

“And ye shall COUNT UNTO YOU from the morrow after the sabbath [the Passover holy day] . . . seven weeks [correct translation] shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh week shall ye NUMBER FIFTY DAYS” (Lev.23:15-16).

Sefirat Ha Omer -- The Key To Being an OVERCOMER!

Why does God command His people to “count the Omer” each day from Passover until Pentecost? What is pictured by this “Omer countdown”? Here is a vital truth about SIN AND OVERCOMING which the end-time churches have completely missed -- the VITAL KEY to becoming a spiritual OVERCOMER!

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In the book of Leviticus God commands His people: “And ye shall *count* unto you from the morrow after the sabbath [the Passover high holyday] , from the day that ye brought the sheaf [Hebrew, *omer*, consisting of 5.1 pints of barley grain] of the wave offering; *seven sabbaths [weeks] shall be complete*” (Lev.23:15, KJV). What is this mysterious command all about? Is this something which applies to true Christians and believers in Christ today? Or is this just something that concerned ancient Israel?

What does this mean? Many people neglect this command of God. They may not be aware of it. Or they may consider it one of the “least commandments” (Matt.5:19). But God commands His people to COUNT THE OMER during the fifty days, from Passover until Pentecost -- numbering off the days consecutively, as they arrive -- until the Feast of Shavuot, or Pentecost, arrives! He commands us to DO IT -- for a great and overriding purpose!

Why? What does the “Omer” represent? And why are we commanded to “count” it off for seven times seven or forty nine days, till Pentecost arrives, on the fiftieth day?

Believe it or not, hidden in the mystery behind the Omer count, is a vital KEY to spiritual OVERCOMING -- A HIDDEN KEY OF POWER to enable us to achieve and enter into the Kingdom of GOD!

The Meaning of the Omer Itself

In Leviticus 23 we read, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a SHEAF of the FIRSTFRUITS of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall WAVE THE SHEAF before the Lord, to be ACCEPTED FOR YOU: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

“And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord” (Lev.23:10-12).

What is this “wave sheaf” offering? What does it symbolize and represent? Notice that it is a sheaf of the “first fruits,” and it is offered to God before the Israelites can harvest the spring harvest. God commands, “And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears” -- that is, produce from the new harvest -- “until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a STATUTE FOR EVER throughout your generations in all your dwellings” (Lev.23:14).

In the book of Romans, Paul writes to Christians, saying, “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom.8:23).

Christians, those called of God during this lifetime to serve and obey Him, out of every nation, are likened to “firstfruits” of God. We have the “firstfruits of the Spirit” of God as a down payment, or earnest (Eph.1:4-14) of our inheritance, as we are the ones who “should be to the praise of his glory, who FIRST trusted in Christ” (v.12). In writing of Christians in the region of Achaia, Paul says of them, “Salute my well beloved Epaenetus, who is the FIRSTFRUITS of Achaia unto Christ” (Rom.16:5). In the book of James we read: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS of his creation” (James 1:18). Also, in Revelation God speaks of the members of the true Church of God as those who “were redeemed from among men, being FIRSTFRUITS to God and to the Lamb” (Rev.14:1-4).

In the book of Romans, Paul addresses our calling -- which is special, and unique, in the sight of God. Of all people on earth, we are the few who have been given the Spirit of God as a begettal, indwelling within us -- a priceless heritage and gift! Therefore “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Rom.5:5). Paul goes on, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God DWELL in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom.8:1-9).

How, then, does this relate to the “wave sheaf” offering which was performed the day after the first high holy day of Passover in the spring? Let's understand! In the book *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, by Alfred Edersheim, we read of the reaping of the wave sheaf, and its presentation. At the end of the 15th of Nisan, says Edersheim, just as it was growing dark,

“a noisy throng followed delegates of the Sanhedrin outside the city and across the brook Kidron. . . . [They] emerged amidst loud demonstrations, in a field across

Kidron, which had been marked out for the purpose. They were to be engaged in a service most important to them. . . . The law had it, 'Ye shall bring a SHEAF [literally the omer] of the FIRSTFRUITS of your HARVEST unto the priest [who typified, or represented CHRIST]; and he shall wave the omer before Jehovah [God the Father], to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath shall ye wave it.' This Passover-sheaf, or rather omer, was to be accompanied by a burnt-offering, of a 'he lamb, without blemish, of the first year,' with its appropriate meat- and drink- offering, and after it had been brought, but not till then, fresh barley might be used and sold in the land. Now, this Passover sheaf was reaped in public the evening before it was offered, and it was to witness this ceremony that the crowd gathered around 'the elders,' who took care that all was done according to traditionary ordinance" (p.256-57)

In the past, many have ASSUMED -- and many STILL assume -- that the "wave sheaf" offering referred to Jesus Christ, who was the offering for our sins upon the stake (II Cor.5:20). But does this make any sense, when we stop to think about it? It was accompanied by the offering of a male lamb without blemish -- which itself typified Christ! It was waved by the high priest before God, to be accepted of the Father -- and the high priest typified Christ, our "high priest" in heaven (Heb.7:24-28; 9:24; 10:10). Furthermore, this "wave sheaf" was offered AFTER the sacrifice of Christ our Passover Lamb (I Cor.5:7-8). The Passover lambs were slain in the afternoon of Nisan 14 -- the precise time when Yeshua the Messiah was slain for us!

Clearly, then, the wave sheaf -- contrary to what many have assumed and believed -- does NOT refer to Christ at all -- but rather is made possible BY the Sacrifice of Christ, which precedes it in time sequence! We have the following sequence of events: 1) the sacrifice of Christ on Nisan 14, late afternoon; 2) the holy day of Passover -- Nisan 15; 3) the next evening, as Nisan 16 began, a sheaf (bundle) of grain is selected from the field across the Kidron valley, east of Jerusalem, and cut and bundled; 4) the next morning, Nisan 16, it is prepared and waved before the Lord and accepted of Him as "THE FIRSTFRUITS" of the harvest.

Do you begin to comprehend? Do you see? The wave sheaf offering is an offering which is a BUNDLE OF SEPARATE BARLEY GRAINS, FROM A NUMBER OF PLANTS, AMOUNTING TO AN "OMER" -- about five pints, or two and one half quarts. This offering *followed* the offering of Christ, as our Passover lamb, who paid for our sins. It was *accompanied* the burnt offering of a lamb -- Christ -- without blemish (Lev.23:12). The wave sheaf itself, then, is NOT CHRIST!

What then is it?

The Wave Sheaf Offering, composed of MANY individual grains, offered together, made possible by the sacrifice of Christ, represents US -- TRUE CHRISTIANS -- those called of God during this age, as His "FIRSTFRUITS"!

It was offered to the Father AFTER the sacrifice of Christ, because there is NO WAY the Father could accept us BEFORE our sins were pardoned, and atoned for, and wiped away and washed away by the blood of Christ! But since Christ became our Saviour, and qualified by living a perfect life, and DIED for us on the stake, this made possible OUR acceptance before the throne of God in Heaven! WE are that WAVE SHEAF OFFERING! *We are the "FIRSTFRUITS"!*

What could be plainer?

But why, then, are we commanded to “COUNT THE OMER” or the wave sheaf for seven times seven days, from Passover until Pentecost? Ah, herein lies a mystery -- a fascinating new truth hidden from the gaze of virtually all of God's people until NOW!

A Lesson from Judaism

A key to understanding this puzzle is provided in the book *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*. Rabbi Greenburg writes:

“The holiday of Shavuot [Pentecost] . . . celebrates and renews the covenant of the Jewish people. In accordance with the classical rabbinical method, Shavuot is the time when Jews recreate the Revelation at Sinai and then reaccept the book of the covenant.

“The reenactment of Sinai starts forty-nine days before the event. . . [T]he countdown begins on the first night after the Exodus. The Omer is counted every night from one to forty-nine, by days and by weeks. According to Maimonides' interpretation, as soon as the Israelites were out of Egypt, they looked forward to receiving the Torah. Maimonides views Sefirat Ha'Omer (Counting of the Omer) as the *outcome of the extraordinary anticipation* that the Jews felt for the moment of *Revelation*. *The Israelites COUNTED EVERY NIGHT much like a child who counts the days until his or her birthday.*

“Earlier rabbinic midrash [teaching] interprets the weeks between Passover and Shavuot AS A PASSAGE PERIOD FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM. The Israelites came out of Egypt *saturated with Egyptian values; the forty-nine days enabled them to 'REMOVE THE IMPURITIES OF EGYPT' . . .*

“The Omer count goes on for seven times seven days. Seven is the number/symbol of PERFECTION in biblical language, as evidenced in such facts as the Sabbath is the seventh day, the slave goes free in the seventh year, and so on. The number forty-nine communicates arrival at the pinnacle of PERFECTION. DAY BY DAY the individual WORKS ON THE INNER SELF, STRIVING TO ATTAIN THE LEVEL OF PERFECTION WORTHY OF RECEIVING THE TORAH” (The Jewish Way, p.80-81).

Consider this: From Passover to Pentecost pictures the Christian life. It is to be a lifetime spent in *overcoming*. Each and every day is vital, and important. Each day brings us nearer to the coming of Christ, and the “wedding Feast” of the Lamb, which Pentecost itself pictures! God delivered “Israel” out of Egypt at Passover. He brought them through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness to the foot of Mount Sinai. And then God “married” Israel on Pentecost, at Mount Sinai, when He gave them His covenant and they accepted it (Exodus 24:1-11; Jer.3:14).

What does this picture? Passover pictures our repentance and acceptance of Christ as our Messiah and Saviour. Going through the Red Sea pictures our baptism (I Cor.10:1-3). These things that happened to Israel were *examples for us!* “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom.15:4). “Now these things were OUR EXAMPLES, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them . . . Neither let us commit fornication [sexual immorality], as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some

of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. *Now all of these things happened unto them for ENSAMPLES: and they are written for OUR admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [age] are come*" (I Cor.10:6-11).

The Lesson of Remembering to Count Daily the Omer

Fifty days after Passover, and the death of the Egyptians' firstborn, Israel met God at Mount Sinai. These *fifty days* are a spiritual TYPE! They typify the Christian escape from the kingdom of this world (Nimrod) and the power of SIN (Egypt), and picture our departing from "sin," and captivity to "sin," and being baptized, and journeying out of sin, and following God's truth, and His commandments, and a life of overcoming, and enduring to the end, till the great "Wedding Day" when Christ comes for His church, the "bride" (Rev.19:7).

The lesson of counting the "Omer" every day, for seven times seven weeks, or 49 days, till Pentecost, or Shavuot, "the Feast of Weeks," pictures our daily fight to overcome -- our overcoming and putting sin out of our lives, till the very end! As Paul says, we are to "Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *redeeming the time*, because the days are evil" (Eph.5:16). As David wrote, "So teach us to *number our days*, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

In essence, the 50 days between Passover and Pentecost are a microcosmic "Jubilee" period, with Pentecost being the "50th day" ("Pentecost" means "Fiftieth Day"), or the anti-type of the "Jubilee Year" which is the 50th year after seven times seven weeks of years (Leviticus 25). Thus this 50-day period from Passover -- a type of our day of "conversion" -- to Pentecost -- picturing the great Wedding Day at the coming of Christ -- pictures the Christian life during which we must prepare, qualify, overcome sin, and root out every vestige of "spiritual Egypt" out of our character and lives!

During these fifty days, we ought to "count the Omer" -- each day -- and think about and meditate on OVERCOMING and preparing to meet Christ, and get ourselves READY, SPIRITUALLY, working on ourselves, striving for PERFECTION, so that we "may be accounted WORTHY . . . to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

During this time period, we should be focusing our attention on overcoming, and growing in grace and knowledge -- praying and studying God's Word, as never before, intently, with concentrated effort and zealous endeavor. It is and ought to be a *focused, concentrated time of distilled essence of Overcoming!* As such, occurring at the beginning of God's sacred year, it is and ought to be the *pattern or template* of our overcoming sin and evil throughout all the rest or remainder of the year. It is sort of like a "nucleus of overcoming." It sets the *pattern* for the entire year!

If we then fulfill the command of God to "count the Omer" daily, from Passover to Pentecost, this helps us *keep in our mind* our primary duty and the primary meaning of these "Days of Overcoming"! And it helps us to be in a right frame of mind of overcoming, throughout the remainder of the year!

Do you see? For years and even today, end-time churches of God have been totally

neglecting this command to count the Omer daily. They simply have not been aware of it, and have not been doing it. No wonder, then, they have had such a miserable and terrible time when it comes to *overcoming* and *putting sin out of their lives!*

Many have thought that the “Days of Unleavened Bread” pictured putting sin out of our lives. However, this not precisely the case. The Days of Unleavened Bread picture *coming out of Egypt -- or sin*. That is, they begin with Passover (during the evening on the 15th of Nisan) and finish with Israel coming through the Red Sea (the final holy day of Unleavened Bread), which pictures Baptism (Rom.6:1-6). But Baptism is merely the *beginning point* of the Christian life! It isn't all finished at your Baptism -- it has merely *begun!*

From that point forward, as the Israelites journeyed through the DESERT, and suffered many trials and afflictions, their journey through the WILDERNESS pictures the *Christian life of overcoming, and enduring, and preparing to meet God -- the Messiah -- at Mount Zion!* The occasion of ancient Israel meeting God at Sinai, where the “Old Covenant” -- a marriage covenant -- was enacted, was an amazing type of our soon-coming marriage to CHRIST, when the NEW COVENANT MARRIAGE with Him will be completed, and the Church will become His spiritual BRIDE for all eternity!

The truth about the “counting of the Omer,” then, has been a sorely NEGLECTED, and ignored truth, and provides a KEY -- A SECRET TO OVERCOMING! Learning to “count the Omer” from Passover to Pentecost teaches us and instills in us the habit of obedience; it inculcates in us the self-discipline to REMEMBER to “count” every day and to keep IN MIND where we are going; in instills in us and helps to set within our minds and hearts our TRUE GOAL IN LIFE -- the Kingdom of GOD!

Many, by not realizing this truth, and by neglecting to count the Omer faithfully, have tended to “let down” in their own personal “overcoming,” and have also “lost sight of” the vision-Quest of the Kingdom. They have lost spiritual FOCUS. They have become entangled with the things of this life, discouragement, despair, seeing the overwhelming trials of the “wilderness” around them, and have taken their eyes OFF the true “end of the journey” -- the KINGDOM OF GOD!

The “counting of the Omer,” the countdown to the Kingdom, which it pictures, reminds us that there is EFFORT required for salvation. We cannot just “coast” into God's Kingdom! We must DO OUR PART! As Jesus Christ Himself declared: “Become ye therefore PERFECT [totally mature, spiritually], even as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matt.5:48). As as He also stated: “But SEEK ye FIRST the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt.6:33).

During this time of the “Omer countdown,” each year, we must set ourselves daily to “count the Omer.” It becomes an *exciting* task and makes us look forward with *sheer delight and joyful anticipation* to Pentecost -- a type of the coming of Christ and the marriage supper. It makes the Kingdom of God and His purpose come alive in our minds, as a scintillating, sparkling, palpable REALITY which seems even closer at hand, and not so far off and misty and hazy.

As the apostle Paul wrote, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are

before, *I press on toward the MARK for the PRIZE of our HIGH CALLING of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil.3:13-14).

Counting the Omer helps to teach us to number our days, and to learn wisdom, and to set priorities, and it helps us to focus on “overcoming.” If we are willing to “get with God's program,” we will begin to make much better progress in overcoming trials, defeating sins and bad habits, and conquering obstacles. You might be amazed how God can help you make progress, and help you to grow in grace and knowledge (II Pet.3:18), if you put into practice this much ignored and overlooked commandment. Doing this also helps us to put our Christian trials and tests into proper focus and true perspective.

How To Be an OVERCOMER

Let us study the command to count the Omer more closely. Notice how it reveals to us the process of overcoming and conquering the lusts and pulls of human nature, the world around us, and our own pride, vanity, and egotism.

The actual command states: “

“And ye shall COUNT unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the SHEAF [Omer] of the wave offering, *SEVEN SABBATHS SHALL BE COMPLETE: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye NUMBER FIFTY DAYS . . .*” (Lev.23:15-16).

“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” (Deut.16:9-10).

In Leviticus 23:15 in the King James Version of the Bible in the spurious wording “seven sabbaths shall be complete.” *Why* did Moses use the word “shabbatot” (usually translated “sabbaths”) in this passage, instead of “shavuot” (which means “weeks”), the word used in Deuteronomy 16:9? *Why* the difference? They are both obviously discussing the same thing -- seven *weeks*, because the expression in Deuteronomy 16:9 has to mean “weeks,” and cannot be translated “sabbaths.” *Why* then does God use a different word in Leviticus 23:15? There must be a hidden “lesson” here for us to dig out and understand! The truth is, this is a hidden reference to *OVERCOMING!* Each *week* pictures a process of overcoming sin, and *seven weeks* (perfection) pictures COMPLETE overcoming -- so that we are ready to meet God, and marry Christ, at His coming!

Let's get this, and get it good!

Let's notice Leviticus 23:15 more carefully: The Hebrew wording, *sheva' shabbatot t'miyot* is mistranslated as “seven sabbaths shall be complete” in the King James Version. Notice -- the Hebrew does *not* read *sheva' shabbatot tam* or *sheva' shabbatot tamam*, but rather it reads *sheva' shabbatot t'miyot*. Both *shabbatot* (“sabbaths”) and *t'miyot* (“complete”) are in the PLURAL forms, which makes *t'miyot* (“complete”) refer directly to *shabbatot* (“sabbaths”). If we believe the “sabbaths” here to be literal weekly sabbaths, then the meaning is totally unintelligible, because nothing exists in Scripture defined as either a “complete sabbath” or an “incomplete sabbath.” All “sabbaths” are a contained unit of time and cannot be specified as either

complete or incomplete. But, there is such a thing as an incomplete “week.”

Contrary to what some church groups teach, “week” is a valid alternate meaning of the Hebrew word *shabbat*. *Shabbat* can mean “week” in the sense that a *kodesh* (“New Moon”) can also mean “month” -- a period of 29 or 30 days. In the idiomatic manner in which *kodesh* means both “new moon” as well as “month,” the Hebrew word *shabbat* means both “sabbath” and “week.” For instance, a valid alternate reading of Isaiah 66:23 is, “from one full month [*kodesh* -- “new moon”] to another, and from one full week [*shabbat* -- “sabbath”] to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the LORD.”

In Leviticus 23:15, then, one can render *sheva' shabbatot t'miyimot* as “seven weeks each one complete,” expressing nothing specific in regard to the weekly Sabbath. This is the proper rendering since the plural form *t'miyimot* (“complete”) is used instead of the singular form *tam* (“complete”) or *tamam* (“complete”). The “seven sabbaths” is not described as a single unit of complete time as would have been the case if *tam* or *tamam* were used. Rather, the usage of the plural form *t'miyimot* indicates that there are as many “completes” as there are “shabbatot,” which forces “shabbatot” into the alternate meaning of “weeks” instead of referring to weekly Sabbaths which are always complete units of time with no further designation necessary.

However, the Hebrew word *tam* also means “portion” or “cycle” in addition to “complete.” Therefore, its plural form *t'miyimot* can mean “portions,” “cycles,” or “levels.” Now the passage begins to become more interesting. What is God telling us here? By using the word *shabbatot* for “weeks” or “periods ending with a rest” WITH the word *t'miyimot* meaning “periods” or “cycles” or “levels,” we have a description of a PROCESS OF OVERCOMING, DELINEATED BY “SEVEN STAGES,” or “SEVEN LEVELS” of spiritual growth and development, each stage “complete” in itself! Thus we have God showing us that we must OVERCOME the SEVEN (complete) aspects of HUMAN NATURE which will tend to drag us down, and keep us from entering His Kingdom! These seven areas of human nature we must overcome are the seven categories of human nature which the apostle Paul refers to as the “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:19-21).

In other words, by using the expression *shabbatot* instead of *shavuot*, God is showing us that these seven “weeks” picture more than just “weeks” of time as we think of them -- they are SEVEN LEVELS OR STAGES OF OVERCOMING SIN!

By using this expression, God is showing His people, Israel, WHAT TO DO with the seven weeks which lead up to Pentecost, in addition to “counting the Omer” each day, and harvesting the grain of the spring harvest every day. *They are also to be working on overcoming their human nature and getting rid of every vestige or remnant of Egyptian impurities and animalistic selfish human nature still clinging to them!*

There is therefore much more involved with this time, in addition to simply counting the Omer and harvesting grain. The *sheva' shabbatot t'miyimot* pictures the “seven weeks of cycles” or “seven weeks of portions” or “seven weeks of levels” which were to be used by the Israelites to *prepare to meet God on Mount Sinai* when the Day of Pentecost (Shavuot, or Weeks) finally arrived.

Each one of the seven weeks corresponded to each one of the Seven Categories of Animal Nature, and the word *shabbatot* is used here instead of *shavuot* because God was emphasizing the importance of “resting” -- “desistance” -- from each of the Seven Categories of Animal Nature during the seven weeks culminating in God's Presence and the Giving of the Torah, in order for the Israelites to be in as best a condition of purification as possible, since no one “unclean” could stand in God's Presence when He arrived on Mount Sinai.

These Seven Weeks or “Seven Stages” prior to Pentecost are also descriptive of the Seven Levels of Spiritual Development each individual must go through in preparation to the coming of the Messiah! Each one of the seven weeks corresponded to new levels of overcoming SIN and conquering our human nature!

The apostle Paul also wrote about our human nature, which must be sacrificed, if we are to inherit the kingdom of God. He declared: “Knowing this, that our old man [human animal nature] is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. . . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom.6:9-13).

Seven Categories of SIN to be Overcome

Corresponding to the “seven weeks” or cycles of overcoming, leading from Passover to Pentecost, the apostle Paul lists the Seven Categories of Base Human Nature which we must conquer and subjugate and expunge from our lives. The Galatians were exhibiting the same traits of rebellion as had been exhibited many centuries earlier by the Israelites upon leaving Egypt. Paul listed the seven categories of human nature which fight against the Spirit of God. They are found in Galatians, chapter 5. Notice: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these”:

1. “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness” -- sexual sins which destructively affect one's spiritual relationship with God and other people.
2. “Idolatry” -- worshipping and obeying demonic gods and wicked evil spirits, following demonic derived doctrines (I Tim.4:1-2).
3. “Witchcraft” -- the use of black magic and other occult perversions, including attempting to control the minds and thoughts of other people and depriving them of the freedom of choice. Many churches which came out of the Worldwide Church of God, like the Worldwide Church of God itself, attempt to practice “mind control” over the members, and threaten any who think independent thoughts, or ask questions indicating their independence of mind, with an immediate disfellowship -- a wicked scare tactic of godless men, if there ever was one!
4. “Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife” -- these are related categories of emotional and mental attitudes of violence, and thoughts that lead to violence -- resulting in strife, destruction, and even murder. John wrote, “He that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (I John 2:11). He added, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no

murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (I John 3:15).

5. “Seditions, heresies” -- sins against peace and unity among true believers causing division, strife and spiritual chaos -- destroying the flock, and inflicting damage upon the work of God. Sadly, we live in a time when although CHRIST is NOT divided, the remnants of the end-time church of God are bitterly divided, and seditions, heresies, and divisions are paramount! Paul asked the Corinthians, “Is Christ divided?” (I Cor.1:13). The answer? Of course not! But Paul also said to them, “For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren . . . that there are *contentions* among you” (I Cor.1:11). He added, “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and *divisions*, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (I Cor.3:3). He later plainly rebuked them, saying, “I hear that there be DIVISIONS among you” (I Cor.11:18). Seditions, treasons, false doctrines, heresies -- these all spring from the fount of heresy, Deceived, carnal men and their evil work of deception and seduction. People of this sort are still very active, seeking to devour God’s people! (I Pet.5:8-9; James 4:7).

6. “Envyings, murders” -- sins of interfering destructively in the lives of other people; destructively interfering with another person’s relationship with God. James warned: “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:14-16).

7. “Drunkeness, revellings” -- these are sins against a person’s own self and his own personal spiritual relationship with God. They are signs of the lack of self-control, self-mastery, and commitment and devotion to serving God. No drunkard or drug addict will inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor.6:9-10).

Notice, now. These seven categories of human nature must be conquered and overcome. This is why the word *shabbatot* is used in Leviticus 23:15 instead of *shavuot* -- the usual word for “weeks.” God was emphasizing the importance of OVERCOMING -- and becoming free from sin and the evil of human nature -- our becoming FREE from these pulls by overcoming them during the “seven weeks” that lead up to Pentecost -- a type of our meeting God and entering His KINGDOM!

We must “rest” -- come to the point of having “overcome” each of the Seven Categories of Animal Human Nature -- in preparing to meet Christ at His coming! Even as ancient Israel had to purify themselves, and prepare to meet with God (Exodus 19:10-15), since no one “unclean” could stand in God’s Presence when He arrived on Mount Sinai, even so WE must PREPARE OURSELVES to become the BRIDE of Christ, whom He will marry, at His Second Coming!

Therefore, the Seven Weeks or “Seven Stages” prior to Pentecost are also descriptive of the Seven Levels of Spiritual Development each one of us as individuals must go through in preparation to the coming of the Messiah!

Overcoming our human, carnal nature, and the influence of the corrupt world around us, is not easy. It requires persistent, constant, energetic effort and perseverance.

Called to a Life of “OVERCOMING”

As Christians, we are called to a life of “OVERCOMING.” Contrary to the ideas of Joseph W. Tkach of the Worldwide Church of God, we are not already “saved” once we accept Christ. It was not all “finished” at the cross. It all just *began* at the cross -- that was just the *start* of God's Plan and program for us!

As we meet obstacles, and face them, and overcome them, we should never feel we “have it made,” or have “qualified,” and are “worthy,” because our own righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight (Isa.64:6). Nor should we think or assume that Christ did it all for us, on the stake, and that there is nothing we have to do but “believe.” God requires not a “dead faith” but *LIVING FAITH* in Christ! As James wrote, “Even so faith, if it hath not *works*, is DEAD, being alone (Jas.2:17). He adds, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (v.26).

Our works will not “earn” us salvation. But they are necessary as works of overcoming, and God only promises salvation to those who “overcome” (Rev.2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). Our experiencing trials, and tests, and overcoming temptation, and sin, is the true “sign” of a true Christian life.

The KEY to Overcoming

The apostle Paul also wrote, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil.1:6). Once God begins to work with a person, He intends to finish the job. However, we must believe in His promises, and trust in His love and compassion. We must realize that all our trials are for our good. When things get the blackest and darkest is usually just before morning -- before the new dawn!

God is our Shepherd (*Yahveh Roi*). God is our Banner (*Yahveh Nissi*). God is our Provider, the One who sees all our need and circumstance (*Yahveh Yireh*). God is our *Father* (*Yahveh Avenu*). God is our *Peace* (*Yahveh Shalom*). God is the One who Anoints us (*Yahveh Mekadishkem*). God is our Righteousness (*Yahveh Zidkenu*).

Therefore, as David wrote so powerfully: “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the *strength* of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1). God promises to help us in all our battles and fights and struggles to “overcome.”

Notice this wonderful promise God makes to us, quoted by the apostle Paul in the book of Hebrews:

“Let your character or moral disposition be free from love of money . . . and be satisfied with your present [circumstances and what you have]; for He (God) Himself has said, **I will not in any way fail you NOR give you up NOR leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless, NOR forsake NOR let [you] down, [relax My hold on you]. -- Assuredly not!**

“So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently and boldly say, **The Lord is my Helper, I will not be seized with alarm -- I will**

not fear or dread or be terrified. What can man do to me?" (Heb.13:5-6, *Amplified Bible*).

Aren't those inspiring words? God says He will not, *He will not*, **He will not** -- ever forsake us, leave us helpless, or let us down (or fall), or relax His grip on us! -- "Assuredly NOT!"

Whatever our position in life, we are human beings -- we are the sons of God -- we are His children. We are all in this boat together, sink or swim. This is not the time to begin to fluster, or flounder, or flunk the test! This is not the time to "bail out," but to "bail water" and start paddling! God is still there to call on, no matter how helpless or hopeless our present (temporary) situation appears.

The Christian life is to be a life dedicated to OVERCOMING SIN and every obstacle and every roadblock that would keep us out of God's Kingdom. It is a FIGHT to the death, spiritually!

The apostle Paul wrote, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So RUN, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. . . I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so FIGHT I, not as one that beateth the air: But *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway*" (I Cor.9:24-27).

Paul wrote to Timothy, "FIGHT the good fight of faith; lay HOLD on eternal life" (I Tim.6:12).

David wrote: "Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight" (Psalm 144:1).

"Counting the Omer" teaches us to get a hold of ourselves, spiritually, and not allow ourselves to wallow in the slough of despair and the pit of depression and inertia. Paul says, "Prove all things," and, "Fight the good fight of faith" (I Thess.5:21; I Tim.6:12). He fought against the pulls of his own flesh, lest having preached to others, he himself should end up a castaway, reject, and make spiritual shipwreck (I Cor.9:24-27).

We need to get our minds focused on the KINGDOM -- set our heart and soul on the GLORY that is set before us -- and do like Paul -- "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil.3:13-14). The Greek word for "press" here is #1377, *dioko*, and means "to pursue," by implication, "to persecute," "follow after," "press forward." *Thayer's Lexicon* gives a fuller definition, "(1) to make a run or flee, put to flight, or drive away; (2) to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing; to run after; (3) in any way whatever to harass, trouble, molest one; to persecute; (4) without the idea of hostility, to run after, follow after, some one; (5) to pursue, to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire."

Luke 13:24 puts it plainly. If we really desire to receive eternal life, glory unbounded and unlimited in the Kingdom of God, then we must "STRIVE to enter in at the strait [narrow, difficult] gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." They won't put in the required effort. The word "strive" here means "*strive as in AGONY*" (marginal reading). The Greek word is #75, *agonizomai*, from which we get our English word "agonize." It means literally

“to struggle, compete for a prize, to contend with an adversary, to endeavor to accomplish something -- to fight, labor, fervently, strive.” *Thayer's Lexicon* adds: “(1) to enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games; (2) to contend with adversaries, to fight; (3) fig., to contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers antagonistic to the gospel; (4) to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive, to obtain something.”

We need to fight to enter God's Kingdom. Sometimes it may seem like a knock-down, drag-out, mismatch of the century -- but we need to struggle onward, never quitting, grateful that we are even permitted to be a part of the struggle, that we have been called to such a high and worthy calling, in Christ! We should make entering God's Kingdom our Number #1 Priority -- “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt.6:33). “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it WITH THY MIGHT . . .” (Eccl.9:10).

Jesus put it plainly when He said, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the VIOLENT take it by force” (Matt.11:12). The word for “violent” here is *biates* and means “a forcer, energetic -- violent.” “Strong, forceful, using force, violent” (*Thayer's*). It derives from the word for “violence” which is #971, *biazō*, meaning “to force, to crowd oneself, press, suffer violence.” *Thayer's Lexicon* adds: “to use force, to apply force, to force, inflict violence on . . . 'the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, carried by storm,' i.e., a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought for with the most ardent zeal and the intensest exertion . . . to force one's way into a thing . . . to get a share in the kingdom of God by the utmost earnestness and effort.”

Moffatt translates Matthew 11:12 as follows: “From the days of John the Baptist until now, they are *pressing into* the Realm of heaven -- these eager souls are *storming it!*” The Amplified Bible has it: “And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize] -- a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought for with most ardent zeal and intense exertion.”

Is it easy, like falling off a log, like the “no-law” preachers insist? They are nowhere near the Kingdom! Rather, as Paul so eloquently declared, “work out your own salvation with FEAR and TREMBLING: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil.2:12-13). The word for “work” here is #2716, *katēgazomai* and means “to work fully, to accomplish, by impl., to finish, fashion.” *Thayer's* adds: “(a) to perform, accomplish, achieve; (b) to work out, i.e., to do that from which something results; (c) fashion, i.e., render one fit for a thing.”

Many, today, are being swallowed up by the Great Apostasy. They think it was all done “by Christ on the cross” long, long ago. They think they can just “coast” into the Kingdom! It is sad; it is tragic; it is incredibly regrettable. We must come to *hate* and to *abhor* evil even as God Himself hates and abhors it (Prov.8:13). We must cling to and earnestly desire the things of God; and then we will receive them (Psalm 37:4-5). We must strive to bring every thought and desire into captivity to the obedience of Christ (II Cor.10:4-5) by means of the spiritual weapons God gives to us to use (Eph.6:10-14; Gal.5:22-23).

Many of God's people, today, are in a rut. They have temporized and compromised for far too long. It is time to WAKE UP, shake yourself out of the spiritual sleep you have been in, splash the cold water of spiritual reality in your face, and remove the spirit of grogginess and lethargic

indolence. SHAKE yourself awake! It's time to put on your “fighting gloves,” or spiritual “boxing gloves,” and begin to make a spiritual name and reputation for yourself, as “One who Overcomes” -- “Overcomer” -- “Prevailer with God” -- “Champion of God.” These are all variations of the name “ISRAEL,” or “Prince of God.”

Another Reason to Count the Omer

In Leviticus 23:13, the Hebrew word for “count” is “safar.” There are several different, but accurate, meanings for “safar.” It is only Judaism which provides the internal history necessary to discover which meaning is intended to be understood in the Biblical text. Although “safar” can mean to count up the total in order to arrive at a sum, it can also just as easily and accurately mean to inscribe by making a mark, to enumerate, or to celebrate.

Judaism teaches that the intended meaning of “safar” in Leviticus 23:15 is “to ritually inscribe by celebrating, i.e., to inscribe to ritual celebration.” Jewish author and historian Chaim Raphael, in his newly published book entitled *Festival Days: A History of Jewish Celebrations* (c.1990, Grove Weidenfeld: New York), provides us with the key to rightly understanding the use of the word “safar” in Leviticus 23:15. He informs us that:

“In the Jewish practice, an Omer (sheaf) of the new barley was offered to the Temple every day after Passover to be 'waved' ceremonially by the priest. The Omer began to be counted daily from the second day of Passover for seven weeks, at which point the festival of Shavuot ('weeks') was celebrated. 'Counting the Omer' until the seven weeks were concluded became a recognizable stretch of Jewish life with its own traditions . . .” (p.69).

This same author adds:

“The seven-week period from Passover to Shavuot had a ritual in which a sheaf of grain from the new harvest was offered to the priest every day. Every offering was COUNTED OFF DAILY until the forty-ninth day, after which Shavuot was celebrated” (p.71).

It should be clear that this ritual of “counting” was performed EVERY YEAR, as a special adjunct to the Passover celebration, at which the spring harvest BEGAN, and continued for forty nine days, until Pentecost, when the spring harvest COMPLETED! Since the spring harvest is a TYPE of the “firstfruits” of God's creation -- true converted people of God, from the time of the patriarchs down to true Christians -- the period of time from Passover to Pentecost represents the TIME OF GOD'S SPIRITUAL SPRING HARVEST -- with Christ Jesus, our Passover, being Himself the “the firstfruit” [the original Greek is in the singular] from the dead unto God (I Cor.15:20), “Christ the firstfruit” (verse 23); “afterward they that are Christ's AT HIS COMING” (same verse).

The apostle James wrote, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of FIRSTFRUITS of his creatures” (James 1:18).

The vast, overwhelming majority of Christians do not even begin to realize or recognize this amazing, wonderful TRUTH! Yet the Jewish people have had an inkling of it. We read in the book *Living Judaism: The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Practice and Tradition*:

“The sages and the mystics taught that Shavuot is the moment of eternal commitment --

-- the MARRIAGE -- between God and the Jewish People. On Pesach [Passover] God and the people pledge themselves to each other. The *sephirah* [counting] is the period of the COURTSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT, *the time when trust and love grow deeper and stronger*. Safirat HaOmer thus becomes not just a time for counting toward an agricultural harvest, *but a time of heartfelt emotion and excited anticipation*, as the relationship between God and the Jewish People moves swiftly forward toward consummation toward the WEDDING at Sinai -- the time when God will give His WEDDING GIFT of Torah. Safirat HaOmer is now a time *not only to count the days, but to MAKE THE DAYS COUNT, IN PREPARATION FOR THE TRANSCENDENT MOMENT OF REVELATION*" (*Living Judaism*, p.177)..

At Christ's coming, He will MARRY the Church, the "firstfruits" (Rev.19:6-9), just as He "married" Israel when He came down to Mount Sinai on that first Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks (Exodus 19-20; 24:9-11). Thus the daily "counting of the Omer" is a ritual which REFLECTS THE SPIRITUAL HARVEST OF TRUE CHRISTIANS and all the holy men and women of old who will be in the FIRST RESURRECTION, and who will "MARRY" Christ at His coming!

Every day, from Passover to Pentecost, as WE COUNT THE OMER, we should pray to God, something like this:

"Blessed are You, O Lord our God, who has sanctified us by Your commandments, and who has commanded us to Count the Omer. Today is the ---- day of the Omer. This is the ---- week of the Omer count. There are ---- days to go until Pentecost (Shavuot)!"

If you wish, as you count off the days, you can mark them off on your calendar. This may also help instill in you the HABIT of counting off each day, without failure!

As we do this, we should remember that Pentecost pictures our coming UNION -- OUR WEDDING -- with CHRIST the MESSIAH at His Coming! This will truly be a "transcendent moment of Revelation"!

The daily "counting of the Omer," then, beginning with the first Omer, continues for forty nine days, until Pentecost -- and spiritually symbolizes the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD which have been "harvested" throughout the centuries and millennia leading up to the great day of CHRIST'S COMING, when Christ will COMPLETE THE HARVEST OF FIRSTFRUITS, and then MARRY HIS BRIDE!

What a wonderful truth! There is far more involved in "counting the Omer" than most of us have ever realized! In the words of Pogo, "We have met the Omer, and it is *US!*"

The Seven Churches of Revelation

It is also interesting to note that the "50 days" from Passover till Pentecost also represent a "Jubilee" period of days. A Jubilee "cycle" of years is 50 years, according to the Bible. God says, "You shall count off seven weeks of YEARS -- seven times seven years -- so that the period of seven weeks of years gives you a total of forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the horn loud; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month -- the Day of Atonement -- you shall have the

horn sounded throughout your land and you shall HALLOW the fiftieth year. You shall proclaim release ["liberty"] throughout the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a JUBILEE for you" (Lev.25:8-10, Tanakh).

But in the case of Pentecost, or the Feast of Shavuot ("Weeks"), God says, "You shall count off seven WEEKS" (Deut.16:9). The book of Leviticus has it, "And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering -- the day after the sabbath -- you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: you must count until the day after the seventh week -- fifty days" (Lev.23:15-16, Tanakh). Notice the fascinating similarity. Countdown to Pentecost is a "daily" TYPE of the

countdown to the JUBILEE YEAR! On the Jubilee year Christ the Messiah will return to earth, and bring LIBERTY to its inhabitants, and marry His bride, the Church of God. On the jubilee of Pentecost, we celebrate the completion of the spring harvest, and when Christ will marry His bride, the Church! So Pentecost typifies the return of Christ -- the true Jubilee! We are to look forward expectantly to the feast of Pentecost, just as we look forward to the coming of the Messiah, to bring His government, His Kingdom, and His laws (Isa.2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4).

Interestingly, by "counting off" forty nine weeks, we count seven times seven weeks, symbolizing the TIME from the Passover (death and resurrection of Christ) till His Second Coming -- a time which spans the entire CHURCH AGE. The prophecy of Revelation points out that during this time span there are seven successive CHURCH ERAS -- the seven successive churches of Revelation, beginning with Ephesus, the apostolic age, and ending up with Laodicea, the present "End-time" degenerate and apostate final church era (Rev.2-3).

Thus, applying this prophecy to the seven times seven "days" between Passover and Pentecost -- that is, between Christ's first coming and His Second Coming! -- we find that each of the seven churches of Revelation is given ONE SYMBOLIC WEEK to do its "work" -- its "heyday" of existence, if you will. The dominate Church of the first century was the apostolic church, called "Ephesus" -- the capital of the Roman province of Asia. The dominant Church during the "End Time" is that of Laodicea -- a city famed for its wool, physical riches and wealth, its medical industry, and for its "lukewarm" water supply.

As we count the "Omer," therefore, each successive week it would be good to reflect on the history of God's Church down through the ages. The first week, Ephesus; the second week, Smyrna; the third week, Pergamos; the fourth week, Thyatira; the fifth week, Sardis; the sixth week, Philadelphia; and the seventh week, Laodicea.

As we near the end of the countdown, we should have rising expectations and increasing joy as we look forward to and relish and eagerly anticipate the FINAL DAY OF JUBILEE, ending all our trials and tests -- the final PENTECOST when Christ Jesus the Messiah will return, the saints will be resurrected and made immortal, and God's Spirit will be poured out upon all nations, and the knowledge of the Lord will begin to fill the earth (Rev.11:15-17; I Thess.4:16-17; Isa.11:9).

The Coming "Great Pentecost"

It was on the Day of Pentecost that God first sent His Spirit upon men. After Jesus was raised from the dead, He appeared to His disciples for forty days (Acts 1:3). Jesus was slain

Thursday, buried before sunset, was in the grave parts of 3 days and 3 nights (Matt.12:40 – see our new article, “How Long Was Jesus Really in the Grave?”), and arose from the dead early Sunday morning before sunrise (“while it was yet dark” – John 20:1). He appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (verses 1-9). The Omer was offered that weekly Sabbath, the day after the Feast Day, on Nisan 16. Sabbath was, therefore, day one of the Omer countdown. Jesus first appeared to His disciples after the Sabbath, on the first day of the week, which was Day two of the Omer count. He appeared to them for an additional 38 days, or 40 days in all (Acts 1:3). Forty days from the day He first appeared to them, Nisan 17, would have been Iyar 26 (14 days in Nisan, plus 26 days in Iyar, which equals 40 days). He ascended to heaven on Iyar 26, which was day 41 of the Omer Count. They still had nine days to go till Pentecost.

Then Jesus, being with His disciples, “gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but WAIT for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT’” (Acts 1:4-5). This was the 42nd day of the Omer count; they still had eight days to go till Pentecost.

Jesus then was in heaven for *seven days*, which was the time required for Him to wait until He could be consecrated by the Father as our High Priest (see Leviticus 8:12, 33). Add the seven days and we come to Day 48 of the Omer Count or Sivan 4 when these days were completed. Remember that Aaron had to wait OUTSIDE the “Tabernacle of Meeting” for seven days (Lev.8:35). The next day was day 49 of the Omer Count -- $7 \times 7 = 49$! This brings us to Sivan 5. This was the day that the High Priest went INTO the “Tabernacle of Meeting” (Lev.9:22-24), to actually TAKE UP OFFICE after offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. The next day would be the “Fiftieth Day” or Pentecost – Sivan 6! What happened on that day?

“When the day of Pentecost came [or “was fully come,” KJV], they were all together in one place [celebrating Pentecost!]. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT and began to speak in other tongues [languages] as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:1-4).

God poured out His Spirit upon all the disciples on that day -- the first time in all human history that God's Spirit was so poured out, as a begetting of hundreds of individuals, all at the same time! This was the BEGINNING of the New Testament Church of God!

But this event was a *type* of a future miracle of the same kind which is soon to occur! In the same way, when Christ returns to this earth, God says, “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on ALL people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will POUR OUT MY SPIRIT in those days” (Joel 2:28-29).

The apostle Peter explained to the Jews in Jerusalem that the pouring out of God's Spirit on that Pentecost was in fulfillment of this prophecy in the book of Joel (Acts 2:5-21). Of course, this was actually a TYPE. The great fulfillment will occur just around the corner, at the coming Feast of Shavuot, when the “weeks are completed” of this present Age -- and the Messianic Age begins! Those final “weeks” and “days” are ALMOST COMPLETE NOW! We are nearing the END -- and the time of our Spiritual REDEMPTION! Let us joyously, “count” the days, till the coming of

that GREAT PENTECOST, when God will pour out His Spirit on all people!

So far as I know, no Church on earth -- not the Worldwide Church of God, nor the Church of God International, not the Seventh Day Adventist Church, nor the Church of God Seventh Day, or any other Church, understands the significance and deep meaning behind the traditional “counting of the Omer.” This is undoubtedly NEW TRUTH! Let us thank God for revealing it to us, and rejoice in understanding the amazing, incredible truth about the “Omer” -- the “firstfruits”!

What about you? Will you be among those blessed “first-fruits” of God? Will you “count the Omer” faithfully, and overcome your human nature, with God's help, and His Holy Spirit, so that you will be numbered among those who will meet Christ in the air as He returns?

Oh, how a serpent, a deceiver, disguised as an “angel of light,” with apparent warmth, empathy, and sensitivity, would love to deceive you, as the serpent deceived Eve, and lead you astray, and blind you to this incredible TRUTH! I pray that God's people today, the very elect, will NOT fall for any beguiling wiles, and slick arguments, clever delusions, and alluring devices -- not for one single, solitary second!

What about you? When you are facing terrible trials, and tests, are you “Counting the Omer”? Are you keeping your eyes peeled, and focused on the Kingdom of God? Are you “marking off” the days in anticipation?

David exclaimed to God:

“For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work;
I will TRIUMPH in the works of Your hands” (Psa.92:4).

“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in *TRIUMPH*
IN CHRIST” (II Cor.2:14).