

# *Feast of the Church*

## *Part #1*

(Sermon Notes)

By Warren Zehrung – 5/18/2013

When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, the disciples of Jesus Christ were all with one accord in one place.

### **Acts 2:**

- 1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- 2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as the roar of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

It sounded to them like a tornado going through the house and tearing it apart.

### **Acts 2:**

- 3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like **as** of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

It was not fire; but it looked like fire to them. We are unable to perceive God's Holy Spirit with any of our 5 senses – so God provided some bold physical manifestations for their benefit.

### **Acts 2:**

- 4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Almost two thousand years later we observe this holy convocation in the same manner – without the great sights and sounds of the original Pentecost – but God's Spirit is present – none the less.

Because we have been privileged to know of the Plan of God shown in His Holy Days, **we understand** that Pentecost pictures God's Holy Spirit being bestowed on the called out saints.

The Church of God came into existence as each individual person received God's Holy Spirit and became a child of God.

They were all changed – now led by God's Holy Spirit. Look at the change that took place in Peter. He was a pretty obnoxious and boisterous fellow before conversion. He was insufferable and rowdy. Jesus had to say to Peter, "Get you behind me satan" – because Peter was not entreatable. Peter denied Jesus three times while Jesus was going through His passion.

Read Acts two to see the change that came over Peter when he received God's Holy Spirit and became converted.

**Acts 2:**

**14** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

**16** But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

**17** And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

All these things occurred on the Feast of Pentecost – and we need to take note of the things that have happened in the past on Pentecost Days because God's Holy Days are "sign posts" in the Plan of God.

**Acts 2:**

**18** And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

And Peter preached a great sermon...

**Acts 2:**

**38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

**40** And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

**41** Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about **three thousand souls**.

It wasn't that Peter gave such a powerful sermon – it was the Will of God and the workings of His Holy Spirit. So we see that the Church of God began to grow mightily – and it did. In our day – many of us have seen the Church numbers swell greatly.

But, let me ask you this: Why? Why did God send His Holy Spirit? What is the purpose of all these Church brethren? How does this fit into the Plan of God? How does the Feast of Pentecost fit into the Plan of God?

Early in the work of Herbert W. Armstrong the church had two great gatherings every year. They met for the Spring Holy Days and they came together – as we do today – for the Fall holy Days.

Today we will begin to look at Pentecost as the "**Feast of the Church.**" That is my title of this sermon today – because I want us to understand the importance of this central – in the Plan of God – **pivotal** Feast around which the Feast days revolve.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the great ingathering harvest of the world, but the Feast of Weeks – Pentecost – is the **Feast of the Church.**

### **Exodus 23:**

**16** And [speaking of Pentecost] the **feast of harvest**, the **firstfruits** of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field: and [then speaking of the Feast of Tabernacles] the **feast of ingathering**, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field.

As God's Church has grown in understanding, the details of Pentecost have become clearer to us as Jesus said they would.

Jesus said that the Comforter which is the Holy Spirit would teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance (John 14:26).

With God's help, there is no end to learning the truths contained in the Bible. The Bible is a gold mine of Spiritual Truth – we are not able in a life-time to see all the wonderful truth God has placed at our fingertips.

There are ways to dig the truth out of the Bible. Psalm 111 gives us one technique for finding God's truth.

### **Psalm 111:**

**10** The reverence of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that keep His Commandments: His praise endures forever.

If we do not live Christian lives with all our might and with the help of God's Holy Spirit – we will not understand God's Word. The more we put the Scriptures together in Faith – the more we are able to see and understand of the Plan of God.

I believe that one of the greatest gifts God gave to Herbert W. Armstrong was the knowledge of the Holy Days – and how they subsequently reveal the step-by-step Plan of God. Mr. Armstrong and His wife Loma did not understand the Plan of God when they first began to observe the Holy Days. No! Not at all!

At first, they kept the Feasts of the Lord as best they could – **out of obedience** to God. Slowly – but surely – they began to understand the timing, the analogies, the types and the symbolism that the Holy Scriptures incorporate.

The Feast of Passover led them to better understand Repentance.

Unleavened Bread taught them to come out of **sin** – a type and figure of Egypt. All the Holy Days reveal the Truth of God that the world is blind to.

### **Mark 4:**

**11** And [Jesus quoting Isaiah 6:9] said unto them, Unto you **it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God:** but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.

**12** That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Brethren, unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God.

Let's take into account the knowledge, the types, the allegories, the timing, and the symbolism that we have come to understand in order to increase our comprehension of the overall picture and meaning of the Feast of Pentecost.

Let's put all the Scriptures together – a little here – a little there – precept upon precept (Isaiah 28:10).

Do we realize that God has never done this with **a people** before – create them into His Children. We are a privileged people!

### **1 Peter 2:**

**9** You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a special select people; that ye should **show forth the praises of Him** who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Out of the multiple billions on people on earth, God is sharing His Truth with us that *His Holy Name* be magnified. We are privileged and blessed to have been called to be the **firstfruits** of God's spiritual creation – being made unto His image – even eventually unto His spiritual eternal life.

At this time we are **a work in progress** – not yet complete – not yet like Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

### **Genesis 1:**

**26** And God said, Let us make man in **Our image**, after our likeness.

Some people say, "God looks just like us – nose, eyes, ears, etc. That is backward – that is making God like us – not us like God.

### 1 John 3:

2 Beloved, **now** [already] are we the sons of God, and it does **not yet** appear what we shall be: [a change to spirit beings needs to take place] but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; [not Him like us – but we shall be like Him] for we shall see Him as He is.

We will see God – not with **physical eyes** – but with **spiritual eyes** of understanding and godly wisdom... Seeing His Justice, His Mercy, His Faithfulness, His Compassion, and His Love.

It is about understanding the heart, mind, attitude, and Spirit of God. We shall be **like Him** – and a great change yet needs to take place in us – and that is what the Feast of Pentecost pictures.

This process of our spiritual development is shown by Pentecost and the events surrounding Pentecost – up to the final Pentecost before Christ Returns.

Let's look at some of the Scriptural points that we have come to know so that we might better understand the ramifications of the Feast of Pentecost within the Plan of God.

The Sabbath Day, at the end of the week, is the beginning of our **spiritual creation**.

### Genesis 2:

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

The entire **physical** creation was complete – and yet something was missing.

### Genesis 2:

2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the **seventh** day from all his work which he had made.

God is the author of the "week" which the entire world utilizes. The **sun** gives us the day. The **moon** gives us the month. The **stars** gives us the year. But God gave mankind the **week**. The week is not found in nature. Why did God give mankind the **week**?

### Genesis 2:

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and **sanctified it**: [set it apart and made it holy] because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

The very first thing God did in bringing many sons and daughters to Glory – was to **begin** the **spiritual creation** for mankind.

\*\*Pentecost – as we shall see – pictures the **completion** of the Spiritual Creation when we, the Children of God, become full-fledged members of the **Spiritual, Eternal** Family of God.

When we shall be **like** Him; When we shall see Him as He **is**.

### **Mark 2:**

**27** And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Our being Spiritually created will not be complete until we are spiritual beings in the eternal family of God.

### **John 3:**

**5** Jesus answered Nicodemus, Truly, truly, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the **Spirit**, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

**6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

Brethren, when will the process of our being spiritually created be complete? The Scriptures spell it all out – if we will have the eyes to see and the ears to hear.

### **Philippians 1:**

**6** Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Notice that: "He which hath begun a good work in you." God has called us and given us a token of His Spirit. And we are assured that He will completely perform that process of our **Spiritual creation** in the day of Jesus Christ. That – as we shall see – will be on that final Pentecost before Jesus returns to this earth.

Great and wonderful events occur on God's Holy Days.

Jesus Christ is the **first of the firstfruits**. The fact that He is "**First**" indicates clearly that there will be **more** firstfruits.

### **1 Corinthians 15:**

**23** But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward [more firstfruits] they that are Christ's **at His coming**.

"At His coming" – there is the timing once again. The saints are also firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

### **James 1:**

**18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a **kind of firstfruits** of His creation.

**Revelation 14:**

**4** These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, **being the firstfruits unto God** and to the Lamb.

The **Wave Sheaf and Pentecost** are connected by the **counting of "seven" weeks**. None of the other Feasts of God are connected by counting – they are fixed dates on God's Sacred Calendar.

**Leviticus 23:**

**9** And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying...

The Children of Israel have recently been delivered from Egyptian bondage. But God gives them instructions and knowledge that they are not to implement UNTIL they come into the Promised Land. Notice.

**Leviticus 23:**

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

We have learned that this "sheaf of the firstfruits" represents the resurrected Jesus Christ. Brethren, are we wise enough to utilize the **timing**, the analogies, the types and the **symbolism** that the Holy Scriptures incorporate – in order to comprehend the deeper meanings that God has for us? This "sheaf of the firstfruits" represents the resurrected Jesus Christ.

**Leviticus 23:**

**11** And he [the priest] shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

**12** And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an **he lamb** without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord.

The resurrected Jesus Christ was the first of the firstfruits offering during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

**Leviticus 23:**

**13** And the meal offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour **mingled with oil**, [Oil represents God's Holy Spirit] an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savor: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin.

The early spring harvest could not begin until this ritual had been accomplished.

This ceremony shows us **in type** that Jesus is the beginning of the spiritual harvest – He is the firstfruits of the spiritual harvest.

**Leviticus 23:**

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

Next – as we continue here – we will see something remarkable. We will see how Pentecost – our Feast – is perfectly connected to Jesus Christ the Wave Sheaf offering. The number “seven” pictures spiritual perfection in the Scriptures.

**Leviticus 23:**

**15** And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths (weeks ending with the Sabbath) shall be complete.

Today – the day before Pentecost – is day number 49. [**Seven times seven**].

**Leviticus 23:**

**16 Even** unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; [That is where the Greeks get the name Pentecost] and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

After seven complete weeks (seven weeks of seven days) from the Wave Sheaf day we come to Pentecost, the fiftieth day. That is this evening at sunset. Pentecost begins this evening. Today will complete the **bracketed** seven weeks – that is what this is all about. Bracketed between the Sabbath prior to the Wave Sheaf and the Day of Pentecost.

These seven weeks picture a complete and perfect TIME for spiritual completion. When the seven weeks are fulfilled – it is Pentecost. Yes, it is the fiftieth day – but it comes at the completion of the seven times seven weeks.

**Deuteronomy 16:**

**9** Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou begin to put the sickle to the corn.

**Exodus 34:**

**22** And thou shalt observe the **Feast of Weeks**, [Feast of Pentecost] of **the firstfruits** of wheat harvest, and the **Feast of Ingathering** [Feast of Tabernacles] at the year's end.

Let's continue in Leviticus – where we have come to the Day of Pentecost – and we will see much more symbolism here.

**Leviticus 23:**

**17** Ye shall bring out of your habitations **two wave loaves** of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with **leaven**; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord.

The **two wave loaves** – that is **us**, brethren. The **two wave loaves** of fine flour represent the **firstfruits to God** of the harvest. Remember, Jesus Christ – the First of the first fruits has been presented 50 days prior to this – and yet, we too are considered by God to be of His firstfruits... they are the firstfruits unto the Lord [also].

These two loaves represent those who will be in the first resurrection from the **Old Testament** and those who will be in the first resurrection from the **New Testament**. Brethren, who is our High Priest today? Jesus Christ, correct? Let's keep this question in mind as we come to a better understanding of what these verses were **prophesying for us**.

**Leviticus 23:**

**20** And the priest [**Jesus Christ** is our High Priest today] shall wave them [Just as Jesus was waved – presented to the Father] with the bread of the firstfruits [**that is us – the Church brethren**] for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

While we are laying this Scriptural foundation for the Feast of Pentecost – let's take a look at some of the other occurrences that took place in conjunction with Pentecost in the Old Testament. We are told to study the Bible in this manner. Paul put it this way:

**1 Corinthians 10:**

**11** Now all these things happened unto them [the folks in the Old Testament] for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

We have long been taught that God gave the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai on the Feast of Pentecost.

How did we know that? Well – again big things happen on God’s appointed Feast Days. That is why the beloved apostle John used the holy Days in the public ministry of Jesus Christ for his gospel outline. He simply followed Jesus’ life from one Holy Day to the next.

The Scriptures give us the timing of the Old Testament **marriage covenant** and the giving of the Law of God on Pentecost after the Children of Israel left Egyptian bondage.

**Exodus 19:**

- 1** In the **third month**, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

These timing points are important to us – but not to the world. Jesus said:

**John 12:**

- 40** He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

Passover was in the middle of the first month. There are **two weeks** in the first month - then **four weeks** in the second month as we come to the third month - six weeks have passed...

**Exodus 19:**

- 2** For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. [mount Sinai]
- 3** And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel.

It would be a good study – but I think that Moses made the **climb up mount Sinai** at least six times – and the Bible does not tell us exactly how long it took him. Could Moses go up and down twice in the same day – the Scriptures don’t tell us. But we have to be getting close to **six and a half weeks**... We can figure it out because we have the Holy Days to guide us.

**Exodus 19:**

- 4** Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Eagles' wings are not to be understood literally – are they? The Israelites did not actually fly on eagles' wings – but they had God’s protection and guidance as He delivered them.

**Exodus 19:**

- 5** Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a very special treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.
- 6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.
- 7** And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.
- 8** And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken **we will do**. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.

This is preparatory to the marriage covenant – Israel is agreeing to enter into a covenant with God where again they will say “I do.”

**Exodus 19:**

- 9** And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord.
- 10** And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.

At this point in Exodus we are only **three days** out from the Day of Pentecost.

**Exodus 19:**

- 11** And be ready against the **third day**: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

**Exodus 19:**

- 16** And it came to pass on the **third day** in the morning, that there were thunders and lightning's, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the **trumpet exceeding loud**; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

Notice that the trumpet was exceeding loud. We will see that point mentioned again – because that is a very important Trumpet. These words of God are not superfluous. They are there so we can put God's Plan all together and understand it. .

**Exodus 19:**

- 17** And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp **to meet with God**; and they stood at the nether part of the mount
- 18** And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.
- 19** And when the voice of the **trumpet sounded long**, and waxed **louder and louder**, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice.

And then in Exodus we find the giving of the Law of God on Pentecost – the Ten Commandments that tell us how to live Godly lives with Godly love. Jesus, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 said:

**Matthew 4:**

- 4** ... It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Paul said:

**Romans 7:**

- 12** Wherefore the **law is holy**, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

**Romans 7:**

- 14** For we know that the **law is spiritual**.

The Old Testament **marriage covenant** took place in conjunction with the Feast of Pentecost.

**Exodus 24:**

- 1** And [the Lord] said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.
- 2** And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: [Remember, Moses is a type of the Messiah] but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.
- \* **3** And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said "**we will do.**"

That is what you say when you enter into a Marriage Covenant. We will see that this Marriage Covenant is fully ratified in just a moment. And again, this Marriage Covenant is taking place in conjunction with all the other events of Pentecost.

**Exodus 24:**

- 4** And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
- 5** And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.

They are “cutting a covenant in blood” – none of the terms or conditions can be changed.

**Exodus 24:**

- 6** And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.
- 7** And he took the **book of the covenant**, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, **All that the LORD hath said will we do**, and be obedient.

There it is – the Marriage Covenant of the Old Covenant is endorsed, ratified and signed off on. The blood sealed the Marriage Covenant with God.

**Exodus 24:**

- 8** And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the **blood of the covenant**, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

Next, God is going to reveal an incredible thing that took place on Pentecost. It is a picture and a prophecy of the ultimate Marriage Supper that is going to take place – also on a future Pentecost.

**Exodus 24:**

- 9** Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel.
- 10** And **they saw the God of Israel**: [All I can say is Wow!] and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

There is the God of Israel – Jesus Christ – and at His feet a “Paved work.” The Hebrew renders this by implication to be transparent flooring. It was as clear as the sky on a brilliant day – and yet it was tinted as a sapphire stone.

Jesus is too brilliant to look upon with human eyes. God had to provide a way that the elders could look up through this “tinted glass shield” to be able to look at Him and not be blinded. Let’s look at that in Revelation 1 – but hold your place here in Exodus 24 – because we will come back here and finish up Part 1 of this Pentecost sermon “Feast of the Church.”

Some you know that I used to have a welding shop. Welders use a helmet with a dark shield for viewing their work. The shield is needed to protect the eyes from the 5,000 to 6,000 degree electric arc that is melting the steel. I cannot tell you how brilliant steel is at that temperature – it is just like the surface of the sun in brightness.

When the arc is first struck – or when it is broken at the end of a pass – the temperatures can easily approach 10,000 degrees for a split second – but it is enough to cause blisters on the eyes of a careless worker nearby. God has a spirit formed shield from to protect the elders from His brilliance. These verses are speaking of the resurrected **Glorified Jesus Christ**.

### **Revelation 1:**

**13** And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

**14** His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

**15** And his feet like unto fine brass, as if **they burned in a furnace**;[there is your molten metal analogy] and his voice as the sound of many waters.

\*Back to Exodus 24 where I want to ask you the question, “Why does God give us this narration of an event that took place on the Pentecost of the Marriage Covenant?”

### **Exodus 24:**

**11** And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also **they saw God, and did eat and drink**.

That is a type of the marriage supper at God’s throne that will take place on the final Pentecost before the return of Jesus Christ.

Tomorrow is Pentecost and we will have Part 2 of “Feast of the Church.”

End: “Feast of the Church” Part 1