

## CHAPTER 9

### HISTORICAL RECORDS OF TEMPLE PENTECOST CONCURRENT WITH ACTS 2 TIMEFRAME

*“But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” ~  
Jesus Christ*

**A**lfred Edersheim devoted much of his life to the study of the Temple services and ministry in the period from the Maccabees to the destruction of the Temple. Notice what he says about how Pentecost was historically counted during and prior to the New Testament dispensation:

The expression, ‘the morrow after the Sabbath’ (Lev.23:11), has sometimes been misunderstood as implying that the presentation of the so-called ‘first sheaf’ was to be always made on the day following the weekly Sabbath of the Passover-week. This view, adopted by the ‘Boethusians” and the Sadducees in the time of Christ, and by the Karaite Jews and certain modern interpreters, rests on a misinterpretation of the word “Sabbath’ (Lev.23:24, 32, 39). As in analogous allusions to other feasts in the same chapter, it means not the weekly Sabbath, but the day of the festival. The testimony of Josephus (Antiq. 3:248-249), of Philo (Op.ii. 294), and of Jewish tradition, leaves no room to doubt that in this instance we are to understand by the ‘Sabbath’ the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, on what ever day of the week it might fall. (*The Temple, Its*

*Ministry and Services*, by Alfred Edersheim, pages 203-204) (emphasis added)

Notice that Mr. Edersheim understood the word ‘Sabbath’ of Lev.23:11, to be the same word ‘Sabbath’ referred to in Lev.23:24, 32 and 39 where it is clearly referring to the Holy Sabbaths of Trumpets, Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. He wasn’t confused by the fact that his contemporary, James Strong, was about to attach a reference number to each word in the Bible, and in so doing would sometimes apply *more than one number* to the same root word – thereby confusing some. The scholars and historians, like Alfred Edersheim, who understood the Hebrew language and its syntax, also understood what the noted historian Edersheim explained when he said, “*as in analogous allusions to other feasts in the same chapter, it means not the weekly Sabbath, but the day of the festival.*” He wasn’t confused by a numbering system; he just studied the Hebrew and its structural context. Edersheim then concludes that there is “*no room to doubt that in this instance we are to understand by the ‘Sabbath’ the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan*”, historically the date from which Pentecost was numbered.

For those who have eyes to see, let them see.

So much history – so many facts! Because the minds of many have been entrenched in this error for so long a time, it makes it more difficult to “think outside their box.” Therefore, an abundance of evidence is provided.

It was God who told us to “BE CAREFUL” about giving special offerings to Him on the correct days – including Pentecost offerings!

*Num 28:2 "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.'*

God then details these appointed times. In verse 26 He speaks of the offering on the “Feast of Weeks” – not the feast of Sabbaths.

*Num 28:26 'Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work.*

### **JOSEPHUS – HOW PENTECOST WAS COUNTED BEFORE AND DURING HIS LIFETIME?**

But 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.” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, Chap. 10, section 5)

In the very next section Josephus continues:

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,... (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, Chap. 10, section 6)

My friends, these *are NOT* quotes of a commentator who opined after a couple of thousand years had elapsed! This is what historians of that day and region recorded as a matter of FACT and HISTORY.

While many are set on an A.D. 30 or 31 date for Jesus' crucifixion, virtually everyone agrees that Jesus Christ was crucified sometime between A.D. 29 and the mid-30s A.D. The beginning of the church in Acts 2 (on Pentecost), was in the same year as Christ's crucifixion. Do we have any DIRECT historical evidence of how Pentecost was counted in A.D. 31? YES! How about A.D. 29? YES! How about A.D. 28, 27 or 26? YES! How about A.D. 32, 33, 34 or 35? YES, YES, YES and YES!

As a matter of fact, we have historical evidence of how Pentecost was counted in the Temple dating BEFORE CHRIST, up to the 50s A.D!

## **THE WORKS OF PHILO JUDAEUS**

Philo lived from about 20 B.C. to about the mid-50s A.D. As a contemporary of both Jesus and the apostle Paul, he is recognized as being one of the most important Jewish historians and authors of second Temple Judaism. His life's work focused on HOW Temple service was carried out

during that era including during his lifetime. Notice what Philo recorded about how Temple Pentecost was counted while he was an adult historian – during the Acts 2 Temple administration:

(160) And also the day on which is offered the sheaf of corn, as an offering of gratitude for the fertility and productiveness of the plain, as exhibited in the fullness of the ears of corn. And that day of Pentecost, which is numbered from this day by seven portions of seven days... (PHILO, *The Decalogue*, Chap.30, section 160)

Note also that Philo says the count was by “seven portions of seven days” – not by the counting seven Sabbaths. Let’s see what else he says about how Pentecost was numbered in his lifetime:

(162) “There is also a festival on the day of the paschal feast, which succeeds the first day, and this is named the sheaf, from what takes place on it; for the sheaf is brought to the altar as a first fruit both of the country which the nation has received for its own, and also of the whole land; so as to be an offering both for the nation separately, and also a common one for the whole race of mankind; and so that the people by it worship the living God, both for themselves and for all the rest of mankind,...” (PHILO, *The Special Laws*, Chap.29, section 162)

Notice Philo states very clearly concerning Temple services during the days of Jesus and the apostles that the special offering of the sheaf was on the day “which succeeds the first day” of the “paschal feast” (Unleavened Bread). This

is an actual concurrent historical recording of Second Temple practices during the time of Christ! Philo would have been nearly 50 years old – well into his historical writing – by the time of Jesus’ death and resurrection, as well as that first great New Testament Pentecost of Acts 2! The sheaf or omer offering was waved up in Temple on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread during Jesus’ life on earth – the day after the first High Day, thus beginning the count toward Pentecost for a Sivan 5, 6 or 7 date.

The historical evidence and the new archaeological evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls is overwhelming! But that is not ALL the evidence, nor is it even the most compelling presented in this book. There is more Scriptural evidence from what became a popular and very widely used translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, often quoted from by Christ and His disciples in the New Testament – the SEPTUAGINT Bible! In the next chapter, we will explore this powerful Scriptural evidence from the Septuagint, and examine other clear Scriptural evidences from both the Old and New Testaments – ones that make it plain that Pentecost was counted from Nissan 16, the morrow after the first annual Holy Sabbath of Unleavened Bread – not from the weekly Sabbath.

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