

DO WE UNDERSTAND THE WAVE SHEAF OFFERING?

The importance of the Wave Sheaf Offering to the called out ones of the Father is more than significant. It is fundamental to our salvation.

Recently a controversy has arisen about when the day of the Wave Sheaf offering was to occur, and that now has become the focal point of this day. As it is disputed the tendency is to lose sight of the real importance of the Wave Sheaf. This is because of the failure to see its primary importance that it stands on its own as THE door to our salvation, but because it also is used to determine the date of Pentecost. It has become relegated to determining the date of the feast of Pentecost, and now even this has become something to be disputed.

Herbert W. Armstrong had to face this problem of when to observe Pentecost, and we find ourselves faced with a similar challenge. The underlying problem for HWA was the Sunday worship of a day dedicated by the world to worshiping the sun, which had replace God's Sabbath. His thinking was that Sunday would not be used by God as a High Sabbath day because it carried the connotation of sun worship.

Because the Wave Sheaf offering was made on the day following the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened bread, on some years the Passover occurs on the Sabbath. When this happens a decision must be made. What is more important? To have the weekly Sabbath occurring during the Days of Unleavened Bread, or to have the Wave Sheaf offering occurring on the day following the Passover? This is the first day of the week of Unleavened Bread. Insisting that the the weekly Sabbath occurs during the days of Unleavened Bread would result in the Wave Sheaf offering falling on the first day of the week outside of the seven sinless days. As Christ was the sinless offering He had to be presented to the Father during these days, picturing a sinless life. Therefore, the Sabbath of the Passover determines the first day to the count of Pentecost, which would be the first day of Unleavened Bread for that year.

Satan recognizes the importance of the first day of the week which God uses as an important starting point. Therefore Satan appropriated it as a substitute for the seventh day, the Sabbath God ordained, and Satan calls it Sunday instead of calling it the first day of the week as God calls it. It is well known that if you tell a lie often enough it eventually appears to be truth.

Once again we see the hand of the arch deceiver at work with yet another wedge being driven into the Body of Christ to promote division. The fruits of division are: Doubt and uncertainty, and ultimately the loss of faith, ending in permanent death for those unable or unwilling to see the true cause of their existence. The desire we have in us to live to please God as given us through His word opens us to this form of attack. Above all we want to be correct. When this happens our attention can be turned from the real understanding, the real significance of this day, to one of reacting to when this day should be determined.

At every turn we are inundated with more questions that are designed to bring doubt to our beliefs. When faced with these challenges our faith is either strengthened or weakened depending on our reaching out to embrace the love of the truth. That reaching out entails the study of God's word and the opening of our minds to God's Spirit. The desire is to understand what God is teaching, and the more effort put into becoming like the Father and His Son in character the more He grants His Spirit to us. Eph. 4:11-13. *"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. For the equipping*

of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”

This desire to become like the Father and Christ is the litmus test of what we believe. God’s word never varies from this goal; with all of the Sabbaths, weekly as well as the high days that we keep ultimately point us to this goal - not only us, but all of mankind who have ever lived.

Beginning with the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, the Wave Sheaf offering stands as the benchmark and a confirming stamp of approval to all that Christ did in His entire human life. Without His acceptance by the Father, Christ’s life would have amounted to no more than any other human who walked this earth. Jesus understood that His life had to be lived to qualify Him to be that perfect sacrifice that would be accepted by the Father.

There are seven scriptures in the book of John that speak to His glorification by the Father. That is the acceptance of the Wave Sheaf Offering which is the picture of that acceptance.

Beginning in John 7:38-39, *“He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart (belly) will flow rivers of living water.” “But this He spoke concerning the Spirit whom those believing in Him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

John 8:54, *“Jesus answered, ‘If I honor myself, my honor is nothing. It is my Father who honors me, of whom you say that He is your God.’”* (Note: Honor is plural, meaning past, present, and future.)

John 12:16, *“His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, (accepted as the Wave Sheaf offering,) then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and that they had done these things to Him.”* Vs 23 & 24, *“But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain.’”*

John 13:31-33, *“So when He had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man is glorified,’ (The “now” is future tense, see John 12:31,) and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.”* Immediately is #2117 in Strong’s, which means straight as a road without curves or hills that can be traveled quickly. Again, pointing to the near future; four and one half days. *“Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, Where I am going you cannot come.”*

John 17:1,4-5, *“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.’”*

This glory that Jesus spoke of, and John wrote about, was the acceptance of Christ as the Wave Sheaf Offering on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, after His resurrection. This is

verified by His statement, *“before the world was....”* (See the description of Christ in His glorified state in Rev. 1.)

Reading in John 16:7, *“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I depart I will send It to you.”* And in verse 16, *“A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.”* Without this acceptance, there would be no passing over or remission of sin, no coming forth of the Father’s Holy Spirit. The door of our salvation would remain closed. Eph. 3:14-16. *“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might thru His spirit in the inner man.”* The harvest cannot begin without the Wave Sheaf offering and its acceptance by the Father.

I Cor. 15:17-23, *“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruit 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 shall all be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruit, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.”* Note that “firstfruits” is corrected here to “firstfruit” to reflect the true Greek meaning of #536. (Christ being the only one presently accepted by the Father.)

In verse 20 Paul tells us that Christ became the firstfruit of those that slept. This statement basically applied to the Old Testament fathers and prophets who became the New Testament church in its infancy. To become the firstfruit, Christ had to be accepted by God the Father. If we go back once again to Leviticus 23 we can understand more clearly the wave sheaf offering.

Note the direction given in Leviticus 23:11, *“He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be ACCEPTED ON YOUR BEHALF.”* Accepted on your behalf is translated from the word “*rason*,” which is #7522. This masculine noun occurs over fifty times in the Old Testament. It carries three major shades of meaning; the primary one being, “favor of God,” or the “goodwill of God.”

The second shade of meaning is “the delight” or “acceptance” of an individual, and always in a religious or ritual sense. Ex.28:38, *“So it shall be on Aarons forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be ACCEPTED before the Lord.”* The word “*rason*” describes the “permissibility” or “acceptance of a gift, or sacrifice.

Lev. 22:20, *“But whatever has a defect you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf.”* The context is clear. Nothing moves forward without the acceptance by God of the wave sheaf.

It is much like an inheritance promised by an unmarried elder brother. Until that brother dies all is subject to change. But, upon his death the inheritance is subject to a reading of the will, the issuing of a check, the signing of the check, the depositing of the check, and finally the bank verifying that substance is real, and is made available to you. You have nothing until the

bank accepts the check as valid. We have nothing until the Father accepts Christ's sacrifice. Nothing is available to us; no remission of sin; no Holy Spirit.

Using the same analogy, while realizing that the Old Testament constitutes the Last Will of Christ, and that the Father is the authorizing authority, then it is He who must confirm the death of Christ to be the fulfillment of a sinless sacrifice by the acceptance of the Wave Sheaf offering. The acceptance must happen before the Will can be carried out, meaning that the statement made by Christ to man begins on the first day of the week in Genesis 1:3-5. And continues on to John 20:1, 16-17. *"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb." Vs.16-17, "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him, 'Rabboni!' (Which is to say teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.'"*

This was the first day of the week, the eighteenth day of Nisan, 30 AD, and is the true beginning of the New Testament, thus making the four gospels part of the Old Testament which contain the historical events leading up to His death, depicting the actions and requirements of what is expected of the inheritors and the rewards to be received by them. Following the Father's acceptance of the Wave Sheaf offering the Father now takes on the responsibility of determining who it is that complies with the requirements of the Will. The executor of the Will is responsible to see that all the provisions of the Will are carried out.

John 5:24. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my words and believes in Him (the Father) who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."* Read the article JOHN 5:22 CLARIFICATION OF WORD JUDGMENT.

Matt. 22:11-13. *"But when the king (the Father) came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said unto the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"*

The seven days of unleavened bread, which picture living our lives free of sin by following the example set for us by Christ, cannot be lived, and cannot proceed without the accepted Wave Sheaf. Isa. 64:6, "But we are like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Phip. 3:8:9, *"But indeed I count all things as loss for the excellence of knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in (of) Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."* The word "law" in Strong's is number 3551 with the following definition. "Of laws relating to external religious rights, e.g., purification (Luke 2:22; Hebrews 9:22); circumcision (John 7:23; Acts 15:5); sacrifices (Hebrews 10:8; Leviticus 6:9, 14)."

Paul is saying here that all of his human efforts to live by the law (the external law, not the commandments) were valued as garbage and that without Christ's resurrection and acceptance by the Father, his faith would be in vain.

In Heb. 1:1-2, *"God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds."* Here God includes the fathers and the prophets of the Old Testament, along with those of the New Testament, us, when appointing His Son heir of all things.

Jumping ahead to Pentecost we see what is waved by the priest for acceptance by the Father. Lev. 23:17, *"You shall bring from your habitations two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the first fruits to the Lord."* Just as the two wave loaves must be accepted, our acceptance is represented by these two loaves.

Why two loaves? The answer is covered in Heb. 1:1. There are two groups represented – The Old Testament and the New Testament. The acceptance of the wave sheaf (Christ) is for these two groups: Those who have lived their lives by faith and died before Christ and those who see the record of Christ's sacrifice and its acceptance by the Father by faith, and live their lives accordingly. Heb. 11:6, tells us what the reward is; eternal life in His kingdom. Just as those of the Old Testament lived their lives by faith without Christ's sacrifice yet being accepted, in their minds it was as good as done, we see that their faith, as well as ours, cannot be accepted without the Father first accepting Christ's sacrifice. This is precisely why the wave sheaf offering must fall within the days of unleavened bread – the days that represent sinlessness.

Heb. 12:1-2, *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* Christ could not have sat down at the Father's right hand without His acceptance as the wave sheaf offering. Rev.5:6-7. *"And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne."*

The days of unleavened bread picture righteous living; living without sin. Any attempt at righteous living without Christ's sacrifice being accepted is nothing more than filthy rags. For those days to have any meaning the wave sheaf must fall within the days of unleavened bread.

Some of the Old Testament people had faith prior to Christ's resurrection and acceptance by the Father and the rest of us by faith because of the written record. John 17:20-21, *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."*

Without the acceptance of Christ as the first fruit by the Father, any effort at righteousness is nothing but garbage. This alone should be enough for us to follow Mr. Armstrong's teaching on

the subject. Quoted from the 1940 Good News Letter by Mr. Armstrong: “On the morrow after the sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the priest waved the Wave Sheaf, and none could be used until this was done.”

1943 Good News Letter by HWA reads: “Jesus, the great Antitypical Lamb, and His resurrection, the Antitypical Wave Sheaf was presented before and accepted of God on the morrow after the WEEKLY sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread, A.D.31.”

1976 Edition of Pagan Holidays, or God’s Holydays – Which?

“This event (the Wave Sheaf) ALWAYS occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread. (See Joshua 5.) This fulfillment of the Wave Sheaf offering actually occurred on Sunday, the morrow after the Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread.”

1981 – Never Before Understood Booklet by HWA

The third is the Feast of Firstfruits, called in the New Testament, “Pentecost,” because it came fifty days after the cutting of the Wave Sheaf during the Days of Unleavened Bread.”

These four written references, showing Mr. Armstrong’s teaching on the subject are clear. They cover 41 years of his ministry, coming to within four years of his death. This is conclusive proof of what he taught on this subject. The Wave Sheaf offering must occur during the Days of Unleavened Bread, which represents a sinless life and is what the Bible teaches.

As a result of this study it can now be determined what is the exact beginning and ending point of the five eras of the Bible, as follows:

#1 – From the creation of the angels and the universe, to the re-creation of the world that we now live in. Job 38:1-7.

#2 – From the first day of the week of the re-creation of the earth. Gen. 1:3-5, to the first day of the week when Christ was accepted by the Father as the Wave Sheaf offering. John 20:1, 16-17. The time that should rightfully be called the Old Testament.

#3 – From the first day of the week on which the Father accepted Christ as the Wave Sheaf offering. John 20:1, 16-17 to the fulfillment of Pentecost on the first day of the week, picturing the resurrection of the saints. I Cor. 15:51-53. *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”*

Lev. 23:15-16. *“Count fifty days to the day after the Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two tenths of ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the Lord.”* Also read I Thes. 4:14-17.

#4 – From the first day of the week, Pentecost, picturing the resurrection of the saints, through the millennial reign of Christ. Rev. 20:13-15.

#5 – From the fiery destruction of the surface of the earth, and the Father bringing New Jerusalem to the earth. Rev. 21:1-2. This era lasts forever.

There is one additional point that should be made about this very important event in God's plan. One might wonder about a day that had such a great significance, yet is not observed by us in a more special way. For the Father this had to be a very personal and affectionate time to welcome His Son, who had successfully completed the most vital part of His plan to reproduce His family of sons.

There are times that are so private and endearing between two that they are not shared by others. These special times can be talked about and explained, but not shared with others.

There is no biblical commitment to set aside this day as one to be observed by God's people.

All of the Sabbaths that we observe are an intimate sharing with the Father of His plan for us, but the Wave Sheaf day was withheld from us as a celebrated day, and remains special to the Father and His Son alone.

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