

QUESTION: "In the article in the June issue of The Good News titled 'The True Pentecost Day,' it is stated that Pentecost always falls on Sunday. But in your booklet 'Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?' you say that Pentecost falls on Monday. Please explain which is right and what is the correct method of counting the fifty days of Pentecost. I'm sure that the discrepancies are not intentional, but I would like to be sure of the correct date so that I may observe Pentecost as God intended."

Mary B.,
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ANSWER: Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and our doctrinal committee have recently concluded a lengthy and very detailed study into the topic of which day is the correct day to observe Pentecost. We found that our previous understanding had been in error. We had been (up to this year — 1974) observing the day of Pentecost on the wrong day of the week — Monday.

Actually, Pentecost always falls on the first day of the week — Sunday. This year the Church of God kept Pentecost on a Sunday (May 26).

Shortly after making this change as a result of this new understanding, we withdrew our booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* and the reprint article "God's Sacred Calendar" in order to make the necessary revisions. God's Church *always has*, and *always will*, correct any error when proved *from the Bible*.

To briefly explain why God's Church found it absolutely necessary to change the day upon which it observed the festival of Pentecost, we will quote from an introductory note written by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong to a lengthy paper prepared by our theological researchers:

"To simplify it [the Pentecost question]... the crux of the matter is in [this] statement:



"... But when it [the Hebrew preposition *mi* or *min* in Leviticus 23:15] is translated as 'from' [instead of 'on'] and is used in conjunction with the element of *time*, it is *always* used inclusively, and never exclusively.

"... In the Hebrew, when in relation to time, it [the preposition *min*] should *never* be translated into the English 'from' but 'beginning *on*' ['the morrow after the sabbath' — Lev. 23:15]. It is the fact that one of the translators of the RSV [Revised Standard Version], who is chairman of the Revision Committee now revising the RSV, said not only that, but that he will strongly recommend the revision and will so translate it ['on' instead of 'from'], that caused me to change the Pentecost from Monday to Sunday. It is just that simple. In English, 50 days *from* a Sunday is always a *Monday*. But when I learned that two of the actual translators confirmed this as above, and I found the English 'from' to be *misleading*, I changed it immediately.

"One other point: in Deuteronomy 16:9 the Hebrew word for 'weeks' is *shabbua*, meaning primarily 'weeks,' but also 'seven,' 'sevened,' or 'sabbath.' But in Leviticus 23:15, 16 the word is *shabbat* meaning "sabbath," or a week always ending on a Sabbath, and not on any other day."

Now notice the properly translated plain instruction beginning Leviticus 23:15: "And ye shall count unto you *from* [*on*, or *beginning with*] the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty

days..." And that fiftieth day is Pentecost!

Starting then to count from the offering of the wave sheaf, with that Sunday as day number one, we will always come out on another Sunday — but *not* always on the same day of the month. It is something which must be "counted" each and every year.

Quoting from the *Mishna*, and speaking about the correct practice which had been followed in Jerusalem before the Pharisees took complete control, "[The Boethusians say:] Pentecost always falls on the day after the Sabbath" (*Chagigah*, 2, 4).

This makes very clear the meaning of the last part of Leviticus 23:15 and the beginning of verse 16: "... Seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days..."

A second and perhaps for some a simpler instruction for counting to Pentecost is found in Deuteronomy 16:9-10: "Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks [Pentecost]..."

Because seven weeks were counted, the festival of Pentecost was also known as the "feast of weeks."

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong has always taught that the individual members of God's Church must grow in grace and knowledge (II Peter 3:18), and as the Church is composed of individuals ("the collective" body of Christ), *so must the Church grow in grace and knowledge*. We must not refuse to correct ourselves no matter how traumatic that correction may be.

The next edition of *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?* has been corrected to conform to this new understanding.

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