



**Church of God Fellowship
Sermon Summary**

The Wavesheaf Ceremony

By Harold Smith

Church of God Fellowship

Sermon Summary

The Wavesheaf Ceremony

By Harold Smith

God never intended everything in the Bible to be understood by everyone in this age. If His intention were for everyone to be able to understand, He would have made it perfectly clear and perfectly plain in the pages of the Scripture. God is not inhibited when it comes to making things clear. So there is a reason. There is a purpose. There are many veiled things. There are many symbolic things which we find reported in the Scripture.

So God isn't always plain. He has revealed His intention is to keep certain things rather obscure and vague. One scriptural passage which indicates this is found in Matthew 13, in the parable of the sower. Here Jesus gave the parable; and immediately after, He makes the statement in verse 9:

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
(Matthew 13:9)

Now, the statement "let him who has ears hear" indicates that not everyone has ears.

"And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?'" (Matthew 13:10)

"Why are You using these analogies, these various stories that you have? Why not just come right out and tell it the way it is?"

He answered and said to them, *"Because it has been given to you..."* (Matthew 13:11a)

The "you" here is His disciples. "It has been

given to **you.**" The disciples are those who God has specially called and specially designated. He has selected them above all others.

"It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 13:11b)

There are mysteries. There are things that are not clear. A mystery is something that is vague, that has hidden meaning.

"It has been given to you [My disciples] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." (Matthew 13:11b)

So only His disciples were privileged to know the mysteries of God's plan and purpose. It is not God's intent, presently, to let everyone know those things. Now let's skip down to verse 16, where He emphasizes the blessing of being able to understand.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. (Matthew 13:16)

Your eyes are blessed, because you can read with understanding. Your ears are blessed, because you can understand what you hear.

For assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (Matthew 13:17)

"Many," He says. Many of the prophets and

the wise men who preceded His disciples of that day, who preceded Jesus' first coming, wanted to have a better understanding; but it wasn't allowed them to have that understanding. It was cut off to them even though they greatly desired to know.

Daniel is an excellent example of this. Daniel said, "Well, I don't understand. Help me to understand." Yet, God instructed him, "Daniel, you don't need to understand this. You are going to the grave. You will be dead for a long time before many of these things happen. So these things are sealed up, Daniel, until the time of the end. You are not privileged to know."

And, of course, Daniel wasn't the only one. There were other prophets, righteous men and wise individuals which God called, but did not allow them to see and understand. However, in spite of the fact they weren't always allowed to understand, they did receive many revelations—major revelations. Some of those "insights" God gave them through revelations were understood. The prophets understood what they meant. But others were not understandable. And, hence, the reason that Jesus says what He does here.

The 7000 Year Plan

In the book of Genesis, as we begin chapter 1 and continue through the third verse of chapter 2, we find that God reveals the manner in which He created the period of time designated as "the week". After Genesis 1:1, this particular section of scripture is revealing how God re-created, or restructured, life from a state of ruin—from *tohu va bohu*, as the Hebrew states. Everything **became** that way. It wasn't that way initially. God brought everything into being in perfect order, and the earth was habitable; but things happened which made it uninhabitable.

We then read about how God designated one, two, three, four, five, six, seven days. Those seven days were the first week. What we are

told is that God completed everything He wanted to complete in a period of one week. There is a lot of symbolism contained from Genesis 1:2 through 2:3! The entire plan of God is laid out **within** that seven-day period. He tells us exactly how His plan will unfold. But that information has not been "given" very plainly. It's been cloaked in symbolism. In that revelation, God reveals His plan will be completed in a seven-day period.

Now, this information about the creation of the first week may have first been preserved by the prophet Abel. That's very possible, because he was a prophet. So maybe he was the one who recorded it. Then that information was transmitted, generation after generation, to Noah—who brought it through the flood. Eventually it reached Moses; and Moses used some of those records after the flood, after God called him, in order to give us what we have. Or, God could simply have revealed it all to Moses without anything—although it seems fairly clear there were records that Moses used, for instance, "the genealogy of Adam", "the generations of the sons of Noah." We have certain genealogies, family histories, which seem to be records that had been preserved.

Either way, the creation of the seven-day week had tremendous symbolism regarding the plan God has for mankind. He begins the Bible talking about His plan, and He emphasizes that plan is to be completed in **seven days**. Let's understand. There is not an eighth day mentioned here—just seven days.

Moses also recorded the promise of a Messiah, which God gave in Genesis 3:15. There is a Messiah prophesied there. This Messiah was to rescue mankind from the sentence of death. The sentence of death came because man disobeyed God. The Messiah was to come in order to release, or rescue, mankind from that sentence of death. When? **Before the week of God's plan was completed, the Messiah would come!** Not after the week was over, but sometime **during** the

week of God's plan, the Messiah was to come.

Moses was also privileged to be given the understanding of the resurrection from death. He was given that information in conjunction with the comprehension that **each day of the week represents 1,000 years in the plan of God**. Moses recorded the plan of God in the seven days of the creation of the week (in Genesis 1 and 2). And then Moses understood that each one of those days was symbolic of 1,000 years each—for a total of 7,000 years.

Now how do we know that? Look at Psalm 90. We read in the subtitle that this is "a prayer of Moses the man of God." This psalm, which was written by Moses, was placed at this juncture in the book of the Psalms—because this is the leading, the introductory psalm to the fourth book of the five books of the psalms.

LORD, [Moses said] You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. [Notice this.] You turn man [and from the RSV] back to the dust. (Psalm 90:1-3a)

That's exactly what Moses wrote in Genesis 3. God said, "Because you've sinned, 'Dust you are and to dust you shall return.'" So Moses is privy to the fact that after death the human body decomposes and goes back to the physical elements of which the earth is composed.

You turn man back to the dust, and [once he is dead, once he has gone back to the dust] say, "Return, you children of men." (Psalm 90:3)

Moses understood the resurrection—that man, once he was dead, would return from the dead. But notice what else he says. This resurrection doesn't happen immediately--because then he gives us insight, and he says:

For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night. (Psalm 90:4)

Moses is connecting the resurrection to some-

time in the "days" of a thousand years each. It doesn't tell us which one. Maybe Moses himself was not privy to which one it was; but he did understand something about a "day" equaling 1,000 years.

Now, Moses may have been told this information—that a "day" equals 1,000 years. He may have been given that ratio outright by God. God could have told him at one of the times when He was spending time talking to Moses on top of Mt. Sinai—maybe when he went up and fasted forty days and forty nights, on one of those several occasions. Or, Moses may have deduced this ratio based upon the statement God made to Adam about the penalty for disobedience. God told Adam, "***in the day that you eat of it*** [the forbidden tree] *you shall surely die.*"

Adam didn't die in that twenty-four hour period. Adam lived to be 930 years old. But he did die in that "**day.**" And maybe it just so happens that Moses understood: "Well, if Adam lived to be 930, and he still died in **the day** that he ate thereof—then **1,000 years must equal a day.**" Had Adam lived another 71 years, he would have lived into "day two;" and God didn't allow that to happen. God never allowed any human being to live to be 1,000 years old. A lot of them lived to be into their 900s, but none lived to be 1,000 years of age.

The apostle Peter later clarified this understanding—for those who have ears to hear. He comes right out and says:

With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8)

There are people today who say, "Oh, he doesn't mean that. That's just a generalization." Those people, brethren, do not have ears to hear. Only certain ones do. We can read that and believe what God says, because of the faith of Christ that we've been privileged to receive. But there are others who read that information, and they scoff at it. But

one day is with the Lord as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years as one day. And, again, we go back and connect that to the creation of the week, and we find that there are 7,000 years involved. That is important for us to understand, especially regarding the subject matter we are about to cover. Back in Psalm 90:13, look at what Moses went on to say.

Return, O LORD, how long? (Psalm 90:13a)

Now, he knew something about the Lord returning to man, because the Lord cut man off. After man's sin, He sent him out of the garden. God was to return to man. "Return, O LORD! How long?" Moses understood this resurrection could not occur unless the Lord returned. What **day** would the Lord return? He goes on to say (in the RSV), "*Have pity on Your servants!*" Then...

O satisfy us early with Your mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. (Psalm 90:14)

"Satisfy us early with Your mercy." Is that mercy a reference to His return and the establishing of His kingdom? That could be the mercy of which he is speaking. Or it may be the mercy of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made to pay the penalty to make possible the resurrection from dust. Maybe that is to what it is referring. All of that information we are not given. Here we find Moses appeals to God to send the Messiah **early** in His plan—before the "week" concludes. That is, before the 7,000 years comes to an end.

There was more information God gave to the prophets—some of which was understood, and some which was not. Later on, hundreds of years after this, God revealed through the prophet David that the prophesied Messiah would be required to be crucified. It's unlikely David understood that when he wrote Psalm 22. But in Psalm 22:16, it is revealed His hands and His feet were to be pierced. That referred to crucifixion. The Messiah was to be crucified.

God later gave Isaiah further understanding

about the need for the Messiah to be pierced, to shed His blood, and to literally fulfill the symbolism of the Passover lambs. That is found in Isaiah 53. And so, little by little, God kept giving further revelation—further understanding. But all that God was telling the prophets was to fit within the seven "days"—within the 7,000 years.

The Sign of Jonah

Now God narrowed down the years when the Messiah's sacrifice could occur by an event that happened to the prophet Jonah. We are told by the example of Jonah that the Messiah could not come in just any year. There was a specific year. And it only happens so many times in a given cycle of the calendar that God has established.

However, it does not seem that Jonah himself understood the full ramifications of what he went through in the belly of the great fish. As a matter of fact, we don't know if any of the prophets understood this before Jesus Himself made a statement directed to some of the religious leaders of His day.

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:40)

Jesus stated to His disciples that He was to remain in the grave for three days and three nights after His burial, before He could exit the tomb. That's what He said. "I must be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth before I can come forth from the tomb." This did play a significant role in the timing of a special harvest ceremony, to which we will come shortly.

The 70 Weeks Prophecy

After Jonah another two centuries passed before God pinpointed the exact year when the Messiah would appear. Remember, Moses wanted Him to appear "early." And God finally

revealed through Daniel when that year would be. It came in response to a prayer Daniel had prayed—because Daniel had read what Jeremiah had written about the seventy years that must be accomplished on Jerusalem. Daniel read that information, and afterward prayed to God for understanding. He wanted to understand exactly what this “seventy years” meant.

In response, God revealed that the final desolation of Jerusalem would not occur until after many, many centuries elapsed. And prior to that end, the Messiah would appear. All of this was in response to Daniel’s prayer. Let’s notice a couple of verses in Daniel 9. Gabriel, who was sent by God to answer Daniel’s prayer, told him:

Seventy weeks are determined upon your people... (Daniel 9:24a)

The question Daniel had was about “seventy years.” But when Gabriel answers, his response is about “seventy weeks,” which actually means **seventy times seven years** in the Hebrew. So there are seventy years times seven—490 years which would take place in the desolations of Jerusalem. This was something Jeremiah was not privy to when he recorded that prophecy. Yet, Daniel is given the understanding that it is not just seventy years, but is, in fact, **seventy years of weeks**.

Seventy weeks [or, seventy times seven years] are determined upon your people and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (Daniel 9:24)

The main emphasis of this seventy weeks concerns God’s chosen people and the city of Jerusalem—because it says “Daniel, your people.” Daniel’s people are the Jews. “Your holy city...” Daniel’s holy city certainly wasn’t Babylon, where he was; but rather it was Jerusalem. The list of what is accomplished, which is

mentioned here in verse 24 (to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness), all of these things would not be fully accomplished **until** the seventy weeks are completed. This is what Daniel is told, and Gabriel goes on:

Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince [that is, until the coming of the Messiah who is the Prince] There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. (Daniel 9:25a)

7 + 62 = 69. There will be sixty-nine weeks, total, before the Messiah appears.

The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. (Daniel 9:25b)

When was this command to restore and build Jerusalem given? The command was issued by Artaxerxes I, in the year 457 B.C. There is an excellent book written in 1953, called *The Chronology of Ezra 7*. It was written by two Seventh Day Adventist scholars, who proved conclusively that 457 B.C. was the year. There is no argument. There are no “ifs, ands, or buts”—457 B.C. was the seventh year of Artaxerxes I. And when reading the book of Ezra, we find very clearly it was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes when this command was given for the city of Jerusalem to be rebuilt.

So the starting point of the sixty-nine weeks until the Messiah is 457 B.C. There are 483 years in sixty-nine weeks (of years), $69 \times 7 = 483$. Therefore, a total of 483 years would elapse from the going forth of the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah appeared. When 483 is added to a minus 457 (because it is 457 B.C.), the result is A.D. 26. A flaw in the established dating method is the absence of the year “0”—hence, a year must be added to the 26—making the 483rd year A.D. 27, which was the year the Messiah was to appear. Indeed, the Fall of A.D. 27 **was** the time when Jesus Christ’s public ministry began.

Now, we go on in this particular prophecy:

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off [That is the seven and sixty-two weeks. He will be cut off.], *but not for Himself.* (Daniel 9:26a)

“Cut off” means “put to death.” He would be put to death.

Then He shall confirm [That is, after the 69 weeks, He comes and He confirms] *a covenant with many for one week.* (Daniel 9:27a)

One week is **seven years**. He will confirm a covenant for **one week** with many. Then:

But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. (Daniel 9:27b)

That is, in the middle of “the week” He shall bring an end to the sacrifices and offerings. Now, “in the middle of the week” is half-way through seven years. For 3½ years He was to confirm the covenant before He would be cut off. He would confirm the covenant with **many** (that is, many disciples) for one week. He would confirm the New Covenant, the terms of which are laid out in Matthew 5-7. So 3 ½ years added to the Fall of A.D. 27 brings us to the Spring of A.D. 31. The Spring of A.D. 31 is 3 ½ years into the ministry of Jesus during the time that He confirmed the covenant with many.

This prophecy places A.D. 27 as the year Messiah would appear, and places the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (the time of the shedding of His blood and the atoning of sin) in the Spring of A.D. 31. That is **very important**, because there are only two years during His ministry [A.D. 30 and A.D. 31] when what was said about Jonah (and the application of “the sign of Jonah”) could **fit** the conditions Jesus specified for the Messiah.

Harvests Provide Overview of God’s Plan

Not only did God reveal many keys needed to identify the Messiah to the prophets, God also

gave the people as a whole **an overview** of His plan and purpose—through the yearly harvest periods. So He gave the prophets certain specific information, but gave the general overview of His plan through the harvest festivals of every year. In fact, it was through the instruction God gave to His people about harvesting that He revealed the absolute identity of the true Messiah. Let’s notice this.

Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest: in earing time and in harvest you shall rest. (Exodus 34:21)

Whether you have a lot to do or very little to do, you are to rest. You can’t use the excuse, “Well, I have too much to do. I can’t rest now.” God says, “It doesn’t matter.” Earing time or harvest—whether things are slack or whether things are hectic, you still must rest.

But notice, the first thing God does in this verse is emphasize the weekly cycle of seven. The weekly seven-day cycle is emphasized before He goes any further. By emphasizing the seven-day weekly cycle at this point, He is showing that man has been given **seven complete days**--not partial, but seven complete days. On the last one of those days, God is fully present—because it was on the seventh day that He rested and placed His Presence on **the seventh day**. So this section which explains “harvest times” begins by emphasizing the seven-day week.

And you shall observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year’s end. (Exodus 34:22)

There are two specific periods of harvesting mentioned here. They symbolize the manner in which God will fulfill His plan—how God will harvest humanity, and bring mankind back into a relationship with Him. God goes on to stipulate the need to bring the very first cutting of the grain from the first harvest to the temple—to the priest:

The first of the firstfruits of your land... (Exodus 34:26a)

Verse 22 mentioned the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, which is the firstfruits' harvest. Of that harvest, only **the first** of the firstfruits was to be considered for this ceremony. That is, the very first of the first harvest of your land.

...you shall bring unto the house of the LORD your God. (Exodus 34:26b)

The manner in which this was to be done is spelled out more clearly in Leviticus 23. God, speaking to Moses, makes the statement:

*Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning **the feasts of the LORD**, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations [or, sacred assemblies], even these are **My feasts**. (Leviticus 23:2)*

God makes this statement about His feasts. What is the first thing He addresses?

Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation [a day of sacred assembly]; you shall do no work therein. It is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. (Leviticus 23:3)

By beginning His revelation about His feasts being associated with the Sabbath, the first thing God does is point us back to the Sabbath--the culmination of the seven-day week. By doing this, God links the completion of all that is symbolized by the feasts **within** His seven-day plan. In other words, He says, "Here is the week. The seventh day is special. All of My harvest will originate within this week."

These are the feasts of the LORD. (Leviticus 23:4a)

He doesn't specifically say the Sabbath is a feast in the same way as the days which are delineated in the remainder of this chapter. It is a weekly feast. We do look at it that way. But He mentions the Sabbath, and then He comes back in verse 4 and says:

These [meaning, what is to follow] **are the feasts** of the LORD, even holy convocations,

which you shall proclaim in their seasons. (Leviticus 23:4)

There are three festival seasons in the year according to Deuteronomy 16. The first festival season in the Spring is the **beginning** of the firstfruits' harvest. The second festival season in the early summer is the **conclusion** of the firstfruits' harvest. Then, the third season in the Fall of the year (as we saw in Exodus 34) is the end of the **final** harvest of the year. All three seasons are connected with harvest periods.

*In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the **Lord's** Passover. (Leviticus 23:5)*

So the first thing that God tells us about is the Passover. The sacrifice of the Passover is on the fourteenth day. That's how it all begins. Without that sacrifice—which is a reference to the sacrifice of the Messiah—it would be impossible for the rest of the plan to unfold.

And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days you must eat unleavened bread. In the first day you shall have an holy convocation: you shall do no servile [regular] work therein. But you shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: you shall do no servile [regular] work therein. (Leviticus 23:6-8)

We find that the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the seven days of Unleavened Bread—constitute the **first season**. This first season is the beginning point of the firstfruits' harvest. That harvest begins within this festival season.

And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 'When you be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits...'" (Leviticus 23:9-10a)

This is the wording of the KJV, and most of the translations have it this way. Marginal

notes in many Bibles, point out the Hebrew word for "sheaf" is **omer**. It is not a sheaf in the way we usually think of it. We think of a sheaf as being grain on stalks which are tied together and cut with a sickle, which are then taken to the threshing floor where the heads of grain are knocked off, the chaff blown away, then the kernels collected and sacked (such as in the book of Ruth). But the word here is not referring to that type of "sheaf". It is the word **omer**. An omer is a dry measure—approximately 2½ to 3 quarts.

Again we read, "*When you come into the land which I [God] give to you, and you reap **its harvest** [i.e., the crop growing on that land], then you are to bring an **omer** of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.*" This is just as we saw, in a brief introduction, in Exodus 34:26.

God expected Israel to follow this instruction from the time they entered the Land of Promise, and for every year thereafter while they remained in the land. "*When you come into the land*"—the very year you enter, and every year thereafter--when it is time for the harvest, the first thing that must be done is make one of these offerings of a special early cutting. And only a very small cutting, it is to be.

Since God gave **them** the land [He says here, "*The land which I gave to you*"], it was their land. It was no longer the land of the Canaanites. The time of the "iniquity of the Amorites" [Genesis 15:16] had been completed. The land now belonged to Israel. Canaanites and all other people who lived on that land were now squatters. The land was God's land, and God gave it to Israel. Whatever was growing on that land now belonged to the owners of that land--Israel. God gave Israel title to the land. Any crops that had been planted [it didn't matter who planted them] were their crops. And God told them to, "*reap its harvest*".

The Elevated Omer

First of all they were to cut just enough stalks of grain to produce the "omer" or "Wavesheaf". This was to be done within the first hour after the setting of the sun.

And he [the priest] shall wave the sheaf before the LORD... (Leviticus 23:11a)

This doesn't mean to take the bundle of grain and wave it in a back and forth motion. It means **to elevate** [as the Tanakh translation has it properly rendered]. The "wave" was to be an up and down motion. The word in the Hebrew literally means "to lift", "to elevate." Raise it, then lower it. So it is the **elevated omer**. That's what the Wavesheaf offering is. It is an elevated omer. It is to be elevated. And, of course, it can't be held up forever; so it will be brought back down.

This was the Wavesheaf—the elevated omer—performed by the priest "*to be accepted for you*". The priest is offering this to God, for God to accept on your behalf. When?

On the morrow [or, the day] after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:11b)

"The day **after the Sabbath.**" God told us about the Sabbath in verse 3. It is the seventh day of the week. On the day after **the Sabbath** the priest shall elevate it.

Look closely at this last part of verse 11 and note what the verse does say. The verse does say that **The Wavesheaf Ceremony was to occur on the day after the weekly Sabbath!** "**The Sabbath**" is transliterated from the Hebrew "*ha Sabbath*" and specifies **the Sabbath** which is mentioned back in verse 3--the weekly Sabbath.

However, the Pharisees ignored this vital point. They correctly believed the Wavesheaf ceremony must Fall during the Days of Unleavened Bread, but incorrectly taught "*the Sabbath*" must be the first annual Sabbath—the first holy day of Unleavened Bread.

Now, after seeing what this verse does say,

let's notice what this verse does not say. **It does not say this weekly Sabbath must Fall during the Days of Unleavened Bread!** However, since this passage does not directly specify which weekly Sabbath precedes the Wavesheaf Ceremony, controversy has been connected to the meaning of this passage for millennia.

The Pharisees' incorrect interpretation that *the Sabbath* was the first holy day of Unleavened Bread caused the fifty-day count to Pentecost to always conclude on the same day every year—the sixth day of Sivan.

Yet, God requires the time from the Wavesheaf to Pentecost to be counted. He didn't say, "On the sixth of Sivan" or "On the sixth day of the third month." No, He does not say that. If He wanted the Feast of Weeks always on a fixed day of the month, God would have **fixed** it that way in His instructions. Yet, He didn't do that. But, again, we must remember that not everything is totally clear to everybody. It wasn't made clear to the Pharisees. However, it was made clear to the disciples of Jesus Christ. We saw that in Matthew 13. "*Those who have ears to hear...*"

There was also another religious group among the Jews, composed primarily of Levites, called the Sadducees. Unlike the Pharisees, they correctly believed the Wavesheaf must Fall on the first day of the week [day one of the weekly cycle]. Hence, they felt "*the Sabbath*" in Leviticus 23:11 always referred to the weekly Sabbath. However, they incorrectly interpreted that it had to be the weekly Sabbath which Falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Bible does not say that. We scrutinized the verse, and it does not say that. Yet, that was the Sadducees' interpretation.

Through the years there has also been controversy within the Church as to how to figure the correct time for the Wavesheaf Ceremony. Some now keep Pentecost on the sixth of Sivan, following the Pharisees' example. There are other people who follow the Sadducees'

method of counting.

Continuing in Leviticus 23, we read:

You shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain [This refers to green grain which is put over a fire in order to remove the moisture.] nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God [The offering specified in verses 10-11.]; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. (Leviticus 23:14)

None of the grain of the land could be cut and eaten until **after** the Wavesheaf was offered.

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. (Leviticus 23:15)

Some think *seven Sabbaths* means seven weeks. That is, seven seven-day periods. No, it means "seven Sabbaths"—seven weekly Sabbaths.

Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering [an offering from your new crop of grain] to the LORD. (Leviticus 23:16)

The time when the Wavesheaf Ceremony was conducted determined when to begin the fifty-day count to Pentecost. So, we need to understand exactly when this Wavesheaf offering was done. After the fifty-days elapsed, on the day of Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks:

*You shall bring from your habitations **two wave loaves** of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They **are the firstfruits** to the LORD.* (Leviticus 23:17)

There were also certain animals which were sacrificed and included in this ceremony:

The priest shall wave them [the sacrificed animals] with the bread of the firstfruits [those two loaves] as a wave offering before the LORD... (Leviticus 23:20a)

Here is another wave, or elevated, offering.

This time **two loaves** were to be elevated—to be held up and brought back down, just like the omer was lifted up, and brought back down.

They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. (Leviticus 23:20b)

These wave loaves represent the ascension and acceptance of the entire firstfruits' harvest—because these wave loaves were made of grain harvested during the entire period of the fifty-day harvest. They represent the firstfruits.

Wavesheaf Ceremony Fulfilled

In order for us to clearly comprehend when the Wavesheaf [the lifted omer] Ceremony was to occur, we need to go to the actual **fulfillment** of what this ceremony represented.

Let's not forget that certain symbolic things were done or instituted to represent a future action or event. The very manner in which God created the first week symbolized how He would accomplish His plan. The many ceremonies under the Levitical system symbolized the depth of the defilement of sin and the cost of removing its blemishes. The sacrificing of the Passover lambs pictured what would be required of the Messiah.

Jesus fulfilled what the Passover lambs represented. The apostle Paul pointed out that all which was represented by those lambs is concluded. There will never again need to be another sacrifice of the Messiah. He will not be required to lay down His life for those who live in any future day of salvation.

In like manner, what the Wavesheaf Ceremony represented has been fulfilled as well. The Messiah, Jesus Christ, was the one who was symbolized by the Wavesheaf Ceremony, which began the count to the Feast of Weeks during the time the Israelites lived in the land of Israel.

Now, all which the ceremony of the

Wavesheaf pictured was **fulfilled by Jesus Christ** after His resurrection. Nothing of the Wavesheaf Ceremony is left to be fulfilled! This is where the experience of Jonah comes into play in understanding when the true Wavesheaf was offered in A.D. 31. When it was offered was in line with what happened with Jesus Christ, and proves conclusively that Sivan 6 cannot always be the day of the Wavesheaf.

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, (for that Sabbath was a high day)... (John 19:31a)

The Sabbath referred to here was the day following the crucifixion and the death of Jesus Christ, which occurred in the middle of the week--on Wednesday of that particular week. In both A.D. 30 and 31, the fourteenth day of Nisan was a Wednesday. Within the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ, those are the only two years when the fourteenth of Nisan fell on a Wednesday. So the Messiah had to be offered on one or the other. Since the seventh year of Artaxerxes I was 457 B.C., A.D. 31 is required to be the year. Jesus was crucified on that day, and it was the preparation day for the first annual Sabbath of the year. The Days of Unleavened Bread would begin that evening after His body was placed in the tomb.

In Luke 23 a man named Joseph of Arimathaea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus.

Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever been lain before. That day was the Preparation... (Luke 23:53-54a)

It was the **preparation** for a high day, the annual Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread.

and the Sabbath drew near. (Luke 23:54b)

Once the stone was rolled back into place over the mouth of the tomb, the annual Sabbath of

the first holy day of Unleavened Bread had come. So Joseph of Arimathaea took the body, put it in the tomb, just as the first holy day was about to begin. That was Wednesday at sunset. Sunset began the first holy day. From sunset Wednesday until sunset Thursday was the first holy day of Unleavened Bread. Friday was the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath.

Now when the [annual] Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. (Mark 16:1)

They bought the spices on Friday, but didn't go to the tomb until early on the first day of the week. How do we know that? Because Luke gives us more information regarding this.

Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. [Once they were bought in raw form, processing was required.] *And they rested the Sabbath according to the commandment.* (Luke 23:56)

They could not have bought those spices on Wednesday evening, because the holy day had started. The only time they could buy them was on Friday. After they bought the spices on Friday and prepared them, the women had to rest on the weekly Sabbath.

These events all took place from late Wednesday afternoon until late Friday. Two full days had passed. When the sun set on Friday, two full days had passed since Jesus' body had been placed in the tomb. It was placed in the tomb just as the sun was setting at the beginning of the first holy day of Unleavened Bread on Wednesday evening. Thursday sunset completed day one. Friday sunset completed day two.

Friday night would be **the third night** of the three nights, and the daylight portion of the weekly Sabbath would have been **the third day** of the three days composing the three days and three nights Jesus said He would remain in the heart of the earth, just as Jonah remained in the belly of the great fish

[Matthew 12:40] three days and three nights! That's important for us to understand. Jesus Christ could leave the tomb as the weekly Sabbath ended—because He was only required to stay there three days and three nights. His body was placed in the tomb as the sun set. His body could come out of the tomb as soon as the sun set, three days and three nights later.

At the same time Jesus was released from His confinement within the tomb—at **precisely the same time**--the omer of the grain for the Wavesheaf Ceremony was being released from the roots which held it to the earth. By coming out of the tomb, He was fulfilling the cutting of the Wavesheaf offering. Remember it was cut within the first hour after sunset, immediately after the end of the weekly Sabbath.

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. (John 20:1)

Mary came very early on Sunday morning, found the tomb opened and empty, then ran to tell Peter and John. They came, looked into the tomb, decided someone moved the body of Jesus and left. But Mary Magdalene remained after they left.

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. [Remember, it was still dark.] Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Je-

Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, "Teacher"). (John 20:11-16)

With this recognition, Mary became very excited and apparently made a movement toward Jesus.

Jesus said unto her, "Touch Me not..." (John 20:17a, KJV)

Jesus told her to refrain from making physical contact with Him for an important reason.

"for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God, and your God.'" (John 20:17b)

Jesus had not yet been **lifted up** as the "elevated omer", but He was soon to be lifted up, to be accepted by the Father on behalf of the rest of the firstfruits. Later that day, Mary Magdalene came back with another Mary and was met by an angel, according to Matthew 28:5-9. At that later time Jesus had already ascended and returned because He allowed them to grab His feet. He didn't say, "Don't touch Me" then. No, He had already ascended and had come back down.

Remember that the "waving" was an "up and down" motion. He was lifted up. He rose up to be accepted by the Father. And then He came back down. Why? Because He needed to come and give assurance and guidance to His disciples, who still didn't understand what had taken place. He had to teach them, and He spent the next forty days with them doing just that before He ascended in the clouds. Shortly thereafter came the day of Pentecost.

So by His coming out of the tomb when He did, Jesus **fulfilled** the cutting of the Wavesheaf. By ascending to the Father and coming back down, He **fulfilled** the actual waving—the elevating—of the omer. The **WAVESHEAF CEREMONY has been FULLILLED!** Just as the Wavesheaf was lifted up to be accepted by God before the Spring harvest could begin, so Jesus was lifted up—by

ascending to heaven—to be accepted by the Father so that the rest of the firstfruits can now be harvested. Just as Jesus Christ died on the stake by shedding His blood one and only one time, so the fulfillment of the symbolism of the Wavesheaf Ceremony will never happen again.

The Spring harvest—the cutting of the early grain—could not begin until the omer of the Wavesheaf was properly cut and prepared for the offering ceremony. In like manner, the resurrection of the firstfruits could not occur until after Jesus had been resurrected, ascended, and been accepted by the Father. No harvesting of firstfruits could occur until **after** the Wavesheaf Ceremony was literally fulfilled.

Since the instruction in Leviticus 23:11, regarding the weekly Sabbath—ie, "*from the day after **the Sabbath***"—is not conclusive as to which weekly Sabbath the Wavesheaf is to follow, the best method of determining when the Wavesheaf Ceremony should Fall is to look to the time of its actual **fulfillment**. That's only logical. How do we understand Leviticus 23:11? We must go to the example Jesus gives us! What was that example? What was the fulfillment? When did Jesus ascend as the Wavesheaf?

When? **On the first day of the week**—without question. There is no way to read through John's record of the events surrounding Jesus' ascension and see it any other way. He was crucified on a Wednesday and placed in the tomb as the sun was setting. To fulfill three days and three nights required Him to come forth from the tomb at the end of the Sabbath. He was then lifted up on the first day of the week. So the Pharisees' interpretation will not stand in light of the actual fulfillment of the Wavesheaf Ceremony.

Wavesheaf During Unleavened Bread

The Sadducees were also wrong on one point of their understanding. On a year when the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleav-

ened Bread Falls on the last day of Unleavened Bread, the Sadducees insisted the Wavesheaf should be done on the day **after** the Days of Unleavened Bread are over. They allowed the Wavesheaf Ceremony to be conducted **outside of** the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Is that allowable? No! Why not? Because in the actual fulfillment of the Wavesheaf Ceremony, not only was Jesus lifted up to the Father on the first day of the week, but He was lifted up **DURING** the Days of Unleavened Bread! **Jesus fulfilled the elevated omer ON the FIRST DAY of the week DURING the Days of Unleavened Bread!** That means Leviticus 23:11 can **only** be understood as a weekly Sabbath that *may* or *may not* Fall during the Days of Unleavened Bread. What is important is **"the day" AFTER the weekly Sabbath must Fall within** the Days of Unleavened Bread!

Now, for those who are convinced the directions in Leviticus 23:11 refer to the weekly Sabbath during Unleavened Bread and do not feel that the actual fulfillment of the Wavesheaf is sufficient, God has included some examples within the Scriptures to help us to understand how to determine the timing of the Wavesheaf in a year when the weekly Sabbath Falls on the last day of Unleavened Bread.

Sabbath Passover in Joshua

The first of those examples is in the book of Joshua. The sequence of events after Israel crossed the Jordan River, under Joshua's direction, clearly reveals a Sabbath Passover in that year.

And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. (Joshua 4:19)

So we find here that **the tenth day of the first month** Israel crossed the Jordan and entered officially into the Promised Land. This

was Tuesday, Nisan 10. This was the day they were required to select unblemished lambs for the Passover sacrifice, which would occur on the fourteenth. [Recall Exodus 12:3]

However, there was a problem that needed to be corrected before they could keep the Passover.

At that time [that is, after they came up out of the Jordan, after they encamped on the west side of the Jordan by Gilgal] *the LORD said unto Joshua, [the Revised English Bible better translates] "Make you sharp knives, and make Israel a circumcised people again."* (Joshua 5:2)

Remember, in the instructions on keeping the Passover, Israel was told the Passover could not be kept by any uncircumcised male. So, it was necessary before keeping the Passover [four days later] for them to be circumcised.

And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at Gibeah-haaraloth. (Joshua 5:3)

That is how it should read according to the marginal rendering. It is referring to a location which was known as "the hill of foreskins" because, when they were done with this procedure, there was a hill of flesh which had not been there before.

And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, even [as the Tanakh translates it] all the males of military age had died during the desert wandering, after they came out of Egypt. (Joshua 5:4)

So there were a lot of those of military age. Please understand those of "military age" were males who were twenty-years-old and older. Thus, all the males who were twenty-years-old and above all died in the wilderness, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. (Numbers 14:29-30) They were the only two survivors who left Egypt who were over twenty years of age at the time that God pronounced the sentence against those who

couldn't enter into the Promised Land.

For all the people who came out had been circumcised... (Joshua 5:5a)

That is, every male that came out of Egypt was circumcised. *"But all the people who were born in the wilderness on the way [that is, during the desert wanderings] as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, [the Tanakh translation continues] **until the entire nation—the men of military age who had left Egypt—had perished**, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey." (Joshua 5:5b-6)*

Please note here that all the males from eight days old [Genesis 17:12] through the age of nineteen years at the time of the exodus were **now** [at the time they entered the land] 40-59 years of age. And they were circumcised! There were tens of thousands, maybe as many as one hundred thousand men, who **were** circumcised. Those born during the forty years were not. So we have 40-59 year old men who **were circumcised** at the time of the entrance into the Land of Promise. And we have other males from 8 days up through 39 years that were **uncircumcised**.

So Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. (Joshua 5:7-8)

This is a reference to all the previously uncircumcised males, between the ages of eight days through 39 years, who were now circumcised. They were all circumcised on the tenth day. Although the newly circumcised men were sore, which limited the amount of help they could provide in preparing for the Pass-

over, there were other older males in every family between

the ages of 40 and 59 who could take care of the Passover preparation. There was nothing to prevent Israel from keeping the Passover at this time.

So the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. (Joshua 5:10a)

The context of the passage is still the first month, and it is now the fourteenth day--four days after the circumcision of all the males. The fourteenth would have been a Sabbath.

And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain on the very same day. (Joshua 5:11)

The only way they could eat this grain **on the day after the Passover** was if the Passover was on a Sabbath and then the Wavesheaf had been offered in accordance with God's instructions in Leviticus 23:14, where God says, "You can not eat of **any of the grain** until you bring this first of the harvest...and it must be waved." It must be elevated by the priest.

For them to eat means the Wavesheaf must have been offered that morning. Again, it had to be a Sunday morning. And what day was this? Since the fourteenth was the Passover, this was the fifteenth. It was the first day of Unleavened Bread.

*On the day after the Passover offering, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the country, unleavened bread and parched grain. On that same day, **when** they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased. (Joshua 5:11-12, Tanakh translation)*

The Tanakh emphasizes that verses 11 and 12 occur on the same day. This was the Days of Unleavened Bread. Sunday was the first day of the Days of Unleavened Bread. This was a high day and the day the Wavesheaf was offered that year.

Seven Week Countdown

There is also a New Testament passage which substantiates the correct time of the Wavesheaf Ceremony as being on the first day of Unleavened Bread **when the Passover Falls on the Sabbath**. It is found in Luke 6. As background, keep in mind the Sadducees insisted the Wavesheaf must follow the weekly Sabbath which Falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

In the year A.D. 29 Passover, Nisan 14, fell on the weekly Sabbath. Luke records an event in that year which occurred two weeks later--on Nisan 28, the second weekly Sabbath after the Passover.

Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first... (Luke 6:1a)

There are no translations that adequately render the meaning of this verse. The phrase "*second Sabbath after the first*" is the Greek word *deuteroprotos* ["Deutero" meaning second and "protos" meaning first). *Deuteroprotos* literally translated is "second-first." When it is properly supplied, the meaning becomes less cloudy.

*Now it happened on the **second-first Sabbath** that He [Jesus] went through the grain fields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands.* (Luke 6:1)

Most commentators are at a loss when it comes to explaining this verse. They prefer to use a secondary manuscript, which omits *deuteroprotos* and simply has "Sabbath". However, this passage is easily understood by "those who have ears to hear." This passage is easy to understand when one realizes that God through Luke's account **was pointing out the difference between the way He counted to Pentecost and the way the Sadducees counted to Pentecost!**

The Sadducees determined when Pentecost should be observed until A.D. 70, when the temple was destroyed and the Levites no

longer performed priestly duties. After that event the Pharisees took over making that determination, which for them was always the fixed date of Sivan 6 based upon their misinterpretation of "*the Sabbath*" in Leviticus 23:11. But the Sadducees were still making the determination during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. They did count from a Sabbath, yet God inspired Luke to draw attention to an error with their method of counting.

Since the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread that year was the last day of Unleavened Bread, that Sabbath was Nisan 21, one week after the Passover. The Sadducees required the Wavesheaf to be on the day after the weekly Sabbath which Falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread. For them, the Wavesheaf should have been Nisan 22--the day **after** Unleavened Bread was over. That means the first Sabbath in the Sadducees' count to Pentecost was the one following Nisan 22. [Remember, count seven Sabbaths until the day after the seventh Sabbath.] Thus, the first Sabbath **in their count** would be Nisan 28.

God says this event occurred on "*the second-first Sabbath*". It was the **first** Sabbath in the Sadducees' count, but it was the **second** Sabbath in the correct method of counting—because the Wavesheaf Ceremony that year should have been the day after the Passover, on the first day of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15. The first Sabbath in the seven Sabbath count would have been Nisan 21, and the second Sabbath Nisan 28. Those who understand the variations in the counts understand what this passage means.

All Births Fall Within the 7000 Year Plan

Now, there is a major conflict with the plan of God IF the Wavesheaf were allowed to Fall **outside** of the Days of Unleavened Bread. As we saw at the outset, the seven-day week symbolizes the time God has allotted for growing the entire crop He will harvest—7,000

years. We must understand that God did not make the feast of Unleavened Bread seven days because of a coin toss," *Heads, it'll be seven days; tails, we'll make it nine.*" No, that is not the way God determined **seven days** for Unleavened Bread.

There is **a reason**—a very important reason—why there are seven days. The seven Days of Unleavened Bread represent the seven days of the "week" of God's plan. It represents something extremely important about those seven "weeks," and about the mercy of God of which Moses wrote, and about returning the dead from the dust. God will extend grace—the state of sinlessness—to every human being born **within the 7,000 years of His plan.**

The Days of Unleavened Bread represent **seven "days"** of sinlessness. There is no leaven. There is no sin. And the only way that can be, as David shows us [and as Paul quotes David in the book of Romans], is if God does not impute sin. Having no sin imputed is the **state of grace.** Grace will be available to every human being ever born within the 7,000 years of the plan of God.

The One represented by the Wavesheaf must be resurrected, elevated and accepted **before** that time is complete. If the Wavesheaf fell outside that time, no one could receive eternal life—because the sacrifice would not be there. What is necessary for a resurrection would not be there. It must be **within** the days.

The "**wave loaves**" ceremony is clearly after the "Wavesheaf" ceremony by fifty days. The Wavesheaf Ceremony does not come after the wave loaves ceremony. It comes before—by fifty days. And the fulfillment of the wave loaves comes when? At the end of the sixth "day" and the beginning of the seventh "day" of the "one week" of God's plan! The final trumpet of the Feast of Trumpets represents the time of the fulfillment of the wave loaves ceremony.

The second harvest must still come after that. But the first harvest—which is pictured on the

day of Pentecost when the two wave loaves are lifted up—comes at the end of six "days" and the beginning of the seventh day. Therefore, within the confines of those seven days of Unleavened Bread, the Wavesheaf is required to be accepted.

If we **do not** make the assumption that Leviticus 23:11 refers to the weekly Sabbath during Unleavened Bread, and if we **do** carefully consider the actual fulfillment of what the Wavesheaf Ceremony symbolized when Jesus ascended to the Father in heaven—when He was elevated on the Sunday during Unleavened Bread—and if we **do** accept the biblical examples which are given to "those who have ears to hear"—then we can reach no other conclusion than what follows.

The Wavesheaf Ceremony was to be offered ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK DURING the Days of Unleavened Bread, following the weekly Sabbath which may occur on the day of the Passover, or during the Days of Unleavened Bread! And the only way it can be properly understood is from the actual **FULFILLMENT!**