev 23:15 From the day after the **Sabbath** (“ha-shabaat”)—the day you bring the bundle of grain to be lifted up as a special offering—count off seven full **weeks** (“ha-shabaat”) (New Living Translation ®).*

*Lev 23:15 And from the day after the **Sabbath** (“ha-shabaat”), from the day on which you bring the sheaf of the elevation offering, you shall count off seven **weeks** (“ha-shabaat”); they shall be complete (NRSV).*

*Lev 23:15 "And you shall count from the morrow after the **Sabbath** (“ha-shabaat”), from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full **weeks** (“ha-shabaat”) shall they be (RSV).*

*Lev 23:15 Count seven full **weeks** (“ha-shabaat”) from the day after the **Sabbath** (“ha-shabaat”) on which you bring your sheaf of grain to present to the LORD (TEV).*

Notice now how the *Complete Jewish Bible* translates this same verse:

Lev.23:14-15: “From the day after the day of rest (“ha-shabaat”) – that is, from the day you bring the sheaf for waving – you are to count seven full weeks (“ha-shabaat”), until the day after the seventh week (“ha-shabaat”); you are to count fifty days; and then you are to present a new grain offering to ADONAI” (Complete Jewish Bible by David Stern).

Further, the Hebrew Tanakh translates “ha-shabaat” as **week** in Lev.23, Moffatt translates “ha-shabaat” as **week** in Lev.23, as in many other works “ha-shabaat” is translated as **week**!

As a matter of fact, almost all Bible translators render this word “ha-shabaat” as week in the New Testament. Notice:

*Mark 16:1 “Now when the **Sabbath** (from “ha-shabaat,” Strong’s #7676) was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.*

2 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week (from “ha-shabaat,” Strong’s #7676), they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.”

But wasn’t the New Testament written in Greek? Much of it was. However, when a society does not have a particular esoteric word in their vocabulary to describe a unique cultural or historical event of another people, they

often borrow the esoteric word from the other culture's language, and adopt it as their own. This is not uncommon. For example, we use the French word "Grand Prix," as the English language did not have a word to describe that racing event, as it was not an English event. The Greeks, being Gentiles, did not have a word that would describe both *Sabbath* and *week*, so the apostles used the **same Hebrew word** from Lev.23:15!

The physician Luke, author of the books of Luke and Acts, repeated this process in Luke 24:1!

Remember, the children of Israel could only eat of the "old" previous year's produce until this omer of first fruits (plural) had been offered up as a wave offering to God (Lev.23:14). THEN, they could eat of the new produce of the land.

Now there are a few more very important points of precious truth in the next few verses that we need to review before going on to the account in *Deuteronomy*.

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

*21 And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. **You shall do no customary work on it.** It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.*

This was a Holy Sabbath Day. No servile or customary work was to be done on it. **HARVESTING IS WORK** – one thing ought to be abundantly clear – **NO HARVESTING WAS TO BE DONE ON THIS HOLY DAY OF REST!**

So far we have seen that the Pharisees were in control of the Temple and all its administrations as well as the calendar. Since the cycle of the moon is just over 29 ½ days in length, and a month could not end in a ½ day, someone would have to be in the position to determine if the month would be 29 or 30 days in length. As shown previously, this responsibility fell primarily to the Pharisees, who Jesus said, "sit in Moses' seat." As demonstrated, the length of the first three months of the year had an impact on the date that Pentecost fell, so the people had to count. The Pharisees and Sanhedrin were also judges who determined matters of "halakhah"

(law) for Israel. As Paul said, God had given them the responsibility of the oracles of God (Rom.3:1-2).

EXEGESES OF DEUTERONOMY REGARDING PENTECOST:

This closer look at Lev.23:4-21 is very helpful, but there is MUCH more Biblical evidence. Thankfully, another KEY to understanding Lev.23:4-21, and the counting of Pentecost, comes from Moses himself, expounding and clarifying God's Statutes to the next generation of Israelites who would cross the Jordan River – and for us today! Notice what Moses said:

*Deut 1:5 On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to **explain this law**, saying....,*

This is a key to understanding the **purpose** of *Deuteronomy* that most ministers and teachers seem **NOT** to understand. *Deuteronomy* was written **AFTER** *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, and *Numbers*. *Deuteronomy* was written to “EXPLAIN” (see Deut.1:5) these previously written books.

During the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, Moses had opportunity to field many questions regarding God's previously-given Laws. So **Moses EXPLAINED** God's Words to this new generation of younger adults, and recorded it for us so we, too, could better understand what was meant in *Leviticus* and *Exodus*! *Deuteronomy* is to **CLARIFY** questions of the law from *Exodus*, *Numbers* and *Leviticus* – SO SAYS YOUR BIBLE! Of course we all need to believe God's Words over those who blindly say otherwise. Sometimes people can blindly and stubbornly maintain their “integrity” and teachings, but God has called us to growth and truth. According to the WCG doctrinal *Pentecost Study Material* referred to in previous chapters, it was claimed that *Deuteronomy* does not interpret *Leviticus*. However, we just read where God's Word says IT DOES! Whom will you believe – your Bible – or men?

The word “explain” is from the Hebrew word “ba-ar.” According to the *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* by AMG Publishers, “‘ba-ar’ is a verb meaning to declare and expound, indicating a written process of clarifying and recording revelation from God.” Indeed, it was truly Moses' explanation, primarily of *Leviticus* and *Exodus*.

This is why *Deuteronomy* sometimes has a slightly different rendering of certain Statutes of God, or has the order of Statutes listed differently. The different wording, or order, in *Deuteronomy* can help explain the context and meaning of what was said in *Leviticus*, *Exodus* and occasionally, *Numbers*. Indeed, God's Word says *Deuteronomy* interprets *Leviticus*, not the other way around (Deut.1:5)! This is a valuable piece of Truth for you students of God's Word to remember! It will help you in various topics of study.

Notice as Moses EXPLAINED what was meant in Lev.23 regarding Pentecost, he used entirely different words to explain what was meant in this parallel account:

Deut 16:8 Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a sacred assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work on it.

*9 You shall count seven **weeks** for yourself; begin to count the **seven weeks** from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain.*

10 Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you.

In what context is this command given in *Deuteronomy*? – The Days of Unleavened Bread, with its sacred assemblies! The weekly Sabbath is NOT even mentioned in all of Deut.16!

Here we see Pentecost is called the “Feast of Weeks,” NOT the “Feast of Sabbaths.” Here the word translated “week” and “weeks” is NOT “*ha-shabaat*,” as in Lev.23. Here the totally different word “*sabua*” is used – a word that can ONLY mean a “week of seven days” – a word that NEVER MEANS SABBATH!

According to *Brown-Driver-Brigg's Lexicon* and *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, Copyright © 2003 by AMG Publishers, this word “*sabua*,” Strong's #7620, is a masculine noun meaning *seven; a week, a group of seven days or years. It indicates a unit of seven.*

This clarifies the real intended teaching of Lev.23:15 is to count off seven (7) full groups of seven (7) days each, for seven (7) full weeks – NOT to be

associated in any way with the weekly Sabbath! **Moses himself clarified it for us by his use of the word “sabua” in Deut.16!**

This is why Pentecost is called “Feast of Weeks,” NOT Feast of Sabbaths!

There’s another important point of clarification that Moses makes for us in Deut.16:9. Instead of saying the count is to be from the “morrow after the Sabbath” as in Lev.23, here Moses says the count is to commence “FROM THE TIME YOU BEGIN TO PUT THE SICKLE TO THE GRAIN!” This helps “explain” things wonderfully, as we will see shortly. Remember, it was the people who (at harvest) put the sickle to the grain. It was not a priestly duty.

**“HERE A LITTLE” (Ex 13:6),
“THERE A LITTLE” (Deut 16:8)
For a fuller picture of the Truth (Isa 28:9-10)!**

Here’s another often overlooked valuable lesson Moses gives us in Deut.16:8, “*Six days you shall eat Unleavened Bread...*” Why did Moses say they were to eat unleavened bread for “six days” here, when elsewhere it is commanded to be eaten for seven days? Compare these two passages from *Deuteronomy* and *Exodus*:

Deut 16:8 “Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a sacred assembly to the LORD your God....”

Ex 13:6 “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD.”

These two passages are nearly identical, save one says “six” and the other “seven.” Why did Moses say, “Six days you shall eat unleavened bread” in Deut.16:8, instead of seven? Do you know?

Careful examination of Lev.23:4-21, as well as the accounts in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, makes it clear that unleavened bread is indeed to be eaten for the full seven Days of Unleavened Bread. However, as was pointed out, on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, the bread from the previous year’s “OLD” grain would need to be used since the harvest of the new crop had

not yet taken place, and the firstfruits offering of an omer of grain had not yet been given. But as *Deuteronomy* says, the count would begin from the time the people put the sickle to the grain for the harvest, thus the firstfruits (plural) omer could be given to the priest (from the people) and offered up. This took place on the morrow after the first Holy Day, or on the second Day of Unleavened Bread – leaving “6 days” of Unleavened Bread remaining, in which they would eat unleavened bread of the newly harvested grain. Since the people were about to enter the Promised Land and begin to harvest crops, this clarifying knowledge in *Deuteronomy* was timely. This has been understood as a reconciling of these two passages – by those responsible for the oracles of God – from ancient times.

(4) R. Simeon b. Eleazar says, One verse says, Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, (5) whereas another verse says, Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread.(6) How are they to be reconciled?' [In this way:] you may not eat unleavened bread of the new produce the seven days. but you may eat unleavened bread of the new produce six days.(7) From the day that ye brought [the 'Omer of the waving]...shall ye number: (Talmud - Mas. Menachoth 66a:4-7)

This is the only clear explanation I have ever heard as to how to reconcile Ex.13:6 and Deut.16:8!

John Lightfoot also records how the Pharisees reconciled these two passages of Scripture. It is more evidence that the count for Pentecost from Lev.23:11,15 was to begin on the day after the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread – or the second Day of Unleavened Bread:

But the scribes, very differently [from the Sadducees], keep strictly to the **sixteenth day of the month of Nissan for offering the firstfruits** without any dispensation, **after the sabbatical day or the first day of the feast is over**. And amongst others by which they strengthen their opinion, those two different places of Scripture, **Exod. xii. 15, "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread,"** and **Deut. xvi. 8, "Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread,"** they, according to the sense they have, do thus reconcile, 'seven days, indeed, you shall eat unleavened bread;' that is, unleavened bread of the old wheat, on the first day of the feast, the sheaf being not yet offered; and unleavened bread of the new wheat, the remaining six days, after you have offered the firstfruits (pp. 23-24, vol. 4, **A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica**).

So let's now carefully consider some critical elements of Lev.23:4-21 and Deut.16:8-10;

- 1 The omer was to come from the HARVEST of the farmers from within the Promised Land. A harvest is just that – a harvesting of the crops, not merely an isolated ceremonial cutting. A **harvest requires WORK, and NO WORK was to be done on the Holy Day of Rest during Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:21)!**
- 2 An omer of the first and best of this harvested grain was prepared and presented TO the priest FROM the children of Israel. The priest did not harvest it. It was not from the priest. The priest offered and waved up the omer to God on behalf of the people.
- 3 The wave sheaf omer offering of shucked, prepared grain was an offering FROM THE PEOPLE, not from the priest, and it was of Israel's firstfruits (plural), not their firstfruit (singular). There was more than one piece or branch of grain, from more than one plant and from more than one field that made up the omer.
- 4 The context of this instruction to offer the omer and begin the count was after the Holy Sabbath of Unleavened Bread – **not the weekly Sabbath. If one believes the weekly Sabbath was suddenly referred to in verse 11, then the syntax of language would not govern, and one would not know which weekly Sabbath was meant.**
- 5 The word translated Sabbath here usually refers to the weekly Sabbath, but not always. According to many scholars, it can also refer to other annual Holy Days, and it can also mean week or weeks, as dictated by the context, as has been demonstrably proven above.
- 6 The people were told, "Count for yourselves" (Lev.23:15). While it was up to the priests to blow the trumpet announcing the arrival of the new moons and the Feast Days (Num.10:1-10), it is also pertinent for each of us to learn to number each day in anticipation and to properly count Pentecost.
- 7 The count was to commence **from** the day after the first annual Holy Day Sabbath of Unleavened Bread or Day of Rest, **to** the morrow after **seven (7) complete weeks**. It is not possible to have an "incomplete" Sabbath.
- 8 No new grain could be eaten until after the firstfruits omer of grain had been brought to the priests and offered up, on the morrow of (DAY AFTER) the first annual Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. Since God commanded us to eat Unleavened

Bread for all seven days (Ex.13:6, Lev.23:6), it was necessary that on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the previous year's "old" grain be used. After the omer of firstfruits was waved up on the second day of the Feast, that year's harvest of fresh grain could be used to make unleavened bread for the remaining 6 feast days! This, too, is an important element to remember.

- 9 The count was to begin "*from the time you [the people] put the sickle to the grain (Deut.19:9)*" at harvest time (Lev.23:10). This again, would necessitate that the count and harvest not begin on the Holy Day of Rest (Lev.23:14).
- 10 The important reconciliation of Ex.13:6 and Deut.16:8 helps further clarify Lev.23:11-15.

But there's still one more valuable and important point that we will see from the exegesis of Lev.23 and Deut.16. It will be shown concisely in the next chapter.

Remember, at the time of Jesus' first advent, the Hebrew calendar was still in the hands of the Sanhedrin and each month (new moon) was calculated (and confirmed by visual observation of the new moon from Judea). Because of this, Pentecost could fall on either Sivan 5, 6, or 7, so a count was necessary (Rosh Hashana 6b, *Talmud*).

But why all the talk in the Talmud about what happens when Passover falls on a Friday, as it periodically does?