

# Pentecost Calculations 2

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A HOT TOPIC in prophecy circles is whether June 24–25 could mark true Pentecost this year.

In this study, we will consider a scenario that makes this date seem at least plausible.

## DETERMINING THE DAY OF FIRSTFRUITS

The first new moon after the spring equinox, Nisan 1, was April 13 this year. Thus, Passover is April 27 and the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread spans April 28–May 4 (Lev. 23:4–8).

The correct reckoning of the Day of Firstfruits, the day of the wave sheaf offering, is a matter of debate.

Scripture says the sheaf of grain is to be waved the day after the Sabbath:

“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” (Lev. 23:11).

The question is, which Sabbath?

- Some believe it is the first day of the week of Unleavened Bread, which is a Sabbath (v. 7). This reckoning would put Firstfruits on April 29.
- Some believe it is the regular Saturday Sabbath during the week of Unleavened Bread. This reckoning would put Firstfruits on May 2.
- Some believe it is the last day of Unleavened Bread, which is also a Sabbath (v. 8). This reckoning would put Firstfruits on May 5.

Seeing how the seven days of Unleavened Bread signify a time of purification, let us consider the third scenario, which has Firstfruits landing on May 5.

## THE WEEK OF PURIFICATION

Puzzling to many Bible readers is the post-resurrection interaction between Jesus and Mary in which the Lord cautions Mary to avoid touching him. Yet a week later, the Lord invites Thomas to do just that.

The different interactions have to do with the purity requirement for the Jewish priest. When the Lord appeared to Mary He was preparing to act as the ultimate high priest by presenting himself before the Father as the firstfruits of the resurrection to come (Heb. 9; 1 Cor. 15:20–23). According to biblical law, which Jesus came to fulfill (Matt. 5:17), the high priest was forbidden to come into contact with anything ceremonially unclean as this would disqualify him from entering into God’s presence (Num. 19:12). This is why in ancient Israel the priest would be sequestered to a special chamber for the seven days preceding Yom Kippur (to avoid becoming unclean), and is why the Lord couldn’t allow Mary to touch Him—she could have been defiled by a menstrual cycle, stepping into the tomb, etc.

With the seven days of purification in view, it is significant that after Jesus’ initial appearance to Mary and the disciples on resurrection Sunday, He was not seen or touched until a week later (John 20:26).

Could the seven days of purification, or Unleavened Bread, explain the Lord’s nonappearance during the week after His resurrection?

In this scenario, Jesus resurrected after the three days but would not have presented Himself before the Father as the “firstfruits” until the seven days of consecration were complete. This is why we see no one touching the Lord until a week has passed.

#### PENTECOST CALCULATION

If the day after the week of Unleavened Bread is the true Day of Firstfruits, May 5 is the start date for the seven weeks preceding Pentecost (Lev. 23:15).

Counting seven weeks from May 5, we arrive at June 23. The following day, the full moon of June 24, would thus mark Pentecost, the 50<sup>th</sup> day.

As always, calculations are only calculations and are not intended as rapture predictions. While Scripture says we will see the day approaching, we are told that no one knows the day (Heb. 10:25; Matt. 24:36).

So keep watch!

#### NOTES:

1. Leaven represents sin or corruption in Scripture (Matt. 16:6). Thus, the week of Unleavened Bread, during which all leaven is to be removed from the home, symbolizes a time of purification (Lev. 23:6; Ex. 12:19).

2. Jesus Himself was dead and thus “unclean.” It would thus be conforming to the Law for Him to observe a seven-day period of purification before being ceremonially fit to enter into the presence of the Father:

“He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; *then* he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD” (Num. 19:1 –13).

3. Some do a Pentecost reckoning based on the moon phase (lunar Sabbath theory), which has the seven-weeks count to Pentecost totaling something different than 49 days. However, Scripture is clear that there are seven full weeks of days (49 days) preceding Pentecost (Lev. 23:15, 16). The word Pentecost literally means 50<sup>th</sup>, and a 50<sup>th</sup> must be preceded by 49. Some teach that the 50 refers to a separate count of 50 days that follows the seven weeks. However, the Pentecost reckoning in Deuteronomy clearly specifies only seven weeks: “Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee ... And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks.” (Deut. 16:9, 10). Also, the seven weeks count is patterned after the Jubilee, which is a straightforward count of seven sevens, not a count of seven sevens plus another 50.