



"Do not give in! Do not compromise! Do not seek some middle ground between right and wrong."
—Abraham Lincoln

21-May-10

Pentecost and the Wave Offerings (Part Two)

Right now, our lives are symbolically within the period of counting the seven Sabbaths, the seven weeks, or the "seven sevens" to the harvest of [firstfruits](#) ([Leviticus 23:15-16](#)). The number seven represents spiritual perfection. This process of completing seven sevens, then, is like spiritual perfection *squared*. These numbers indicate God's confidence that He can overcome the corruption, the sin, within us and bring us to the state of sinlessness in the resurrection (see [I Corinthians 15:50-57](#)).

It may seem contradictory that [God](#) would *require* this special wave offering on Pentecost to contain leavening—a symbol of sin—or that He would accept anything that contained sin. We need to consider a couple of points in this regard. First, this is a tacit admission or recognition by God that sin is part of the human experience, and even within those whom He has justified and is sanctifying (see [Romans 7:14-25](#)). There will be sin in the church, as well as in us.

Notice, though, that in the commanded sequence, this leavened wave offering occurs after the offerer makes a substitutionary [sin offering](#), after he has demonstrated his complete devotion to God and fellow man in the burnt

and meal offerings, and after he has shown that peace exists between God and himself in the [peace offering](#). This does not imply that God is unconcerned about sin or that sin is inconsequential. It is not. Sin separates man from God ([Isaiah 59:1-2](#)), and it caused the Son to be crucified so that man could have a relationship with God ([Revelation 5:9](#)).

If a teenager asks his parents, "Dad, Mom, is it all right if I rob the local gas station?" the response will certainly be, "Of course not!" The parents' answer will always be the same because robbery is never a good thing. As parents, we recognize that our children are going to make mistakes—that it is part of the process of maturity. Certainly, we hope those mistakes never involve committing a felony, but we accept that our children have not been born perfect.

In the same way, a measure of corruption will always be within us, and God recognizes this with the [leavened loaves](#). Certainly, we should be *striving* to make our portion of these loaves as unleavened as possible. However, not until the resurrection will this body of corruption and mortality be changed into one of incorruption and immortality, as I Corinthians 15 shows.

Second, God accepts these leavened loaves because they are the last stage in the *physical* process but not in the *whole* process. In other words, God understands that we have sin within us, but that is not the end. As one man put it, "God loves us the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us that way." The leavened loaves are acceptable to God because He knows that all of the perfecting that He has been doing during the time of "seven Sabbaths" will ultimately culminate in the [resurrection of the dead](#) and our change into incorruptible immortality. The leavening is accepted because of God's confidence that it will be stripped away at the true end of the process when our change comes, and His work of perfecting us will then be manifest.

It is important to recall the major themes of the [Sabbath](#) during this time of counting seven Sabbaths. In the [fourth commandment](#) ([Exodus 20:8-11](#)), God links the Sabbath with His work of creation. The first Sabbath marked the end of the physical creation and the commencement of the spiritual one ([Genesis 2:1-3](#)). God is our spiritual Creator as well as our physical One, and

as we faithfully walk through this period of seven Sabbaths, He will be orchestrating events and circumstances to create us in His image. We just have to keep walking with Him.

In [Deuteronomy 5:12-15](#), God links the Sabbath with His work of redeeming His people from slavery. Just as God delivered Israel from Egypt, so He has also delivered us from the grasp of [Satan](#), this world, and the ultimate penalty of sin. As long as we remain cooperative with Him, He continues His work of releasing us from the clutches of sin. Thus, this sanctification process begins with the justifying work of [Jesus Christ](#), and it ends with our resurrection and change from corruption to glorious incorruption. In the intervening time, we are submitting to God as He puts us in circumstances that serve to perfect us spiritually, to create us in His image, and to deliver us from all that is opposed to eternal life with Him.

It is a well-known principle that the goal determines the preparations. One goal that the day of Pentecost embodies is the right relationship between man and God, which is why there are so many peace offerings. They typify the abundant sense of well-being for all parties at the end of the process. If it is our goal to share in satisfying, pleasing, peaceful, fulfilling meals with God after the resurrection, there are things we can be doing now to prepare for that goal.

One thing that we can do is to identify how we derive or pursue satisfaction or fulfillment. The [book of Ecclesiastes](#) chronicles Solomon's experiments in trying to derive satisfaction from any number of pursuits; and even though most of them were not wrong pursuits and he received some measure of satisfaction from them, he concluded that none of it was lasting. There was nothing eternal in them—all of them were temporary and would soon pass away.

Although Solomon records the futility of pursuing satisfaction and well-being *apart from God*, human nature tends to suppose that it will be different for us—that the normal rules do not apply, that we are somehow exempt from natural law. Therefore, in general, we are still inclined to seek satisfaction from material possessions, exciting experiences, or status and

recognition. We may pursue satisfaction by pursuing different circumstances, seeking what [the world](#) has to offer, or forming a close friendship.

Like Solomon, we may pursue any number of things that are not bad in and of themselves, but God's instruction on the sacrifices shows that *true* satisfaction, peace, fulfillment, and abundance can come *only* through a right relationship with Him, which is possible only after we have been redeemed from our sins and have dedicated ourselves to serving Him and fellow man. Nothing this world has to offer even comes close to the sense of contentment and well-being that issue from our experience of peace and unity with God. By the same token, if we are *not* experiencing such satisfaction and well-being, something may be amiss either in our goal or in our part of the process.

This right relationship with God is what we should cling to as this world self-destructs and pressures continue to mount against us. If our source of satisfaction, peace, and contentment comes from our fellowship with God, we will be far less inclined to engage in pursuits that may distract us, wear us out, or lead to us neglecting God. We will be less inclined to surrender to fear or anxiety. We will neither be held back by the shortcomings of others, nor feel as if we cannot be happy until someone else changes. We will not let our weaknesses overshadow the spiritual help that is available or our appreciation of what God is continually doing on our behalf. We will let nothing distract us from the phenomenal purpose for which God is preparing us.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[New Covenant Priesthood \(Part One\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Old Testament activities picture New Testament realities, far from done away, but raised or elevated to their spiritual intent. As a parallel to the

Aaronic priesthood, the church has been chosen as a royal and holy priesthood (in training) offering up spiritual sacrifices and proclaiming praises of God (I Peter 2:5,9). Paul insists that our sacrifices (reasonable service) should extend to everything we do in life (Romans 12:2), including prayer, study, meditation, as well as sharing goods and experiences (Hebrews 13:15-16).

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Offerings of Leviticus \(Part Six\): The Sin Offering](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The sin offering is the first of the non-sweet-savor offerings in Leviticus. John Ritenbaugh explains the atonement made through Jesus' perfect offering of Himself for us—and our obligations to Him as a result.

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