

## The Seven Week Harvest

(Day 49)

Fred R. Coulter—May 30, 2009

Greetings, brethren, welcome to Day 49 of the count toward Pentecost—which is the 50th day—tomorrow.

As I've said before, I don't think you can ever find the day after the Sabbath falling on a Monday. That is unless you have the calendar all mixed up. This day is a very special and important day for us to understand what God is doing and how He's doing it.

The Seven Church harvest and what God is doing, because there is a lot that God is doing between the time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His ascension to heaven to be accepted as the first of the firstfruits, and on down to the close of this age when Jesus returns and the first resurrection takes place, which we will cover tomorrow.

Deuteronomy 16:9—we will see how God defines it here: "You shall count seven weeks to yourselves. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time you *first* began to put the sickle to the grain....

That first sickle to the grain is the *premiere sheaf* talked of and written about in Lev. 23; and that premiere sheaf is the very first one that is accepted by God the Father. As we know, that's a type of Jesus Christ.

"...And you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God according to the sufficiency of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give according as the LORD your God has blessed you. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God..." (vs 9-11). *That's what we are going to do tomorrow!*

But always remember: ***This is the harvest of the firstfruits;*** and we're going to see that there's also an overlap of the dedication of the firstborn and the firstfruits go hand-in-hand. That refers, first of all, ***to Jesus Christ,*** and then ***to the Church!***

Let's look at what Jesus said concerning the harvest of the firstfruits and why that is so important for us to understand. ***Today*** marks the end of the firstfruit harvest, and ***tomorrow*** is the resurrection when the change comes.

The Feasts of God are so important that He mentions them over and over again. That's why anyone who studies the Bible, or anyone who attempts to understand the Bible, if you do not understand about the Sabbath, the Passover and the Holy Days, ***you're not going to understand the Bible, you're not going to understand the plan of***

***God and you're certainly not going to qualify for eternal life!***

That's why the principle that we have during the Feast of Unleavened Bread always applies: ***A little leaven leavens the whole lump!*** So, ***IF*** there are false doctrines regardless of how small they may begin, and are not corrected by the Word of God, through the Spirit of God and the love of God, ***THEN*** more and more is going to come.

***When you look at the Bible and compare*** the Catholics, the Jehovah Witness, the Protestants and whatever other religion there may be, and you will see there is a vast difference. The vast difference is that ***God is the One Who does the calling, and God is the One Who does the selecting!***

We are going to see that ***we are the firstfruits being prepared for the resurrection,*** which Pentecost pictures tomorrow.

Exodus 23:14: "You shall keep a feast unto Me three times in the year. You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread... [we've already kept that] ...You shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And no one shall appear before Me empty. Also the Feast of the Harvest of the Firstfruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field. And the Feast of Ingathering, in the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labors out of the field.... [then He reiterates] ...Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD" (vs 14-17).

Exo 22—here's something that's important. Here is a principle. Remember, we have a physical example, which illustrates a spiritual principle, then is magnified and expounded upon in the New Testament.

Exodus 22:29: "You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe fruits and of your vintage...."

Even after the grain harvest, they were to bring in the first ripe of the wine; the first ripe of the grapes; then the raisins; the first ripe of apples and pears and oranges and lemons, etc. etc. All of those picture the later harvest that comes with the Feast of Tabernacles. But what we are to do is, if we have land and if we have our own fruits and vegetables, which would really be great if we were able to have it today, we wouldn't have all this commercialized, corporatized food that is foodless food, causing many diseases and sickness among people, and even among those in the Churches of God. That would be

good if we had that, but most of us don't have enough land.

Notice what else he says, because this ties the firstfruits with the firstborn. We saw that the firstborn was dedicated to God on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The firstborn of males were redeemed on that day.

"... You shall give the firstborn of your sons to Me.... [and they will be redeemed] ... Likewise you shall do with your oxen *and* with your sheep; it shall be with its dam seven days. On the eighth day you shall give it to Me" (vs 29-30).

- When you count toward Pentecost, how many sequences of seven days do we have? *Seven!*
- What is Pentecost in the last week? *The eighth day!*
- Isn't it interesting that the first resurrection takes place as pictured by Pentecost?

Undoubtedly on the Day of Pentecost, is when all are resurrected and dedicated to God, and we are called the Church of the Firstborn. So, there are many examples and many types that we're going to see that fit in with the harvest of God and that fit in with the seven weeks and the Feast of Pentecost.

Exo. 34—God is re-stating for the children of Israel all of His statutes and judgments after they had rebelled with Aaron and built the golden calf and worshiped it.

Exodus 34:19: "All that opens the womb is Mine..."—because through the process of procreation of animals and birds, as well as food for human beings, God is creating on a continuous basis!

"...all firstlings of male livestock, of oxen or sheep.... [shall be Mine] ...But the firstling of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck...." (vs 19-20).

In other words, no one is going to get around offering the firstborn to God, because that's His! What this does for us, when we understand this—though we don't do it—is that God is the One behind the whole process of producing new life; whether it be plant life; whether it be animal life.

"...All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.... [redeem with a lamb, which has to be eight days or older] ...And none shall appear before Me empty" (v 20).

There it's stated again and the importance of it we can see by the repetition, as we have in the book of Exodus.

Deuteronomy 26:1: "And it shall be when you come into the land, which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance, and possess it, and live in it, you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the earth which you shall bring of your land that the LORD your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket, and shall go to the place which the LORD your God shall choose to place His name there" (vs 1-2).

Obviously, some of them would have to be dry. Others of them could be given to the Levites within the community because where He placed them in the cities of the tribes of Israel was where He placed His name for the Levites to live.

Verse 3: "And you shall go to the priest in those days, and say to him, 'I profess today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.' And the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God" (vs 3-4). *It comes right before God!* Of course, that's also going to happen at the resurrection.

Verse 5: "And you shall declare and say before the LORD your God, 'My father was a Syrian ready to perish. And he went down to Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and many. And the Egyptians ill-treated us, and afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. And when we cried to the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice and looked on our afflictions and our labor and our oppression'" (vs 5-7).

Here's the spiritual type. When we are out in the world, we are doing as the world, we are a slave of the world, we are a slave of Satan the devil; because he's the 'prince of the power of the world, the god of this world,' and he's 'deceiving the whole world.' We see that even more and more in the present political and economic climate that we see ourselves in today. There's the spiritual analogy. *God has called us out of this*, and we are to bring to Him the firstfruits and our tithes and our offerings the way that God wants them to be, whether from the land or from the fruit of our labors.

Verse 9: "And He [God] has brought us into this place..."

What happens when He calls us: *He brings us to Him*, for a relationship with Him through:

- loving Him
- obeying Him
- with prayer
- with study
- with knowing God's Word

*All of that combined together!* “...and has given us this land, a land that flows with milk and honey” (v 9).

Now the truth of it is this: *spiritually, in the Church, that's what the brethren are to be given*, the Truth of God's Word, just like flowing with milk and honey.

Verse 10: “And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which You, O LORD, have given me.” And you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God. And *you shall rejoice* in all the good which the LORD your God has given to you, and to your house; you, and the Levite, and the stranger in your midst” (vs 10-11).

Now here's another thing, too: What is the greatest rejoicing that we are to do before God? Just the physical things that He has given us? *or* The spiritual things that He has given us?

- His Holy Spirit
- understanding His Word
- living by the Truth
- loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being

*That's the spiritual reality of what we're reading here!*

Verse 12: “When you have made an end of tithing all the tithes of your increase the third year, *which is* the year of tithing, and have given *it* to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (that they may eat inside your gates and be filled).”

The third tithe, talking about here, was the welfare program that God had for the children of Israel. Today, what do we have? *In this nation, and most of the nations of modern-day Israel, we have government welfare and assistance to people that actually costs us more than ten percent anyway, in our taxes.*

That's why the Church does not collect third tithe. However, there are those widows and those in need so we help them. Those who still want to give third tithe, in their third tithe year, the best way to work it out is to find a widow close to you—and if there's not one close to you, let me know; then we can send the money directly to the widow and we will take care of that on your annual receipt. That has worked very, very well. We are following, in a spiritual sense, what is commanded here.

Verse 13: “Then you shall say before the LORD your God, ‘I have brought away the Holy things out of my house, and also have given them to the Levite...’” *The Levites here are the retired*

*Levites*, because the other Levites receive the tithe and they did not need it.

“...and to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me. I have not broken Your commandments, neither have I forgotten them.... [sometimes that may be difficult to do, so]: ...I have not eaten of it in my mourning, neither have I put *any* of it away for unclean use... [that is *improper* use] ...nor have I given of it for the dead....” (vs 13-14)—*because that's the way that the religions of this world are!* You give money to have the dead have their souls come out of purgatory.

“...I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God...” (v 14)—*that's the whole sum of the Bible. God says, ‘obey My voice.’* That's the sum of the whole Bible, Old and New Testament. So that's what we have to determine.

“...and have done according to all that You have commanded me. Look down from Your Holy dwelling, from Heaven, and bless Your people Israel...” (vs 14-15).

Not just yourself, also the people in the Church, the people in the world, and we can't function without God also blessing the people in the world, because our incomes are related to what's going on in the economy.

“...and the land which You have given us as You swore to our fathers, a land that flows with milk and honey” (v 15).

I'll tell you one thing, in the United States of America never could that be more true. However, we see all the problems and difficulties that are taking place today, and they are taking place because as a nation we have forgotten God. As a Church we are Laodicean. So, we all need to repent whether we are in the Church, or people in the land; so that they could live by the letter of the Law in the land, and we live by the spirit of the Law within the Church, with the love of God.

Verse 16: “Today the LORD your God has commanded you to observe these laws and judgments. You, therefore, shall keep and observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.”

If you love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, how are you going to respond to God with the Sabbath and the Holy Days, and tithes and offerings, and doing the things that you need to do? *You're going to do it with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Verse 17: “You have declared today that the LORD is your God...”

When you come before God on the Sabbath and Holy Days, you are saying, ‘God in heaven and Jesus Christ at His right hand are my God.’

“...and that you would walk in His ways...” (v 17). *There is the way we are to walk in the New Testament! Jesus said we are to keep the laws in the spirit of the Law!*

“...and keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments, **and obey His voice**. And the LORD has taken you today to be **His specially treasured people...**” (vs 17-18).

Amplify that to the New Testament and see that we are called **Holy**; see that we are called **beloved**. **We are especially treasured by God!** So, here's what's important: within the Church, that's how we need to understand our relationship with God and with each other. That's why the Church and our assembling together *should be a joy* rather than a burden. Just like when God tells us to do things, He does it for our own good. And therefore we should do it with a cheerful attitude and a joy because of what God has done because He has called us to eternal life. Let's understand that!

I think it's very important that we went through the whole chapter to see and understand exactly what God has said, and apply this spiritually, to our day today and what God is doing with us.

Verse 19: “And to make you high above all nations...” **When we're spirit beings will that not be so?** Is not the Church of God, as God sees it, greater than all the nations on the earth? *Yes, indeed!*

“...which he has made in praise and in name and in honor... [apply this spiritually] ...and that you may be a Holy people to the LORD your God, even as He has spoken” (v 19).

Take these last two verses—18-19—and tie them to John 17, and especially the ones where God has **personally chosen us!**

Now let's see how much more we're going to be able to learn here on this day of the seven weeks—day 49. Let's see how the Church is likened to firstfruits. Then we will see how that compares with what God is doing on the earth, and that there is a perfect parallel between the planting and the harvesting of grain, and the calling and development of Christians and then how that relates to the first resurrection.

James 1:17: “Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above...”—*because God has determined it!*

What is the greatest and most perfect gift that we receive that comes from above? *The Holy Spirit of God!* As we're going to see tomorrow

[Pentecost], there are three instances of Mt. Zion: in the Old Testament, Acts 2 and Heb. 12; and I think you'll find that very interesting.

“...coming down from the Father of lights... [Who has personally called you] ...with Whom there is no variation... [I'm the ‘same yesterday, today and forever.’] ...nor shadow of turning” (v 17). *God's character is perfect, and this is what He wants to develop in us!*

Verse 18: “**According to His own will...** [God's own will and desire] ...He begat us by *the Word of Truth...* [by the Spirit of Truth] ...that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings.”

The ‘created beings’ here are referring to those who are born again in the resurrection at the return of Christ. You have been created in the image of Jesus, created after the image of the Father, etc.

Let's see how this process begins. Matt. 13:16 and here we have the parables of the planting or the sewing of the seed. Rather than read through the whole thing, I'm going to carry forward and see the planting of the seed. In doing so, I want you to take a broader view. I want you to think about all the experiences that you have gone through in the Church of God and you have observed:

- how people have come and how people have gone
- how people have grown in grace and knowledge
- how some have fallen away
- how some have come back
- how some have fallen away and haven't come back
- how sometimes that some people get really excited when they hear about the Word of God, but they don't have any endurance

I want you to think about all of those things as I'm reading this, and also think about where are they. I also want you, in your personal prayers, to pray for those people because remember this: *As long as there is life, there's hope!* As long as there is hope, and God can still deal with them, they can come back in repentance and be able to be restored.

The Church of God is not an executing squad of men with rifles to kill those they disagree with:

- we are to teach
- we are to help
- we are to nurture
- we are to help them grow in grace and in knowledge

So, if something isn't according to the liking of the minister and he kicks someone out and he says you're forbidden to talk to anyone in any other Church of God, ask them: ***Scripture and verse?!*** 'Well, it says here...' Ask them: Do you know their heart and mind? Can you judge them? 'So you can't tell me I can't talk with my father and my mother, my own physical parents, because you say you're some great apostle in the Church and you're going to tell me what to do?' My advice is: Get out of that church as fast as you can!

Matthew 13:16: "But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see... [God has opened our eyes, minds and hearts to see and understand] ...and your ears, because they hear"—*because you're willing to listen to God!*

I want you to understand the tremendous blessing of living in this age, that we have a lot of troubles coming down upon us. We have the whole Word of God. We have understanding of the Word of God. And God has revealed things in the New Testament and through His Spirit and teachings that He has so that it says right here:

Verse 17: "For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard." ***Think about that!***

Though Isaiah wrote all of his prophecies, you understand more of it than he did. Likewise with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, all the prophets and with Daniel. Daniel wanted to know; and what did God tell him: It's 'closed and sealed till the time of the end.' At the time of the end the wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand. Now we need to be thankful to God for this. And we need to realize that it is God's work and God's part within us to do this.

Verse 18: "Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart. This is the one who was sown by the way.... [they weren't converted; they fell by the wayside] ...Now, the one who was sown upon the rocky places is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy... ['Oh, this is great!'] ...but *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, he is quickly offended. And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful" (vs 18-22).

They didn't progress far enough beyond just the planting of the seeds of the Word for them to

understand. They did not progress far enough to receive the seed of the Holy Spirit. However:

Verse 23 shows the ones who did: "But the one who was sown on good ground, this is the one who hears the Word and understands... [when you understand it, you'll repent] ...who indeed brings forth fruit and produces—one a hundredfold, another sixtyfold and another thirtyfold."

Now, just as an aside, all grains have an even number of the rows of seed; not an odd number. You see, the Word of God and His creation all ties together, and we are the pinnacle of His creation, because He is creating His sons and daughters, made in His image, after the mind of Christ, after Their love, Truth and faith and everything else to be put in us.

Verse 24: "And He put another parable before them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is compared to a man who was sowing good seed in his field; **but while men were sleeping, his enemy came...**" (vs 24-25).

The enemy's always going to come. We're always going to have difficult times. Don't think that it's going to be totally love, joy and peace. We have joy when we overcome. We have peace when we understand the Word of God. But remember, Jesus said, 'In the world you will have tribulation, but in Me you will have peace. Be courageous!'

"...and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away" (v 25):

- *fake* Christians
- *fake* brethren
- *false* doctrine

Verse 26: "Now when the blades sprouted and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared"—*because they have no fruit!*

The blade in the grass looks just the same, and then when the grain starts, you can tell that's a wheat; but you can separate then the tares by looking at them.

Verse 27: "And the servants came to the master of the house *and* said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then where did these tares come from?'"

How did this happen? Now think of that in relationship to your experience within the Church. Have you ever said that of false ministers, false teachers, false doctrines and false brethren, how did that happen? Well, here it tells us. It's going to. That's why Jesus told us how many times over again—and the apostles—'***let no one deceive you by any means!***' *regardless of who it is.*

Verse 28: "And he said to them, 'A man who is an enemy has done this.' Then the servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go out and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest while you are gathering the tares, you also uproot the wheat with them'" (vs 28-29)

The truth of the matter is that **IF** you love God and know the Truth and obey the Truth, it does not matter what's going on around you, because your relationship is with God and it's not with men. You know the difference between right and wrong, between good and evil. You know how to live your life in those circumstances. Besides, in order to do that, He would have to change His plan immediately. So, He's not going to do it!

Verse 30: "Allow both to grow together until the harvest... [tie in Rev. 14] ...and at the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, 'Gather the tares first, and bind them into bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my granary.'"

Go back to the very first of the firstfruits, and there's a continuous wave of harvesting. Just like here in the United States: They start harvesting the grain in the southern area (like in Texas) and then they move north every week as the grain ripens as they go north. When they harvest it they put it into the granary. Now let's understand that's even symbolic of when we produce the fruit and we are ripe and we've reached old age and die, we're put into the grave, and the grave is really the granary.

Just like a grain and a body, Christians, when they die, are called sleeping. Grain, when it's harvested before it's planted again—the grain that was planted is gone now, just like our bodies are going to be gone, too—but the grain has all what is necessary to produce new grain when it's planted. So you can say the grain is like a Christian who died and is sleeping in the grave. When it comes time for the resurrection, there it will be!

Mark 4:26—let's see the parallel here: "Then He said, 'The Kingdom of God is likened to this: It is as if a man should cast seed upon the earth, And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, but he does not know how'" (vs 26-27).

Same thing today! They do not know what makes the grain grow. They know they have the grain. They can analyze what is in it. They can even distinguish the different genes that are in the grain, the different parts of the grain. But you take a seed and you put it in the ground. You water it. You can watch it grow. You can get up day and night and look at it, but:

- How does it grow?

- How does this little grain have life in it?
- Why can you put it in the water and soil and it grows?

It's the same way with spiritual character. We're going to see in just a little bit, **we have the seed of God within us!** And no one out in the world knows that God is working with us in our mind for us to develop the character and mind of God. Now they might see our outward behavior and understand that we're good people. But they don't know what's going on in the mind, just like when you plant a seed, you don't know how it's growing. **No one can see and understand the character, the love of God, the relationship with God that is going on within you!** Exact same thing!

Verse 28: "For the earth brings forth fruit of itself, first a blade, then a head, then full grain in the head. And when the grain is mature... [you have to be spiritually ripe and ready] ...immediately he puts in the sickle... [firstfruit, it's what we're talking about] ...for the harvest has come" (vs 28-29).

There are some tremendous analogies that we are going to see here and how it works out together.

Matthew 13:33: "Another parable He spoke to them: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until all was leavened.'"

This is a good use of leaven. But how leaven works within the dough is very similar to how does a grain grow. You don't know. You put it in there and it rises. We'll talk a little bit more about this tomorrow because this has great bearing on the offerings for the Day of Pentecost, the 50th day in Lev. 23.

Verse 34: "Jesus spoke all these things to the multitudes in parables, and without a parable He did not speak to them; so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world'" (vs 34-35).

I want you to understand that **you are understanding things that have been hidden even from angels**, from the foundation of the world. Because Paul said even angels '**desire to look into the things that we know and understand.**'

(Go to track #2)

Let's see the spiritual seed and how that is within each one of us individually. Remember where James said that God, **according to His own will:**

- in calling us
- in bringing us to repentance and

- converting us
- begat us by the Word of Truth

**So that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings!**

1-John—here we’re going to see the process; and we’re also going to see the contrast. **The contrast** is with the way it is in the world, and **the process** is with God’s Spirit. Keep your mind on this; remember the important thing in our lives and the key of growing and overcoming is that we always keep our mind:

- on the goal
- on the purpose
- on the end result

**and that will see you through every trial and tribulation and difficulty that you go through!** That will help you to love God even more, draw close to Him in prayer and understanding, understanding His Word, too.

1-John 3:1: “Behold! What glorious love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children... [‘teknos’] ...of God!....” *There are two words for ‘children’:*

1. ‘huios’—which means *son or child*
2. ‘teknos’—meaning *His very own begotten offspring*

**We haven’t attained to the resurrection,** so let’s see what else it tells us here.

“...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him” (v 1).

Just like they do not know—nor does anyone know—how a seed grows, the world doesn’t know us, other than the fact they might look upon us as nice people.

“...Beloved, now we are the children of God...” (v 2)—*though the resurrection has not yet come*, and we’re not yet full-fledged children of the resurrection.

“...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... [John didn’t know when he wrote this] ...but we know that when He is manifested... [that is at the return of Jesus Christ] ...we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.... [that’s going to be a great thing] ...And **everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself...**” (vs 2-3):

- through Christ
- repentance
- Holy Spirit
- growing
- overcoming

“...even as He is pure” (v 3)—*here comes the contrast:*

The King James says, v 4: “**Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**” Well, the Greek is even broader than that!

Verse 4: (FV): “Everyone who practices sin is also **practicing** lawlessness...”—**against Law**—the Laws of God! Lawlessness has to do with the seemingly good intentions of human beings to add to or take away from the Word of God. That’s called ‘**the way of Cain!**’

“...**for sin is lawlessness**” (v 4). It’s very broad; because Satan loves do-gooders; do-gooders that will couch sin in the terms of doing good, and entrap people into evil without them knowing it. You can think how this works in every way, in many different fields.

Verse 5: “And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Everyone who dwells in Him does not **practice** sin... [we’re talking about practicing evil **vs** practicing sin] ...anyone who **practices** sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him” (vs 5-6).

Sin is the transgression of the Law, so if you’re practicing Sunday, Easter, the Eucharist and the holidays of this world, all seemingly good Christian things to the world, **you are deceived and are practicing and living in sin under the guise of doing good!**

Whereas God has the Sabbath, the Passover and the Holy Days—and these are the three frameworks within the Bible on which everything that God has given us hangs. They practice sin. They don’t know God. Though they claim to know Him, they don’t know Him because that’s not the way you know God.

Verse 7—here’s the warning: “Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. The one **who practices sin...** [living a life of sin] ...**is of the devil...**” (vs 7-8)—**under his influence, prince of the power of the air, following the ways of the world!** That’s all of the devil!

“...because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.... [and is a liar from the beginning.] ...For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil” (v 8). *Not him, but the works; and annul it!* Notice the contrast all the way down:

- sin/righteousness
- good/evil

- practicing righteousness/practicing sin

Verse 9 makes the division very clear and shows us about the seed of begettal that is within us. So the parables all come together, and then we become the firstfruit of God and are harvested on Pentecost, which pictures the resurrection (we'll see that tomorrow), and it also shows how God is going to do this and let the tares be gathered after the resurrection occurs.

Verse 9: "Everyone who has been begotten by God **does not practice sin...**"

That's straight from the Greek. The *King James* says: 'cannot sin.' So therefore, they're deluded (the Protestants) who believe it's impossible to sin. They're deluded into thinking that once they've been 'born again'—the way they define 'born again' (which is incorrect)—that they can't sin. They can do whatever they want to, but they can't sin. Even if they're lying, cheating and stealing and committing adultery, they claim that when the call comes for the 'rapture' they're going to be raptured up because they cannot sin. Now, that is speaking out of both sides of your mouth with a forked tongue at the same time.

Here's why he cannot *practice* sin: "...because His seed... [Greek: 'sperma'] ...of begettal is dwelling within him, and he is **not able to practice sin** because he has been begotten by God" (v 9). **Does that mean we won't sin at all? No!**

1-John 5:16: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is* not unto death... [that means one you can repent of] ...he shall ask, and He [God] will give him life for those who do not sin unto death.... [that's why we confess our sins every day] ...There is a sin unto death; concerning that *sin*, I do not say that he should make *any supplication to God*. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death. We know that anyone who is begotten by God does not *practice* sin; for the one who has been begotten by God keeps himself *by the power of God*, and the wicked one does not touch him" (vs 16-18).

If you have the Spirit of God, what is the Spirit of God going to do when you sin? ***It's going to convict you, prick your conscience so you can repent!*** So, you can't practice sin. You can't live in sin.

Now you see the parallel between the planting of the seed, the harvesting of the firstfruit, the Church, the receiving of the Holy Spirit of God by begettal so that we can become a kind of firstfruits unto God. So, ***you have, with God's Spirit, the seed of begettal!*** Now you must grow and change and overcome:

- through your relationship with God the Father
- through the Word of God
- through the way that you live
- through keeping His commandments

***Then can be ready—qualified by God—to be resurrected at the first resurrection!*** That's the process.

Now let's see how Paul wrote of this; because this becomes very important for us to understand. It's in the Bible. It's in the New Testament. We have the physical type in the Old Testament, and then we have the anti-typical, or the spiritual type, in the New Testament, and they fit like a hand-in-glove.

Eph. 1 shows that God the Father is dealing in the lives of every one of us directly and personally. This puts a responsibility on all of us. It also puts a responsibility on all those who are teachers, elders and ministers, that they teach the Word of God, and to understand that using ***the Word of God is a stewardship! Preaching the Word of God is preaching the Truth!*** Feeding the flock is all part of it and the brethren do not belong to the minister nor to a corporate organization, but they have the begettal of God the Father, the seed of eternal life within their minds, and they are His.

So our job is to teach, to encourage, to train and yes, when there's correction, to bring correction. And let's understand something else, which is very important, too, which is this: ***Anyone who is yielding to God is going to be yielding to the correction of God on a daily basis.***

Therefore, if you have a relationship with God, which He wants you to have—that is close, that is personal, that is daily, through prayer and study and living God's way and keeping His commandments, God will do the correcting to you individually; and you don't need a minister to stand up in the pulpit and beat you on the head and throw fear into your heart and mind that hellfire and brimstone is coming down upon you. If a minister has to do that; and they are people who are in the Church—and they are His flock—that says that he's been delinquent in teaching the brethren; because God is able to correct them through being led of the Holy Spirit of God. Here's why:

Ephesians 1:4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before the foundation of the world..." ***Before the foundation of the world God knew He would personally choose those for eternal life!***

This does not mean we're predestinated by birth to do so, but predestinated by plan, provided

we answer the call and repent and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God.

“...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love... [*that's why we are called **Holy brethren***] ...having predestinated us... [that's the plan; that's the result of the calling] ...for sonship...” (vs 4-5).

We bear the name of God the Father, just like children: ‘***we are the children of God!***’ Where’s His name going to be? He’s going to give us a new name! His name is going to be in our foreheads; isn’t that what we’re told in Revelation? Yes, indeed!

“...to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will” (v 5). ***God has done that according to His own will and desire!***

That’s why one day you’re living your life and all of a sudden circumstances happen and you wanted to know: Where is God? Who is God? And God begins dealing with you. If you respond, His Spirit stays with you. If you don’t, it departs from you. Let’s keep that in mind.

Verse 6: “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of His grace in the Beloved Son.”

Everything we have to do with our relationship with God is through grace. Not only having our sins forgiven:

- being able to receive the Holy Spirit
- understanding the Word of God
- praying to God
- changing
- growing
- overcoming
- having access to the throne of God in heaven above
- having God’s Spirit

***is the greatest grace that we can receive!*** Now, we can’t receive that until we’ve already had the grace applied to us, so we can have the forgiveness of our sins.

Verse 7: “Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery [secret] of His own will...” (vs 7-9).

How many people know that? *Hardly any!* But all those who have the Holy Spirit of God have varying degrees of knowledge of it. This is why we need to grow in grace and in knowledge, so we can:

- know more of it

- know more how God is working
- know more what He is doing
- know how He is doing it

“...according to His good pleasure...” (v 9)—because when we’re resurrected, Psa. 16 says ***that there are joys forever more with God!*** All the things we’ve gone through in this life, as far as trouble and tribulation and difficulty, will be forgotten.

“...which He purposed in Himself... [His very own plan that He devised] ...that in the Divine plan for the fulfilling of the times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens... [to reconcile that] ...and the things upon the earth; yes, in Him... [Christ and God the Father] ...in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance...” (vs 9-11).

Did we not read in the beginning what the children of Israel were to do when they went into the ‘promised land,’ which was their inheritance? Yes!

What is our inheritance? *Not the promised land, but the Kingdom of God*, which is coming to this earth; and it is an inheritance, meaning you possess it and use it and it is yours; ***joint heirs with Christ!***

“...having been predestinated **according to His purpose**...” (v 11).

This is why we’re never to get down and discouraged and let it hang upon us like a pall or go around like ‘Joe Dipstick’ with a big cloud waving over you all the time, because ‘He’s called us according to His good pleasure, which He has purposed in Himself; in His plan; having an inheritance; having ‘predestinated us to His purpose’ of love, joy, peace and eternal life. Anyone with truly the desire is going to want that; because the longer you live and the more you understand, the more that you realize that ***this life without God***, as Solomon said, ***is vanity!*** That we are one breath away from dying. Now, that’s not to be morbid. That is so that we can look at things truly and be thankful to God that He has called us to eternal life.

“...Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will; that we might be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; in Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth...” (vs 11-13).

Remember what we read back there in Matt. 13: they hear the Word. But the ones who hear and act upon it, that’s what He’s talking about here:

“...the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing...” (v 13)—and you continue to:

- believe
- grow in faith
- love God
- serve Him

Why?

“...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...” (v 13).

When the ‘seed of begettal’ comes in our mind, it is an exactly an exact parallel between the begettal of a new human life in the womb. When the seed from the Father—the ‘sperma’—penetrates the egg from the mother, the egg seals so that nothing else can get in. There’s an exact parallel here. Our minds have been sealed with the Holy Spirit; that’s why in our growing and changing and overcoming in our relationship with God, we are not going to become an abortion; and we’re not going to become a premature birth. But we’re faithful to the end and are resurrected.

“...Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the* earnest... [that’s just the start, the down payment] ...of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory” (vs 13-14).

Everything from v 2 to v 14 in the Greek is one sentence. For all of you English buffs, the Greek does not follow the English rules of grammar. That would be classified as a gargantuan run-on sentence; that if you wrote something like that in first-year journalism you would flunk. But it’s the Word of God and it is the Truth!

Let’s tie 1-Cor. 15 together with Christ and with us, and come up to the time of the resurrection and then we will conclude there because tomorrow, the Day of Pentecost, pictures the first resurrection—the harvest of the firstfruits. This is talking about now how the firstfruits come to maturity, and we’re just like grain. When we’re ripe and die, we’re put into the granary to await the Holy Spirit for the resurrection so that we can enter into the Kingdom of God as spirit beings. That’s a fantastic plan that God has!

The truth is we need to be motivated, excited, happy, joyous, glad, serious—all of the things we need to do in understanding God’s calling—to make all of this happen. God has personally done it in our lives, and the lives of all the brethren wherever they are. Now that is fantastic.

What Paul writes; and what is astounding about this is, that even within the Church of God at that time there were people who were saying that there’s no resurrection, and the resurrection has passed, and that only applied to Christ. Sound a little bit like Protestantism today? Or Catholicism today?

You read their insane, double-mouthed doctrine on the resurrection of the body, and you will know that they don’t understand a thing.

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* Gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing.”

- standing in the Gospel
- receiving the Word of God
- receiving the grace of God
- receiving the Spirit of God

Verse 2: “By which you are also being saved...” *There are three steps to salvation:*

1. **saved** from your sins and having those forgiven
2. are **being saved** on a daily, progressive way as long as you stand in the Gospel and walk in the way of God; and walk in the Spirit of God.
3. But you **are being saved IF**—notice the two-letter word qualifier

...**if** you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you... [and **IF** you are not, you are not being saved] ...otherwise you have believed in vain” (v 2).

Those who believe in going to heaven believe in Jesus **in vain**. Just like Jesus told the scribes and the Pharisees concerning their traditions, that ‘in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.’ That’s what Sunday-keeping is, Easter is, the occult holidays are, and the doctrine of going to heaven **are all the traditions and doctrines of men!**

Jesus said, ‘**you full well reject the commandments of God.**’ Now, I can’t make it any plainer than that, **you believe in vain!**

Verse 3: “For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures... [Old and New Testament] ...and that He was buried... [at the set time] ...and that He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, *and then to the twelve*” (vs 3-5).

There were all of these witnesses, as we are going to see, of His resurrection. And Acts 1 said that He was **with them for forty days and forty nights, teaching them things concerning the Kingdom of God**, He was showing Himself alive. That’s why we have the written Word of God, **inspired by the Spirit of God, God breathed, and it is the Truth of God** so we can know that what we’re reading is true and that it did take place.

Verse 6: “Then He appeared to over five

hundred brethren at one time... [and that was out at the mountain in Galilee where He set to meet them] ...of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen sleep.... [a little harvest of grain in the granary] ...Next He appeared to James... [who was His half-brother] ...then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage" (vs 6-8).

He was called later. You know all about that and how Paul wrote of it.

Notice how Paul looked upon himself, v 9: "For I am the least of the apostles, *and* am not fit even to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God."

You will find that this is absolutely a truism, which never fails:

- the more you understand about God
- the more you understand about His calling
- the more you understand the preciousness of receiving the Holy Spirit
- the more you understand the purpose of why we are here

***the more humble you become, because God is developing in you the character of God!*** That's exactly what happened with Paul. We find in Eph. 3 that he said, '*I am less than the least of all the saints.*' So, Paul was no great, exalted, mucky-muck apostle, leading the way with authority and hammers and sticks to beat people into the Church and the Kingdom of God and make them do what they're supposed to be doing. *No!* He taught them; and he knew that unless they yielded to God it's up to God.

Verse 10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them..."

He worked harder knowing what he had done to persecute the Church! God blessed him in that, and Paul is responsible for 14 epistles plus the book of Acts—which Luke wrote and was Paul's right-hand man or secretary—plus the Gospel of Luke.

When you consider that that's only sixty percent of the New Testament under the aegis and the writing and the approval of the Apostle Paul. Now, do you think he's going to make a mistake? Do you think that this was written centuries later? *Nonsense! Never happen!*

"...however, *it was not I...*" (v 10). He didn't do it because of any great ability he had. No:

- he was beaten
- he was scourged

- he was stoned

*so that he would know!* No goodness came to him except from God. The ministry that he was given was because Christ had counted him worthy to put into the ministry.

"...but the grace of God with me.... [Paul says, 'let's get it all right']: ...Now then, whether I or they, so we preach, and so you have believed. But if Christ is being preached, that He rose from *the* dead, how *is it that* some among you are saying that there is no resurrection of *the* dead?" (vs 10-12).

An incredible thing, isn't it? Because what is our hope? *The hope of the resurrection!* So he's making it clear. For all of those of you who believe, or have believed in the past, or if you know nothing of the Bible and you think that everyone has souls and they're going to heaven or to hell or purgatory, listen up!

Verse 13: "**For if there is no resurrection from *the* dead, neither has Christ been raised....** [didn't happen then] ...And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is also in vain" (vs 13-14).

Of course, this is not in vain. But he continues to make the point. How foolish and silly it is for people to believe that souls go to heaven when Ezekiel says, 'the soul that sins it shall die.' Now what are you going to do with that?

Verse 15: "And we are also found to be false witnesses of God..."

God is a God of Truth; His Word is true; and if there's no resurrection, ***you're a false witness for God,*** and if you believe and you preach that souls are going to heaven, ***you are a false witness for God, you are not from God and have nothing to do with God,*** and why don't you quit using the name of Jesus Christ until you repent?

"...because we have testified of God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise, if indeed *the* dead are not raised. For if *the* dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. But if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins" (vs 15-17). *So you think about what you're preaching!*

If you're a Sunday-keeping minister and you preach about going to heaven when you die, and you give a sermon about how Aunt Lucy is up in heaven looking down here on us now, you better think again because you are in your sins. You better come to God, study the Bible, and repent! You're still in your sins.

Verse 18: "And those who have fallen asleep in Christ have then perished. If in this life

only we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most miserable” (vs 18-19).

That is his argument against what people claim there is no resurrection. Now then, he begins showing that there is a resurrection, and the purpose of the resurrection.

Verse 20: But now **Christ has been raised from the dead...**”

Paul said, ‘I saw Him. The apostles saw Him. Five hundred other brethren saw Him.’ Paul said he was taught separately, in the wastelands of Arabia, to understand the Word of God; **and he was taught for three years by Christ, personally and through vision!** Now, if you think he’s lying, think on this: Who was Balaam? *Balaam was a false prophet, and he wanted to come and curse Israel!*

So, God allowed him to go. Is a false prophet dedicated to his own purpose, wanting his money and everything? Was he not hired to curse? And remember, Balak said to him seven times: ‘I hired you to curse! And you’re blessing!’ Now, think on this: If Balaam, who was unwilling to preach the Truth, was willing to sin and be paid to curse, **God instead made him preach the Truth**, don’t you think that God was able to inspire the apostles and the Apostle Paul to preach the Truth? Were they not converted and yielded to Him? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 20: “But now **Christ has been raised from the dead;** He has become the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep.”

He is the firstborn from the dead; and that’s what the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures. That’s why the Wave Sheaf Offering Day falls on the day **after** the Sabbath.

Verse 21: “For since by man *came* death... [through Adam] ...by Man... [**Christ** the second Adam] ...also *came* the resurrection of *the* dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.... [it’s getting into what’s going to happen to us] ...But each in his own order: Christ *the* Firstfruit; then, those who are Christ’s at His coming” (vs 21-23).

That’s why Pentecost pictures the first resurrection. And we will see about the coming of Christ and how powerful and how moving and what an absolutely fantastic event that is going to be. Brethren, ***we have been called to be part of that!***

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*  
(except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 16:9-11
- 2) Exodus 23:14-17
- 3) Exodus 22:29-30
- 4) Exodus 34:19-20
- 5) Deuteronomy 26:1-19
- 6) James 1:17-18
- 7) Matthew 13:16-30
- 8) Mark 4:26-29
- 9) Matthew 13:33-35
- 10) 1-John 3:1-9
- 11) 1-John 5:16-18
- 12) Ephesians 1:4-14
- 13) 1-Corinthians 15:1-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Leviticus 23
- John 17
- Acts 2
- Hebrews 12
- Revelation 14
- Psalm 16
- Acts 1
- Ephesians 3

Also referenced: Sermon Series:  
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