



The Church of God International

HOME BIBLE

Study Course

11

Understanding the Day of Pentecost

Doctrinal Statement:

The Day of Pentecost is celebrated fifty days from the wave sheaf day—hence the terms “Feast of Weeks” in the Old Testament and “Pentecost” (Greek for “fiftieth”) in the New. It is the “birthday” of the Church of God, commemorating the sending of the Holy Spirit; and foreshadows the resurrection of the “firstfruits.” Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the New Testament Church continued the practice of observing this ancient festival of God.

Pentecost (Feast of Weeks): This festival took its name from the manner in which the date for its observance was determined. Rather than being celebrated on a particular calendar day, it was counted seven weeks, or fifty days, from the wave sheaf day—hence the terms “Feast of Weeks” in the Old Testament and “Pentecost” (Greek, meaning “fiftieth”) in the New. It marked the end of the spring harvest. The basic instructions for determining the date of Pentecost are clear in Leviticus 23:15–16, according to the Hebrew text: “You shall count beginning with the day after the Sabbath, the day on which you brought the wave sheaf (seven sabbaths shall be completed), to the day after the seventh sabbath; you shall count fifty days.”

In other words, one begins and ends counting with a Sunday. That is why Pentecost always falls on a Sunday. This interpretation is confirmed by the practice of the conservative and priestly groups represented by the Sadducees, the Samaritans, and the Karaites.

Granted, other groups used either the first or last holy day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (rather than the weekly Sabbath) as their reference for counting. This interpretation evidently originated in the change of the meaning of the Hebrew word *shabbat*. This is the word occurring three times in Leviticus 23:15–16, translated “Sabbath” each time in the translation above. The original meaning of the word was the weekly Sabbath, but it was occasionally used for the annual holy days, or rest days, as well, though always clarified by the context. However, during the intertestamental period, the word came to mean “week.”

Thus, the Pharisees took the word *Sabbath* in the sense of “annual sabbath” and “week,” so that they counted seven “weeks” beginning with the first holy day. The Falashas and the Essenes, while using a solar calendar, interpreted

the word as “week,” counting seven weeks from the Sunday after the Passover week.

These interpretations, although originating before the first century A.D., were evidently incorrect. The term *Sabbath* was not likely to be used of an annual sabbath without clarification. Thus, the Pharisaic method was an unlikely interpretation. Further, to take the word *Sabbath* in the sense of “week,” as the Pharisees, Essenes, and Falashas all did, was anachronistic; the word did not have this meaning in Old Testament times.

The Church of God International understands Leviticus 23:15 to mean that we should count beginning with the Sunday—“the day after the Sabbath”—that occurs during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

When God called Israel out of Egypt, He gave Israel seven festivals, and this was prior to the covenant He made with them at Sinai. They were to observe these festivals in the promised land so they would come to know and fear Him. One of these festivals was the Feast of Harvest, or Weeks (Exodus 23:16; Deuteronomy 16:9–10,16). In the New Testament, this one-day festival is called Pentecost, meaning “fiftieth.”

The Israelites planted grain in the fall, then harvested in the spring, beginning with the wave sheaf offering during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Then, fifty days later, they celebrated the Feast of Harvest, as we read in Leviticus 23:9–16,21.

All the people would gather at the Tabernacle for sacrifices. At this time two loaves of bread were waved before God. These loaves were called firstfruits because of their symbolic link to another harvest festival, the Feast of Ingathering, or Tabernacles, held in the fall (Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:34).

The Feast of Harvest, or Pentecost as we commonly call it today, was of great importance to Israel. A poor harvest

meant the nation could face food shortages; on the other hand, an abundant harvest meant plentiful bread.

Because God was in control of their agricultural blessings, this feast revealed whether God was pleased with them. God's blessings or cursings upon them showed whether they were living in obedience to the covenant they had made with God.

For Christians today, the Festival of Pentecost takes on far greater meaning than Israel's agricultural blessings. It aims at and signifies our ultimate purpose in life; it points to our potential destiny to be born into God's kingdom. Its lucid symbolism reveals to us what we must do to be harvested as members of God's family.

Some may ask how we know this. What gives us the proof that this old harvest festival points to our future destiny?

The answer lies in Jesus' parables that compare the Kingdom of God to planting and harvesting.

Jesus looked at the multitudes following Him and said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). The symbolism Jesus uses in this parable is clearly understandable. He is talking about the "harvest" of humans into the Family of God.

The time period of this marvelous harvest is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Let us understand the spiritual significance of this third holy day, Pentecost, and how it points to our unique opportunity to be in the coming early harvest of humans into God's family.

Final Words

The seven annual festivals God gave us reveal to us His great plan for mankind. These holy days are not "Jewish holidays" but God's method of communicating to us His great plan for all of mankind.

The Passover reminds us that we need the blood of Christ to pay for our sins. The Passover was given to us as an annual memorial so we would not forget that our Savior had to shed His blood and have His body broken for us. The Passover (com-

munion service) is the first step in God's plan of salvation.

The Days of Unleavened Bread is the second step, reminding us of the importance of coming out of sin, putting sin out of our lives. It is when we begin to submit ourselves wholeheartedly to God and obey His commandments that we take this second step in God's plan.

We have now arrived at the third step: the Day of Pentecost, or Feast of Firstfruits. If you have prayed about this lesson, and have your Bible and other study helps at hand, you are ready to begin Lesson 11.

The Wave Sheaf Offering

There are two annual harvest seasons in Palestine. The first one is a small spring harvest following the winter rains. It begins on the day of the wave sheaf offering, and ends at the Day of Pentecost.

The second harvest season occurred in the late summer and early autumn, and followed the late spring or latter rains in Palestine. It ended with the Feast of Ingathering, which is called the Feast of Tabernacles. Pentecost pictures the very small early harvest.

The Days of Unleavened Bread, according to Leviticus 23:10-11, occur about the beginning of the small spring harvest season. The grain, planted earlier, has been nurtured and has now reached maturity. The stalks are now bearing fruit, ready to be harvested.

It was in the following manner the first harvest began. On Sunday morning ("the morrow" after the weekly Sabbath) during the Days of Unleavened Bread, small, specially selected and newly sickled stems and heads of barley were brought to the priest to be accepted by God. This was called the wave sheaf offering, or the "first of the firstfruits."

This astonishing ritual, which the ancient priests of Jerusalem carried out each year, contains the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. It also acted out His birth and life, and the destiny of the Church of God. That is why many Jews of the first century became Christians. Even a large group of the priests

were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7).

It is interesting to note that God gave these annual festivals to Israel before they had any land of their own to harvest.

The wave sheaf ritual was given by the One who was to become Jesus Christ, to whom the ritual pointed. "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it'''" (Leviticus 23:9-11).

The sheaf had to be made up of the "firstfruits," the very first of the harvest to be reaped. "You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (Leviticus 23:14).

The sheaf had to be offered first, before the rest of the harvest, because it symbolically represented Christ. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

After Jesus was crucified, He was buried in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. Then He was resurrected. He needed to be accepted by God the Father as the firstfruit of the spiritual harvest. Christ was a holy sacrifice, the first human being to be resurrected. He completely fulfilled the symbolism of the wave sheaf offering, and, because He was a holy offering, no one was allowed to touch Him until He presented Himself to God the Father (John 20:17).

The morning after His resurrection, He had to appear before God to be accepted, in the same manner as the High Priest in the Old Testament had to wave the sheaf of barley to be accepted by God before the spring harvest could begin.

Jesus didn't allow Mary to touch Him when they met because His sacrifice had not yet been accepted. But after His acceptance He allowed His

disciples to inspect His body (Matthew 28:9; John 20:20–28).

When Mary saw Jesus in the garden, it was the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread. It was the day of the wave sheaf offering.

He ascended to His Father and then returned to earth and was seen and handled by His disciples (John 20:19).

Review

1. *The first small spring harvest begins on the day of the wave sheaf offering and ends at Pentecost.*
2. *The Days of Unleavened Bread occur about the beginning of the small spring harvest season.*
3. *The Israelites were not to eat of the harvest until they brought an offering to God.*
4. *The sheaf had to be offered first, before the rest of the harvest, because it symbolically represented Christ.*
5. *Because Jesus was the wave sheaf offering, He would not allow anyone to touch Him until He ascended to His Father and was accepted as the perfect sacrifice. On the same day Jesus saw Mary in the garden, He ascended to His Father and returned.*

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite.

Leviticus 23:9–11,14; Acts 6:7; 1 Corinthians 15:20; John 20:17; Matthew 28:9; John 20:19–28

The Firstfruits

Fifty days after the wave sheaf offering during the Days of Unleavened Bread (and the acceptance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice by God the Father in Heaven), the Holy Spirit came according to the promises Jesus had made (Acts 2:1).

There was a special offering made on the Day of Pentecost in the Old Testament. (Leviticus 23:17). The Bible tells us these loaves symbolized the firstfruits. The apostle James tells us "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

The two loaves we read about in Leviticus 23:17 cover the two periods of the Old Testament and the

New Testament Church. "Church" has been translated from the Greek word *ecclesia*, which means the "called-out ones."

Therefore, Pentecost, or the Feast of Firstfruits, portrays to us the first part of the spiritual harvest of souls: the calling out of God's Church, a small group of people and a small first harvest. It is quite apparent that God is not dealing with the vast majority of the world today. He is only calling a few now to whom to reveal His wonderful truths.

Remember that in Leviticus 23:17 the two loaves were baked with leaven. The apostle John reminds us that we cannot say "we have no sin" (1 John 1:8). As we learned in the previous lesson, the Bible uses leaven symbolically to represent sin. Therefore, the two loaves were baked with leaven.

Even though we cannot say we are without sin, we are to confess our sins as we find them in our lives, and Jesus will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). We are to put sin out of our lives whenever we find it. Only Christ our Savior is without sin!

The apostle James tells us clearly that Jesus Christ begot us with His word of truth, and that we are the firstfruits of His creatures (James 1:8). The apostle Paul actually names a person, Epaphroditus, saying that this individual is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ (Romans 16:5). Therefore, after Christ was accepted as the wave sheaf, the general harvest of firstfruits could begin, which in reality is only a small harvest of people during this age, to be reaped at the Second Coming of Christ.

Notice that these firstfruits are mentioned again by Paul in the plan of the resurrections: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:20–23; see also 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

Therefore, Christ is the first of the

firstfruits, and all those who come up in the resurrection at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are the "harvest of firstfruits."

In Matthew 13:24–30, Jesus speaks a parable and later explains what we are to learn about the spiritual harvests, and also what happens when Christ sows the seed of truth among the people of the earth. In verse 24, Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a man who sows good seed in his field. An enemy comes along and sows tares (weeds) among the wheat. The young tares and the young blades of wheat look the same and can't be distinguished until they are grown and ready for harvest. Tares (unbelievers) and wheat (believers) must live side by side in this world. God allows unbelievers to stay for a short period of time, just as a farmer allows tares to remain in his field so the surrounding wheat isn't uprooted with them. When harvest time arrives, the tares will be uprooted and burned. The wheat shall be gathered in to the barn.

It is easy for God to tell the difference between the tares and wheat. Although some people try to hide their wicked works, the fruit of their disobedience is easily seen by God. God also can see those who produce righteousness, obedience, and the other fruits of the Spirit. See Matthew 13:36–43.

The phrase "end of the age" indicates the last days of man's mis-rule over the earth, the time before the return of Jesus Christ and harvest of the firstfruits. The period of the fifty days between the wavesheaf offering and the Day of Pentecost symbolizes what has been going on since Jesus Christ sent His Holy Spirit. During this time God has been calling out an "elect," or chosen people, as "firstfruits." At the end of this age, the "reapers," who are the angels, shall gather those who are the elect, or the chosen, and this good grain will be put into God's kingdom (Matthew 13:30,39; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Matthew 24:31).

Review

1. *The Holy Spirit came fifty days after the wave sheaf offering.*
2. *The two loaves represent the first-*

fruits of Old and New Testaments.

3. The word Church is translated from the Greek word *ecclesia*, meaning the "called-out ones."

4. The firstfruits portray to us the first spiritual harvest of souls.

5. Leaven symbolically represents sin; therefore, the two loaves were baked with leaven.

6. We cannot say we are without sin.

7. We are to put sin out of our lives whenever we find it.

8. If we confess our sins to God, Jesus will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

9. The Church is composed of the firstfruits begotten by the word of truth.

10. Christ is the First of the firstfruits.

11. The harvest of firstfruits occurs at the First Resurrection.

12. At the end of the age, the angels shall gather the firstfruits (elect and chosen), and, just as the good grain was put in the barn, they shall be put into the Kingdom of God.

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite.

Acts 2:1; Leviticus 23:17; 1 John 1:8-9; James 1:8; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18,24; Matthew 13:24-30,36-43; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Matthew 24:31.

Founding of the Church

When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, they were known as the Congregation of Israel (Acts 7:38; Leviticus 8:3). The Israelites were the physical type of the spiritual Church established by Jesus Christ on the Day of Pentecost.

The foundation of the Church of God is made up of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself as the chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:18-22).

The true Church is the collective body of individuals, called out from the ways of this present world, who have surrendered their lives to God, and who through the Holy Spirit became begotten sons of God (Romans 8:9).

God's Church began on the Day of Pentecost. The apostle Peter explained to those present how to enter this one true Church of God.

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). It is through the Holy Spirit that God dwells in His Church, His "called-out people."

The apostle Paul makes a comparison between the Old Testament period and the New Testament Church of God (Hebrews 12:18-23). The firstborn is Christ Jesus, the Founder of the Church of God. Also, those who are of the general assembly and have their names written in heaven, and who are going on to perfection in this life, are also members of the Church of God, including those who have died in the faith (verse 23).

God's Church was prophesied to be a scattered, small assembly, rejected by the world, and often without fellowship of like-minded brethren.

In Hebrews 10:23-25, we are given these instructions: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." Notice we are to assemble with *ourselves* together, not with those who do not believe as we do.

Once we are converted and receive the Holy Spirit, we are righteous because God sees Christ in us. We are not righteous of ourselves. We are owned by God when we receive His Spirit, and He then commands us, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Ephesians 5:11). We are admonished to rebuke and expose evil or else our silence will be interpreted as approval.

God commands us not to have fellowship with unrighteousness, and not to receive contrary doctrine into our homes (2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 John 10-11).

Our fellowship is with the Father and Jesus Christ first, and then with one another through Christ (1 John 1:1-7). However, our walk with Christ should not be used as an

excuse to neglect family members, just because they do not understand. We must always set the right example as a Christian, expressing a warm, loving, and caring attitude to each member in the home, in the hope that family members will be converted by our example (1 Timothy 5:8).

Review

1. The Israelites whom God brought out of Egypt were known as the Congregation of Israel.
2. The foundation of the Church of God is made up of the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ, the chief Cornerstone.
3. The Church is to grow into a Holy Temple.
4. The Church began on the Day of Pentecost.
5. It is through the Holy Spirit that God dwells in His Church, His "called-out ones."
6. We must hold fast the profession of our faith.
7. We should provoke one another to love and good works.
8. Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son first, and then with one another.
9. We must set the right example in the home.

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite

Acts 7:38; Leviticus 8:3; 1 Corinthians 10:32; Ephesians 2:18-22; Romans 8:9; Acts 2:38; Hebrews 12:18-23; 10:23-25; Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 John 10-11; 1 John 1:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:8.

Law Given at Sinai on Pentecost

There is a sign that identifies God's people, and that sign is the Day of Pentecost (Feast of Firstfruits). The Day of Pentecost identifies those who have God's Holy Spirit, those who are God's elect, those who will be resurrected when Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

It was on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was first made available. It was on Pentecost when God gave the nation of Israel the Law on Mount Sinai. When the Lord God spoke to Moses on Mount

Sinai, He reminded Moses to inform Israel about the sabbath days being a sign, that they were for a perpetual covenant, a sign forever, and that God had rested on the seventh day. He also gave Moses two tables of stone, tables of testimony, written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:16–18)!

The Jews even today have a historical tradition that God gave them the Law at Mount Sinai on the Day of Pentecost (Feast of Firstfruits).

While God's Law was written in stone, Jeremiah the prophet tells us that God really intends for His Law to be written in our *hearts* (Jeremiah 31:31–33; cf. 2 Corinthians 3:3).

God likens our hearts to being as hard as the stone tablets He wrote His Law on. But the time was coming when God would take the stoney heart out of our flesh and give us a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19–20).

God also promised to give us His Holy Spirit, which would make our heart pliable and willing to comply with all God's laws and wishes for us (Ezekiel 36:26–27).

Review

1. *The Holy Spirit was first given on the Day of Pentecost.*
2. *The Law was given to Israel on Pentecost.*
3. *Sabbath days are a sign of who God's people are.*
4. *God intends the Law be written in our hearts.*
5. *God likens our hearts to being as hard as the stone tablets He wrote His Law on.*
6. *God promised to remove the stoney heart out of our flesh.*
7. *God promised to give us His Holy Spirit.*

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite

Exodus 31:16–18; Jeremiah 31:31–33; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Ezekiel 11:19–20; 36:26–27

Holy Spirit of Power

In Acts 1, Jesus informs His disciples that they shall receive "power" after the "Holy Spirit" comes upon them (verse 8). Jesus also tells them to remain at Jerusalem and wait for the "Promise of the Father" which He had spoken about to them (verse

4). Notice they shall receive this great "power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

Jesus revealed also to His disciples that they would be able to do the same works He did and "even greater works." (John 14:12). All of this being done by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Father doing the works.

Jesus admitted to His disciples that of Himself He could do nothing, but it was the Father in Him by the Spirit that gave Him the power to do the works (John 5:19,30; John 8:28; 14:11).

Jesus tells His disciples with great confidence that He will pray to the Father to send the Comforter (the Holy Spirit), that this power may abide with them forever (John 14:16).

(Please Note: It is because of the masculine and feminine gender of the Greek language that the Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as "He." Do not allow yourself to be confused by this rule of Greek language. The Holy Spirit is not a "Person," but the *power* of God. See Luke 1:35.)

Therefore, if we want this great power of God, we will have to obey Him. After all, Jesus obeyed His Father's will in every way. Without obedience to God, we cannot receive this gift of the Spirit (Acts 5:32).

It was because Jesus obeyed His Father and had the Holy Spirit that He was able to overcome the world. Jesus also expects us to be "overcomers" (Revelation 3:21).

As we have seen, Jesus Christ promised spiritual help to His disciples. The Holy Spirit had been with them in the Person of Christ. But He was now leaving them and going to His Father. Therefore, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to be in them as it was in Him (John 14:16).

The word *Comforter* is translated from the Greek word *parakletos*, which means "one who goes alongside to help."

After Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received God's Spirit (Luke 24:49). The word *tarry* used in this verse is an archaic English word. It does *not* mean to experience some form of ecstatic, emotional,

religious event. The word simply means to "wait."

It was on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples received the Holy Spirit. When cloven tongues of fire set on them, they received the Spirit and began to speak in other languages (Acts 2:1–4). We see in this miraculous event the fulfillment of the prophet Joel's words about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28–29).

There were many devout Jews from every nation at Jerusalem at this time. They were considered devout because they lived by the laws of God revealed in the Old Testament. However, they were not yet disciples of Christ.

These devout Jews from all over the Roman Empire were gathered together with the disciples of Christ for a specific reason: it was the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

By receiving the miraculous power to speak in languages other than their own, they were able to preach to the international group of people gathered for the festival.

The Festival of Firstfruits had been observed by devout people, including the disciples of Christ, for many generations (Leviticus 23:15–21). This festival was observed long before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

One interesting point to consider: If Christ's disciples had failed to obey Him and were not present on that Day of Pentecost, would they have missed out on receiving God's Holy Spirit? God gives His Spirit to the obedient (Acts 5:32).

Review

1. *The disciples received power after the Holy Spirit came upon them.*
2. *Jesus commanded the disciples to remain at Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father.*
3. *They received "power from on high."*
4. *The disciples would be able to do even "greater works" than Jesus.*
5. *The Holy Spirit is not a Person; it is the "power of the highest."*
6. *To receive the Holy Spirit we must obey God.*
7. *Jesus expects us to be overcomers.*
8. *Parakletos, or Comforter, means "one who goes alongside to help."*

9. The word tarry is an archaic English word which simply means to "wait."

10. When the disciples received the Holy Spirit, they were capable of being understood in other languages.

11. Gathered there in Jerusalem were Jews from all over the Roman Empire.

12. This festival was observed long before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

13. God gives His Spirit to those who obey Him.

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite

Acts 1:4,8; Luke 24:49; John 5:19,30; 8:28; 14:11,16; Acts 5:32; Revelation 3:21; Acts 2:1-4; Leviticus 23:15-21.

Name of the Church

The name of the Church that Jesus Christ founded is "The Church of God." This name is found in the Bible in twelve different places.

In five scriptures where the name of the Church appears, the whole body of Christ is intended. Therefore, when speaking of the whole Church and all of its individual members upon the earth, the name is "The Church of God."

(1) Acts 20:28. The elders were instructed to feed "**the church of God.**"

(2) 1 Corinthians 10:32. No offence to be given to "the Jews or to the Greeks or to **the church of God.**"

(3) 1 Corinthians 11:22. "Or do you despise **the church of God** and shame those who have not?"

(4) 1 Corinthians 15:9. Paul stated he was not worthy "because I persecuted **the church of God.**"

(5) Galatians 1:13. Again this verse says, "I persecuted **the church of God.**"

The Church is nowhere referred to as a denomination or as having any other name than that of Jesus Christ.

If a specific local assembly is mentioned, the Church is called "The Church of God..." and the name of that specific location.

(6) 1 Corinthians 1:2. "To **the church of God** which is at Corinth."

(7) 2 Corinthians 1:1. "To **the church of God** which is at Corinth."

(8) 1 Timothy 3:5. Paul, when speaking to Timothy in a local assembly, said "if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of **the church of God?**"

(9) 1 Timothy 3:15. "the house of God, which is **the church of the living God.**"

When speaking of local assemblies collectively, as one group, the word church is written in the plural. (10) 1 Corinthians 11:16. "...we have no such custom, nor do **the churches of God.**"

(11) 1 Thessalonians 2:14. "For you, brethren, became imitators of **the churches of God** which are in Judea in Christ Jesus."

(12) 2 Thessalonians 1:4. "so that we ourselves boast of you among **the churches of God.**"

In Romans 16:16, Paul refers to the various assemblies as the "churches of Christ." However, as we have seen from the previous verses, the name of the church is the Church of God, and it is kept in the name of the Father (John 17:11).

It is the Church of God that keeps the commandments of God and has the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:13,17).

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of Life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

Review

1. The name of the church is "The Church of God."

2. When speaking of all the assemblies of the Church, the name is "The Churches of God."

3. The Church of God keeps the commandments and has the testimony of Jesus.

4. Satan hates the Church and will make war against it.

5. Those who have right to the tree of life keep God's commandments.

The Elect?

Is it possible to belong to Jesus Christ if you don't have God's Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-11)? From these

verses we can see that without the Holy Spirit we do not belong to Christ and neither can we be raised from the dead. We also see that the firstfruits themselves are yearning for the time when they will become members of the God Family. In addition, the whole creation is groaning in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God (Romans 8:19-23).

In Romans 8:33 we see that those God has chosen to receive the firstfruits of His Spirit are also called the "elect." These elect Christians are those who have God's Spirit and understand the plan of God.

God has given the firstfruits His Holy Spirit to seal and preserve them (Ephesians 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit we receive is called the "guarantee of our inheritance." The guarantee refers to the very small token amount, or down payment, of the Spirit we receive now. By receiving this earnest of the Spirit now, it is the same as receiving Christ. This gives us the power to become the sons of God (1 John 1:12). It is the guarantee to the firstfruits (Christians) that they will receive the fullness of His Spirit and Sonship in His Family when Jesus Christ returns to this earth!

Review

1. We cannot belong to Christ if we do not have His Holy Spirit.

2. The firstfruits are yearning for the time when they will become members of the God Family.

3. The whole creation is groaning in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

4. Those who receive the firstfruits of God's Holy Spirit are also called the "elect."

5. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

6. The "guarantee," or earnest, we have refers to a small down payment.

Scriptures to Read, Remember, and Recite

Romans 8:9-11,19-23,33; 1 John 1:12; Ephesians 1:13-14

The Church of God International

11

Understanding
the Day of
Pentecost

Test Yourself

**Write your answers on a
separate sheet of paper.**

**Check *your* answers
with the answers found
at the end of the test.**

**Detach the return
coupon at the bottom of
the page and mail back
to us. We will
send the next lesson
in the series to you.**

HOME BIBLE

Study Course

True or False Questions

1. There can be no harvest until after the wave sheaf offering.
2. The wave sheaf was offered on the day after the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread.
3. The wave sheaf did not represent Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus presented Himself to the Father and returned the same day.
5. Jesus let Mary touch Him before He ascended to His Father.
6. One hundred days after the wave sheaf offering the Holy Spirit was given.
7. The two loaves were baked without leaven.
8. The firstfruits will be harvested at the return of Jesus Christ.
9. The angels shall gather the “elect” into God’s Kingdom.
10. God gave His Spirit to everyone on Pentecost.
11. The foundation of the Church is made up of the Old Testament patriarchs.
12. By our example we may convert those of our own household.
13. Our fellowship should be with the world first.
14. The Day of Pentecost is a sign identifying those who have God’s Spirit.
15. The Law was given to the New Testament Church on Mount Sinai.

Continued on next page

16. God did away with the Law when He wrote it on the tables of our heart.
17. They received power from on high at Jerusalem.
18. God gives His Spirit to those who come to church.
19. We must obey God to receive the Spirit.
20. Jesus expects us to be overcomers.
21. To “tarry” means to have a religious experience.
22. The Day of Pentecost is known as the Feast of Firstfruits also.
23. There were hardly any Jews at Jerusalem on Pentecost.
24. The disciples began to speak in other languages when they received the Spirit.
25. The birth of the Church was on the Day of Pentecost.
26. It is not necessary to have the Holy Spirit to be in the First Resurrection.
27. We are not sealed by God’s Holy Spirit.
28. The “guarantee” we have refers to the small down payment of the Spirit we receive now.
29. The Church will never grow into a Holy Temple.
30. We do not have to hold fast the profession of our faith.
31. God likens our hearts as being as hard as the stone tablets He wrote the law on.
32. The two loaves represent the firstfruits of Old and New Testament.
33. We never have to confess our sins to Jesus.
34. It is through the Holy Spirit that God dwells in His Church.
35. “Comforter” does not mean “one who goes alongside to help.”
36. The Church of God is just another denomination.
37. The Church of God is kept in the name of the Father.
38. The Church is not really expected to keep God’s commandments.
39. Satan will make war against the Church that keeps God’s commandments.
40. Those who keep the commandments can eat of the “Tree of Life.”

Answers to True or False Questions: Score Yourself: Miss 0–3 = Excellent; Miss 4–6 = Good; Miss 7–9 = Fair

Answers: 1. True; 2. True; 3. False; 4. True; 5. False; 6. False; 7. False; 8. True; 9. True; 10. True; 11. False; 12. True; 13. False; 14. True; 15. False; 16. False; 17. True; 18. False; 19. True; 20. True; 21. False; 22. True; 23. True; 24. True; 25. True; 26. True; 27. False; 28. True; 29. False; 30. False; 31. True; 32. True; 33. False; 34. True; 35. False; 36. False; 37. True; 38. False; 39. True; 40. True.
