

THE HARVEST CYCLE

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INTRODUCTION.

Understanding the cycle of the natural grain harvest will assist us in understanding the spiritual harvest promised by the Father to the endtime Church.

THE BIBLICAL HARVEST CYCLE IS INVIOABLE:

DICTIONARY.COM DEFINITION of *INVIOABLE*: That which must be respected and not removed or ignored.

1. EARLY RAIN
2. PLOWING
3. SOWING/PLANTING
4. FAITH/WAITING - GOD GIVING INCREASE
5. LATTER RAIN
6. HARVEST/REAPING
7. THRESHING, WINNOWING, AND SIFTING

For the Church, this Harvest Cycle is eternal principle which cannot and must not be ignored or altered. To do so is violating eternal principles.

THE GRAIN HARVEST ILLUSTRATES THE SPIRITUAL HARVEST FROM THE CHURCH'S PERSPECTIVE.

When an individual Christian's involvement in winning lost souls is being discussed, the Bible uses the harvest of grapes, figs, or olives to illustrate the message. Individuals are identified typologically as fruitful or unfruitful branches on a grape vine, as a fig tree without figs, etc.

However, when the soulwinning efforts of the corporate body — the Church — is referred to, the Bible always uses the figure of “Net Fishing” OR of the barley and wheat harvest of Palestine as the framework in which to discuss the Church's involvement. Individuals are only discussed in the framework of the grain harvest in the context of their involvement with the Body as a whole in its involvement in the harvest.

THE AWAITED HARVEST IS THE REASON FOR THE “DELAYED” RAPTURE.

James 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Most certainly, the awaited "precious fruit," which James identifies as the reason for the “delay” in the rapture, can be nothing but the produce of a “grain harvest.” Every Scripture in both the Old Testament and the New Testament containing a reference to the "early" or "latter" rain DIRECTLY refers to the Biblical grain harvest.

Consequently, it would benefit us greatly to understand the exact sequence of events involved in producing the grain harvest in Biblical lands and times. Additionally, the Church Age can be understood with more clarity and certainty by comparing the sequence of the grain harvest to the Church's chronological history and eschatological future.

THE DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL HARVESTS MUST BE INTERPRETED FROM BOTH AN OVERVIEW AND A CURRENT TIME VIEW PERSPECTIVE.

To accurately understand the large body of Scripture which refers to harvests, it must first be understood that most Scriptural principles have, at least, a two dimensional application in relation to time — a current time view (or time specific) perspective and an overview (or general) perspective.

Again, the current time view perspective is time specific. Thus, it considers the impact of the application of a specific Scripture or Biblical principle upon a specific place or people and/or to a specific and limited period of time or generation. This application of Scriptural principle demonstrates how any passage impacts the reader's current time or to the time of any specific point in history or in the future.

The overview perspective relates directly to God's master plan and purpose. This interpretation and understanding of a Scripture passage relates to how a specific text applies to the overall plan of God in general. This overview perspective considers the plan of God as a single entity, and it considers the impact of any specific Scripture or Biblical principle on mankind and/or the Church (or the Church Age) in general.

As an example of these two perspectives, depending upon the perspective from which it is viewed, any particular day in a person's life is impacted differently. Using the current time view perspective, every day of one's life has a specific beginning and ending (a 24 hour period), the same day when viewed from the overview perspective is just one small portion of a life with a beginning (birth) and an ending (death). Any particular event of a specific day can be both monumental (completely ruining the whole current day) and, at the same time, insignificant (having no lasting impact upon one's life, when viewed in the perspective of a person's whole life).

Wherefore, the current time application corresponds to the will of God for a specific point in time. The overview perspective corresponds to the range and reach of the overall plan of God for a specific age. The current time perspective is specific context oriented, while the overview perspective is general scope and breadth oriented.

Consider the following specific example using the "Sequence of the Grain Harvest" being firstfruits, harvest, and gleanings: The early (First Century) Church's harvest when viewed from the overview perspective, with the Old Testament as the point of reference, corresponds to "the gleanings." This same harvest when viewed from the overview perspective, with the New Testament as the point of reference, corresponds to "the firstfruits." However, the same harvest, when viewed from a current time view perspective, has its own complete harvest cycle — firstfruits on Pentecost, the main body of the harvest in Jerusalem and the uttermost parts of the earth, and the gleanings as the harvest waned late in the first century (see the letters to the seven Churches of Asia written about 99 A.D. - Revelation 2 and 3).

Likewise every generation's involvement with the harvest can be viewed and understood from both perspectives. Yet, depending upon the Scripture being applied to it, the same harvest event may "appear" to be completely different (or even contradictory) elements of the harvest cycle. This confusion is eliminated when it is understood that the event is being viewed from more than one interpretive perspective.

To better understand this concept, consider the following: The overview perspective of any Scripture would generally consider the entire 2,000 years of Church history as a single harvest cycle. Each event in Church history would be understood to correspond to only one element of the harvest cycle. However, in the current time view perspective, it is understood that (at any point in time during the Church Age) any specific effort to evangelize the lost by any individual or group of believers is subject to all of the elements of the harvest cycle. Those involved in reaching the lost (of their specific location or generation) may expect the covenants promising a harvest to apply to them and their efforts. **However**, any individual, generation, geographical location, or localized portion of the Church can experience at least one full harvest cycle within their limited time or local context. Accordingly, the current time view allows for the application of any or all the Scriptural elements regarding a harvest cycle to be applied to a single situation and set of circumstances. Each generation is expected to be involved with harvesting the lost of their generation. Consequently, each generation can experience (and should desire), at least, one full harvest cycle in their lifetime.

UNDERSTANDING THE OVERVIEW PERSPECTIVE OF THE HARVEST OF THE CHURCH AGE IS CRITICAL.

The remainder of the discussion in this chapter will be primarily based upon the overview perspective. The goal of this book is to demonstrate that the current generation (the generation upon whom the ends of the world are come) is the only generation of the Church Age which will experience a "generational" (current time view perspective) harvest cycle, while, at the same exact time, will be participants in the endtime harvest of the Church Age (overview perspective). Let us now examine the sequence of events relating to the literal grain harvest which are paralleled in the spiritual harvest of the Church Age. Each of the following sections of this chapter relates to a specific event in the full cycle of the grain harvest.

THE FEAST OF WEEKS (PENTECOST) IS THE CONCLUSION OF THE PREVIOUS HARVEST.

Leviticus 23:15-16

15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

For the Hebrews, the Day of Pentecost (which was usually in the early part of our month of June) is the celebration day for the CONCLUSION of the grain harvest. Accordingly, the harvesting sequence of the Church Age actually begins at the end of the Old Testament general harvest cycle. The Lord calls those things that are not as though they were (Romans 4:17). He also calls the end of a thing before the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).

The Lord birthed His Church on the day that the Jews celebrated and feasted the conclusion of a successful barley and wheat harvest. The significance of this cannot be overstated or repeated too frequently. The Day of Pentecost (specifically, the birthday of the Church) was both an end and, at the same time, a beginning. By choosing this day to begin the building of His Church, the Lord made it clear that the harvest under the Old Testament plan of salvation was concluded. Those who were added to the Church on its birthday were all Jews — by race or religion — making them the gleanings of the Old Testament harvest (from the overview perspective of the Old Testament harvest).

Again, from the overview perspective, as awesome and inspiring as the first century Church's harvest may have been, in God's order of things, it was only gleanings. From the perspective of the harvest cycle, the Day of Pentecost was a day of ending. The harvest cycle ends with gleaning. Jesus told the disciples:

John 4:38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

The Lord's statement reveals the Apostles to be gleaners. The early Church reaped harvests that they did not sow, from fields they did not own, for a purpose completely different than the one for which the sowers sowed the seed. The Lord had commanded the Hebrews to leave some grain in the fields for the poor and the strangers to glean. This harvest of the gleanings had different reapers than those who were the Old Testament reapers. The results of the harvest were taken to different "barns" than those reaped during the Old Testament (note the change in "temples" between the Old and New Covenants). The purpose of the reaping was different than that under which the Old Testament harvest was reaped (the converts were added to the Church; they did not become proselytes of Judaism).

The current time view perspective acknowledges that Paul both sowed and reaped. However, almost all of those people itemized in the book of Acts as reaped souls were directly or, at the least indirectly, influenced by Old Testament sowers. The Samaritans, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Cornelius' household, Apollos, those at Ephesus, etc., were all believers in the One true God before being gleaned into the Church. Even Paul, who confessed himself to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, always preached to the Jews in dispersion first. Most of the Gentiles to whom he ministered were connected in some way to the Jewish community. Very few converts mentioned in the book of Acts were heathens before hearing the New Testament Gospel. The opposite will be true in the endtime harvest.

As has been already stated, from the overview perspective, the endtime harvest is a part of one single harvest cycle covering the entire Church Age. However, if we view the single harvest period (called the "endtime harvest" according to the overview perspective) from the more focused current time perspective, the "endtime harvest" is actually, in fact, a series of rapid, multiple harvests (Amos 9:13). Accordingly, the first century harvest is gleanings from the overview perspective, but it is actually several localized harvest cycles (generational harvest cycles) in the context of the specific time frame of the first century.

By carefully examining the date each of the Epistles were written and then reviewing the Epistle's contents, it is demonstrated easily that the main surge of the first century harvest lasted (approximately) only thirty years after the Church's birth. Thirty years is not a very long time when compared with 2,000 years of Church history. If the overview perspective of the harvest cycle is not a valid approach to Scriptural exegesis, then we are left with no plausible explanation of the Church's decline so soon after its birth.

AFTER PENTECOST, THE GROUND BECOMES FALLOW.

The gleaning period concludes about the beginning of summer. After a few weeks of heat, the remains of the crops perish in the field. The ground cracks under the intense sun of Palestine. The dried remains of the harvest make it appear that all that had been sown is dead. The heat and dryness cause the ground to become fallow. It stays this way all summer and into early fall.

The early Church, as foretold by the writers of the Epistles and the book of Revelation, went into the heat of summer fairly quickly after the harvest. The hearts of men (the ground) baked and hardened under the heat of compromise. Theologians have called this phase of the harvest cycle, that the Church was now entering, "the Dark Ages." Actually, this was "the heat and rainless ages."

THE FALL HARVESTS ARE NOT GRAIN HARVESTS.

In late summer and fall, the main harvest of grapes, figs, and olives takes place.

The grapes represent the joy of the believer, the figs depict the strengthening of our faith, and the olives symbolize the anointing of our ministry.

The grape, fig, and olive harvest occur at about the same time the early rain begins to fall. The Lord uses this depiction to represent the renewing of the Church before the beginning of the grain growing season.

In other Scriptural contexts, the fall harvests are used to allude to the involvement of individual believers in the Lord's labor of reaching the lost. Thus, the parable of the vine and the branches accentuate that, while the endtime harvest is promised to the collective body of believers, the work must be done by all believers individually — regardless of the phase of the harvest cycle which is currently in effect for the Church in general. Everyone is expected to be involved in the work. The Lord's burden for the lost is not to be borne by a select minority but by all.

THE EARLY RAIN PREPARES THE GROUND FOR THE PLOUGH.

The difference between the early and the latter rains is explained in the following commentary:

(Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

James 5:7 [Until he receive] The receiving of the early and latter rains is not the object of his hope, but the harvest, to which those rains are the preliminary. The early rain fell at sowing time, about November or December; the latter rain, about March or April, to mature the grain for harvest. The latter rain that shall precede the spiritual harvest will probably be another Pentecost-like effusion of the Holy Spirit.

(Adam Clarke Commentary)

James 5:7 [The early and latter rain.] The rain of seed time; and the rain of ripening before harvest...Without these two rains, the earth would have been unfruitful. These God had promised: I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil, Deuteronomy 11:14. But for these they were not only to wait patiently, but also to pray, Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so shall the Lord make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to everyone grass in the field; Zechariah 10:1.

The early rain starts in mid to late fall (mid-October to early December). The time of the arrival of the early rain is dependant on the elevation. This rain showers steadily and gently for several days at a time. The early rain falls for a few days and stops for a few. This cycle repeats itself for over a month. The purpose of the early rain is to soften the fallow ground so that the farmer can plow it.

Psalms 65:9-10

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

The early rain of the Church Age harvest cycle began as a move of God in the 13th and 14th centuries. During this time the Bohemian Brethren (later known as the "Moravians"), began a 24 hour-a-day, prayer chain which lasted 101 years. They were very revival and missionary minded and spread their faith in many places across the globe.

THE RAIN SOFTENED GROUND IS THEN PLOWED.

After the ground is softened by the early rain, the farmer breaks up the fallow ground with the plow in the late fall. The purpose of plowing is to prepare the ground for sowing:

Isaiah 28:24-26

24 Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?

26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

Plowing helps to kill the roots and seeds of weeds and thorns. The thorny ground in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:7,22) was ground that had not been properly prepared through plowing. Hence, the thorns grew with the good seeds and eventually the good seeds were choked out. In order for our hearts to become "good ground," they must be broken by the preached Word of God and by the conviction of His Spirit."

Ultimately, God is the plowman. He works through human agency to do this plowing:

Job 16:12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

When we do not respond to His Word and His Spirit, the Lord uses circumstances to disrupt and disturb our lives. Hearts which are unbroken do not readily receive the seed:

Proverbs 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Psalms 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Sometimes God plows individuals, other times He uses stronger means to plow entire nations:

Jeremiah 26:18 Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

(READ ALSO: Micah 3:11-12)

The sower can sow the seed upon unplowed ground, but the amount of harvest reaped is not nearly as abundant as the harvest of the seed sown on "good" (plowed) ground. There is always the danger also that the weeds which remain in the unplowed ground will completely negate the results of the harvest.

IF THERE IS NO SOWING, THERE WILL BE NO HARVEST.

The farmer sows his seed after the ground has been plowed. The seed of a grain crop is not planted, but is sown by broadcasting. Sowing is not synonymous with planting. Sowing connotes scattering, broadcasting, disseminating, or randomly propagating seed. Planting suggests carefully and systematically placing seed into the ground. Thus, we are made to better understand the parable of the sower and the reason the seed fell on four different types of ground. The sower did not sow cautiously, but he scattered seed without restraint. Therefore, giving every type of soil at least a chance to be part of the harvest.

While systematic methods of evangelism are productive (specifically those which focus primarily on individuals), there can be no question that the Lord of the harvest intended for us to use other methods which would sow the seed without discrimination. Only scattering the seed will reach people that we would otherwise overlook or neglect.

The Bible says, ". . . he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Soulwinners are reapers; sowers are not required to be as wise, as skillful, or as knowledgeable as soulwinners. Sowers do not have to have the same revelation of truth as reapers. They just have to be willing to scatter the seed anywhere and everywhere. The seed is the seed no matter who is sowing it. The seed of God's Word is not owned by anyone. No matter how it is sown or who sows it, the power of the Word of God is still the same. The Word is truth, and the truth will manifest itself when the seed is germinated. God, not the sower or the reaper, germinates the seed.

The sowing which followed the early rain was done by ministries like the Moravians and ministers like Luther, Wesley, Whitefield, Finney, and many others that only God remembers. Each contributed, in some degree, to this period of receiving the early rain, plowing the ground in preparation, and sowing of the seed.

Revelations of truths that were long lost started the process of bringing the Church back to its original state. Restoration of Apostolic concepts and ministries were occurring throughout the world. All of this was the result of the early rain.

It was in the early part of this period that the Word of God was first made available to the common man by being translated into the "language of every plowboy" (William Tyndale). English was the first common language into which the Bible was translated. Thus, the English translation began the quest of making God's Word widely available to the common man.

England was the first Protestant nation and has been a launching point for sowing the Gospel seed for centuries. God used the imperial desires of Great Britain to facilitate the spread of His Word throughout the world. Today, English is the language of world-wide commerce, aviation, and industry. Throughout the world, many nations, which will be focal points of the coming endtime harvest, have English as their official language. Also, over the last thirty years, English has become the most commonly taught second language in the schools of every nation on earth. Why? Because the Lord is preparing the world for endtime, Apostolic, world-wide revival and harvest.

THE GRAIN CROP GROWS IN WINTER.

Some areas of the world have two grain harvests each year – summer and winter. However, the grain harvest in Biblical times was a winter crop.

Winter represents those very times that we think God is doing the least. When nothing seems to be happening with the seeds that we have sown in people's lives, God is still at work. The greatest revivals in history were products of adverse circumstances. Things do not have to be going perfectly for God to produce a harvest. The more impossible the harvest appears, the greater the glory for God.

The Church, which was emerging from this “dark time,” experienced much resistance from established "Christian" religion during this period. This was a "winter time" for believers. Many were hung, beheaded, burned at the stake, pulled to pieces on the rack, and slain in various other fashions as a result of the "ruling church's" Inquisitions and other persecutions throughout the world. Great resistance to the Gospel seed and its propagators became the "Wailing Wall" for many believers. In spite of this, the crop of believers continued to increase in numbers and to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

As a result of persecution, religious freedom became so important that many were willing to leave their homelands to attain it. Their goal was to find another place of residence which would allow them to worship God without fear. As a result, America was settled. America became both a beacon for Christianity and a launching place from which to reach the world with the Gospel.

THE WORLD WAITED WHILE THE CROP GREW.

Grain crops are not like other types of crops. Once sown, they are left alone until harvest. Even the discovery that bad seed was sown among the good seed does not disrupt the growth process (Matthew 13:24-30). The only requirement for the grain to grow is adequate rain.

The Lord gave us the phases of the growth of the crops before they can be harvested:

Mark 4:28-29

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

The seed which is producing the endtime harvest has progressed through these stages of development (the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear) as the original truths of the Apostolic Doctrine were progressively being revealed to those who were seeking for it with hungry hearts and objective minds.

GOD ALONE IS THE GIVER OF "INCREASE."

1 Corinthians 3:5-8

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

AFTER man has done his part by faith in fulfilling the requirements of his participation in the harvest process, GOD ALONE is the only one who can make the crop grow. It is during this period, after the sowing and before the reaping, when man can do nothing, that God makes the crop grow and gives His increase!

THE LATTER RAIN IS THE FINAL PREPARATION OF THE HARVEST.

In late winter and early spring, the latter rains come to ripen and enhance the crop and to prepare it for harvest. The time frame is late March and early April according to the Julian calendar, but it is the latter part of the last month and the first of the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. The latter rains end around the time of the Passover which is 14th day of the first month (Nisan).

For the Church, the latter rain began on January 1, 1901, in Topeka, Kansas. The Church is still experiencing the latter rain period. The promised harvest has NOT begun. Rain is NOT desirable during the period of the harvest. At the beginning of this century, the Holy Ghost was poured out primarily on Trinitarians. For the most part this is still the situation. The majority of people currently receiving the Holy Ghost are Trinitarians. While this is beginning to change in some parts of the world (most notably Ethiopia), it is still the predominant situation.

One of the main reasons God gives the Holy Ghost is to lead people into all truth. This happened in the beginning of **the last century** and it is continuing today throughout the world. However, when the harvest begins, it will be those who are Abraham's seed (his seed are those who believe in Abraham's God) who will be the recipients of the harvest.

THE TIME OF TRANSITION FROM LATTER RAIN TO HARVESTING IS VERY SIGNIFICANT.

The latter rain concludes at the time of the Passover. The sacrificial death of the lamb, at the Passover celebration, was the fulcrum between the latter rain and the beginning of agricultural grain harvest for the Jews. We know that Jesus is our Passover Lamb. He sacrificed His body for our salvation.

The Church is the Body of Christ on earth today. The spiritual Passover is the fulcrum between the latter rain and the endtime harvest. The latter rain will end and the harvest will begin when we, the body of Christ, are crucified with Christ.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The latter rain, being a time of God's blessing being poured on His people, is defined by the receiving mind set of those who are the recipients; endtime harvest will be defined by the giving **mind-set** of those are participating as laborers. The endtime harvest cannot begin as long as the Church is basking in the down pour of God's blessings and reveling in His benefits.

While focusing on what we are receiving from God, we are not allowing Him to use us to give to others. We cannot focus on both receiving and giving simultaneously. Believers must become givers, instead of takers, in order to participate in the endtime harvest. Dying out to ourselves is the catalyst of this change.

The transition from latter rain to harvest centers around sacrificial death. For the Church, the transitional event is a crucifixion – His then and ours now. As it was with Jesus the Christ, so must it be with the Church the Body of Christ:

John 12:23-28

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man [the Church] should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat [the Church] fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it [the Church] bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

27 Now is my [our] soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I [we] unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

Of world-wide, Apostolic, endtime revival and harvest, we must say, "For this cause were we born (again), for this cause came we into God's kingdom." We, like Esther, have come to the Kingdom of God, for such a time as this!

THE WAVE OFFERING BEGINS THE HARVEST.

On the first Sunday after Passover (today, we know this as Easter Sunday), the farmers bring the first sheaves from their fields to the temple to wave before the Lord as an offering of thanksgiving. This act is a demonstration of faith for the coming harvest. This is called the "Festival of Firstfruits."

Leviticus 23:9-11,14

9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

10 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:

11 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 . . .

14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, 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.

No one was allowed to begin any part of the grain harvest before the wave offering had been made. Jesus was the firstfruits of those resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:23). His resurrection occurred on this very day.

AGAIN, INCREASE IS FROM GOD ALONE. THIS CANNOT BE OVERSTATED!

The Church is not charged with producing the harvest! The increase is God's responsibility:

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

The seed has been sown, the crops are grown, the latter rain is concluded. Nevertheless, the beginning of the harvest is not a sovereign event in which God excludes men. After the Church has been crucified with Christ, faith for the harvest is the key element which activates the harvesting.

The time for the above mentioned wave-offering was very specific. The time of the last day harvest is just as definite – set sovereignly by God alone. However, the beginning of the harvest is signaled by the faith of the reapers being demonstrated through giving thanks before commencing to reap in earnest. Demonstrated faith in the promise is the activator.

THE SEVEN WEEKS OF HARVEST IS THE "ENDTIME HARVEST."

The following information concerning the harvest is supplied by these commentators:

(Vines's Expository Hebrew-Greek Dictionary)

The beginning of "harvest" varied according to natural conditions, but took place on the average about the middle of April in the eastern lowlands of Palestine, in the latter part of the month in the coast plains and a little later in high districts. Barley "harvest" usually came first and then wheat. "Harvesting" lasted about seven weeks, and was the occasion of festivities.

(New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

Harvest is a figurative term for judgment; a season of grace; a time when many are ready to receive the gospel; and, as the harvest is considered the end of the season, so our Lord says, "The harvest is the end of the age." Dew in harvest, causing the plants to ripen with rapidity and luxuriance, is a symbol of God's fostering care; cold in harvest is refreshing, like a faithful messenger; whereas rain in harvest, being untimely, is a symbol of honor given to a fool.

The grain harvest lasts for seven weeks, starting on our Easter Sunday. Approximately, the first three weeks are the barley harvest. The last four weeks are the wheat harvest. Barley was the grain used to make the bread mostly eaten by the poor. Wheat was considerably more expensive. Even in the harvest, God saves the best until last. This period was to become the natural example of God's plan for "reaping" the harvest of souls of lost humanity.

The seven weeks of grain harvest were the focal point of their agricultural lives. Likewise, the endtime harvest should be the most important event of our lives also. A successful grain harvest was a matter of life or death to them. The fruit and olive harvests of the fall enriched their lives, but the grain harvest provided the sustenance for life itself. Likewise, a successful endtime harvest is a matter of life or death to those who are waiting to be saved.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD DURING THE HARVEST IS AS A "FELLOW LABORER."

At the expense of redundancy, the following points must be repeated. We have misunderstood the purpose of the rain of God's blessings in our lives. The Lord has sent the rain to confirm and refresh us because of our weariness (Psalms 68:9). The rain represents His goodness toward us. The goodness of God leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

Nevertheless, rain is not desired during harvest time. Again, rain represents the blessings of God upon us. At some point in our walk with God, there must be a transition in our thinking from receiving to giving. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). For harvest to come, we must be willing to fellowship with the Lord's focus: to seek and to save the lost.

For us to recognize the time of the harvest and be willing to participate in it, we must be willing for God to change our relationship with Him. During the harvest, the primary fellowship the reapers will have with the Lord is allowing Him to flow through them in ministry. As we die out to ourselves, a new anointing comes which causes our ministries to take on greater degrees of effectiveness. Focusing on allowing God to minister through us to others always produces greater spiritual benefits for ourselves than when our focus is only on seeking to receive from God for ourselves.

The Church must be transformed from being "containers" of God to being "conduits" for Him. If we make this transition, we will be astounded to realize that the "blessings" we receive from allowing the Lord to flow THROUGH US (conduits) are far greater, more powerful, and more beneficial than anything we have ever received by the Lord flowing into us (containers). This is the principle of ministry which best describes those who will be the laborers in the endtime harvest.

We must stop trying to work for God, and we must begin to allow Him to do His work through us. Consequently, when we do so, all the pressure to do the reaping (and to produce the harvest) is off of us; we will allow Him to do the reaping — through us! The fruit on the branch of the vine is not produced by the branch, but it is produced by the branch allowing the flow of fruit producing life from the vine to flow through it. Therefore, right relationship with the vine results in life-giving ministry flowing through the branch.

CONVICTION IS GOD'S REAPING TOOL.

The primary reaping implement used in the Lord's harvest is the sickle of God's Word wielded with compassion, anointing, authority, and power. The sharpness of the spiritual sickle is conviction from the Holy Ghost. Conviction is the "pricking" of the conscience by the Spirit of the Lord, convincing lost souls that what they are hearing and feeling is real and true.

Conviction also prods the sinner to repent of their sins, to submit to God's authority, and to obey the plan of salvation. The greater the dimension of conviction working with the preached Word, the greater will be the results of the reaping. Conviction is the most effective method of reaping the multitudes because conviction is from God and Godly sorrow causes repentance to work.

It was conviction at work on the Day of Pentecost which "pricked the hearts" of the multitude and caused them to respond to Peter's message (Acts 2:37). When conviction is at work, no hype, no psychology, and no manipulation of the emotions are needed to reap the harvest of the lost.

It is hypocrisy of the highest degree to attempt to create false conviction. When it dawns on people that they have been deceived, the resulting disillusionment is almost impossible to overcome in the future. Thus, false conviction condemns souls to hell. Can the soul of the one who is producing the false conviction be far behind?

Conviction is produced primarily by the confirmed Word. The early Church was effective and fruitful in their ministries because the Lord confirmed the Word that they preached with signs following (Mark 16:20). Paul said he preached the Word with demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Nothing arrests the attention of the lost any more effectively than to have demonstrated to them the reality of God and the Gospel. The world is replete with the false, the sham, the fake, and the con. They have virtually no experience with the real.

Paul said that he fully preached the Gospel. What is the fully preached Gospel?

Romans 15:18-19

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Again, spiritual reapers preach not only with great authority, but God works with the laborers — they do not have to work alone. The Lord provokes the sinner to repent by convicting and convincing him with signs following, and thereby, He confirms the validity of the Word to the conscience of the hearer:

Mark 16:15-18,20

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover . . .

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

This is the ministry of the endtime harvesters. The reaping is not done "by might, nor by power," it is done "by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

THE DAY OF PENTECOST IS THE COMPLETION OF THE HARVEST.

The 50th day of the harvest marks its conclusion. The Jews called this day by several names: the Feast of Harvest, of Weeks, and of Firstfruits. Also, it is known as the Day of Pentecost. It is a day of celebration and thanksgiving for the COMPLETION of the harvest.

Deuteronomy 16:9-10

9 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.

10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks [Pentecost] unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

In the typology of the harvest cycle, this Pentecost Sunday represents the rapture. The gleanings of this harvest would be those who are saved during the seven years of wrath which follows the rapture. As with the gleanings which were reaped after the first Pentecost Sunday in this cycle, the gleanings harvested after the cycle's last Pentecost Sunday would be saved by a different plan of salvation than the main harvest which preceded them.

Revelation 7:9-10,13-14

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb...

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 20:4-5

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Both Revelation 7 and 20 speak of another group of saved people reaped after the rapture. Revelation 7 specifically states that the multitude described therein was saved out of the great tribulation. The Holy Ghost, through the Apostle John, describes them, in Revelation 20, as those who refused to worship the beast and resisted taking his mark — they were beheaded. Because worshiping the beast was damnation (Revelation 14:9-11), being beheaded was a significant element of the plan of salvation for the group harvested as the "gleanings" of the New Testament harvest (Revelation 13:12-15; 20:4,5).

The gleanings are a part of the first resurrection (Revelation 20:3,4) because they are a product of the overall New Testament harvest. Those saved out of great tribulation (Revelation 7:14) are neither the first-fruits nor the main harvest, but they are the gleanings of the New Testament harvest cycle.

The gleanings were "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues..." (Revelation 7:9). Figuratively, gleanings are a part of a different covenant than the main harvest. That principle proves true in this case. The Revelation 7 group was gleanings because they were not saved under the New Testament plan of salvation; they did not have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Revelation 7:17).

The souls of the gleaners' crop occupy a different place in the Kingdom of God than the Church. This group is made up of those who did not make it into the main harvest, but did respond to God under much different circumstances. Typology tells us that the main harvest has a time limit upon it even as the grain harvest had a "seven week" time limit. How long the endtime harvest will last only God knows, but we must be aware that the harvest period is not an indefinite length of time (Romans 9:27-28).

Consequently, when the harvest period expires, there will be ripened grain from the seed sown by New Testament sowers which will remain in the field unharvested. The crop of souls who will become the gleanings will be standing in the field waiting to be harvested along with the crops which become the main harvest. The laborers just were not able to reap them before the designated time for gathering the main harvest

expired. The gleanings did not reject the opportunity to be a part of the main harvest: they simply were not reaped by the Church's labors before the cutoff point. Should not the Church's urgency significantly increase to prevent any more of the harvest than necessary from going through the terrible ordeal of wrath in order to be reaped?

WHO ARE THE GLEANERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT HARVEST?

The identity of the gleaners (those who will reap the gleanings recorded in Revelation 7) are the 144,000 Jews who were sealed in the beginning of Revelation 7. John identifies them as "servants of God" (Revelation 7:3). Throughout the New Testament, this phrase identified laborers in God's kingdom, and, in most Scriptural contexts, it specifies preachers of the Gospel.

Revelation 14:4 states that the 144,000 were "firstfruits unto God." First-fruits of what? Christ Himself is the first-fruits of the main body of the harvest which is the Church. Therefore, the 144,000 cannot be the first-fruits of the Church. From a current time perspective, it can only be concluded that they were the first-fruits of those saved "out of" the seven year period of wrath, but from the overview perspective, they were the gleanings of the New Testament harvest.

WHAT IS THE PLAN OF SALVATION PREACHED BY THE GLEANERS?

The message preached by these gleaners would have to be the same as John the Baptist's and Jesus' message during His earthly ministry. This is the case as demonstrated by the prophet Daniel and the vision given to him about Israel which is recorded in the ninth chapter of his book:

Daniel 9:20-27

20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

In response to Daniel's intercessory prayer of repentance for his people, the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel with a message for Israel — "THY people and ... the holy city." The angel showed Daniel a vision which revealed to him the things which would occur in Israel's history over a 490 year period (70 weeks with each week representing 7 years). The "clock" for this 490 year period would begin "ticking" at the "going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." The subject of this ENTIRE 490 year period is Daniel's people — Israel (the Jews) and their city (Jerusalem). Again, at NO point in the prophecy (including the last "week" of seven years — the 70th) are the Gentiles mentioned or referred to as being the subjects of or the recipients of the blessings or the judgments contained in this vision from God.

Gabriel told Daniel that the continuity of the 70 weeks would be interrupted between the end of the 69th week and the beginning of the 70th. The cause of this interruption would be the "cutting off" of "Messiah the Prince." While the Hebrew word for "cutting off" means "to cut (off, down, or asunder)" and "to destroy or consume," it also means "specifically, to covenant" (Strong's). Brown, Driver, and Briggs defines the Hebrew word as: "to cut, to cut off, to cut down, to cut off a body part, to cut out, to eliminate, to kill, to cut a covenant." The Messiah's "cutting off" was an interruption to the Old Covenant by the establishing of the New. Of course, the New Covenant was for "all flesh" not just for Israel. In fact, the New was rejected by Daniel's people. This rejection ("blindness" - Romans 11:25) on the part of Israel is temporary according to Paul. Therefore, the purpose of Messiah's "cutting off" was to change covenants. Paul said that the temporary blinding of Israel was specifically for the salvation of the Gentiles (Romans 11:25). The time period between the end of the 69th week and the beginning of the 70th week is called the Church Age or the Age of Grace.

Daniel's 70th week is commonly understood to be the same exact time period as the seven years of God's wrath discussed in the book of Revelation (chapters 6-18) and called by some the "Great Tribulation." Further proof that this seven years of wrath is primarily intended to "revive" the Jews is that it is also called "the time of Jacob's trouble":

Jeremiah 30:4-11

4 And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah.

5 For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.

6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

A careful comparison of the vision given to Daniel concerning the 70th week, Jeremiah's "time of Jacob's trouble," and Revelation 6-18 will reveal their exact parallels to the point that it must be concluded that all three are discussing the exact same period of time and events.

The designated event which recommences the vision's time clock after its interruption at the end of the 69th week is the "confirming of the covenant" for one week — the remaining week of Daniel's 70 (Daniel 9:27). The Hebrew word for "confirm" means "to confirm, to give strength; to confirm (a covenant)" (*Brown-Driver-Briggs*). *Webster's* says that "confirm" means "to establish as true that which was doubtful or uncertain." "Confirm" does not connote "beginning," it does connote "beginning again or starting over." Therefore, the meaning of "confirm" in the context of Daniel 9:27 is the "RE-establishing" of Israel's covenant with God or one of putting strength back into a covenant which had lost its strength. Only one "Prince" has the ability to do this — Messiah the Prince, Jehovah God manifest in the flesh. For the rules of grammar (both Hebrew and English) to be properly obeyed, the pronoun "he" of verse 27 (the one confirming the covenant with Israel) can ONLY refer back to "Messiah the Prince." There is NO OTHER NOUN used in all of these verses which can fulfill the requirements of the grammatical rules concerning relative pronouns.

Christ (the Messiah) is the sign of the covenant to the Jews:

Isaiah 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Paul clearly and explicitly states that all of Israel will be saved (Jeremiah 30:7 also agrees with Paul's statement concerning Israel's salvation):

Romans 11:25-32

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Paul states that the means of this salvation will be a "Deliverer" who shall come out of Zion. This "blindness" which has happened to Israel will last "until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has come in" (Amplified Version).

Romans 11:25-26 ...a hardening (insensibility) has [temporarily] befallen a part of Israel [to last] until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved. As it is written, the Deliverer will come from Zion, He will banish ungodliness from Jacob. (*Amplified Version*)

After God is through with His focus upon the Gentiles, He will turn back to Abraham's offspring. Paul makes God's intent perfectly clear in Romans 9;10;11. The Lord will once again turn to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6; 15:24). Again, the salvation of Israel to which Paul is referring is to occur AFTER God has completed His work with the Gentiles. For this to be the case, the "blinding" of Israel INTERRUPTED God's work in their lives and left it incomplete UNTIL He had first given the Gentiles their opportunity. In addition to His plan to save the Gentiles, God desired to provoke Israel to jealousy by His work of salvation among the Gentiles:

Romans 10:17-21

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Romans 11:7-15

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

The 70th week is Israel's history and not the Church's. Also, Israel has not accepted the New Covenant; therefore, the New Covenant cannot be "confirmed" to them. The only conclusion with which we are left is that Israel's "confirmed" covenant has to be the "Old Covenant." It is not possible to "confirm" a covenant which was never accepted by Israel. The Lord will use the Law to get Israel to accept the New Covenant. The Law (Old Testament) is the "schoolmaster" to bring Israel to the Messiah (Galatians 3:24-25). Therefore, the blood sacrifices and oblations will recommence to be offered as a result of the covenant's confirmation. Blood sacrifices ceased at the destruction of the Temple. The Bible foretold that the Jewish Temple would be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The Jews are awaiting this event in order to reestablish blood sacrifices.

However, because of the sin of many in Israel during the period of the 70th week who accept the Anti-Christ as their Messiah and reject the ministry and message of the 144,000, the One who confirmed the covenant will cut off ("to cause to cease, to put to an end" - *Brown-Driver-Briggs*) the sacrifices in the middle of the week. The One who confirms the covenant and the one who comes on the "wings of abomination" are NOT the same person:

Daniel 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations {will come} one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (*New American Standard*)

Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate." (*New King James*)

Daniel 9:27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator." (*Revised Standard Version*)

Daniel 9:27 And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations (shall come) one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall (wrath) be poured out upon the desolate. (*American Standard Version*)

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until that the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate. (*Darby's Translation*)

The context of Daniel 9:27 does not allow any interpretation which has anyone else stopping the sacrifices. Whoever confirmed the covenant with Israel is the same one who stopped the sacrifices. The One who confirmed the covenant was DISPLEASED with Israel's sin and stopped the sacrifices in response to the abomination of their sin of Idolatry. This idolatry will provoke the worst of God's judgment upon the earth. Notice that in the following text from Matthew 24 that the people referenced are THE JEWS:

Matthew 24:15-31

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The events described in Matthew 24:15-31 appear to be the details of the event referred to in Daniel 9:27. Note please that it is at the coming of the Son of man in Matthew 24:30 that Israel will recognize the Messiah (and the Covenant) which they have rejected:

Zechariah 12:9-11

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

The "elect" of Matthew 24:15-31 who go through "great tribulation" has to be the same as the Revelation 7 multitude who are saved out of "great tribulation" (see the text of Revelation 7:9-17 below). The specific "elect" referred to in Matthew are those who live in Judea and pray and observe the Sabbath.

Therefore, because of the facts which have been presented above and in order for there to be any continuity to Daniel's seventy weeks, whatever the plan of salvation was during the 69th week of the vision must be, of necessity, the same plan of salvation in effect during Daniel's 70th week. The plan of salvation in effect at the time of Messiah the Prince's death was the law of the Old Covenant applied through "repentance (Matthew 3:2; 4:17) and the water baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 1:3) through faith in the Messiah (or the name of the Messiah)" (the disciples of John at Ephesus - Acts 19:1-5; John 4:1-2; Luke 24:47). All of the followers of both John and Jesus obeyed this plan of salvation before the death of Jesus.

The only difference between the message of John the Baptist and Jesus was that John preached baptism in the name of the coming Messiah (he did not know who the Messiah would be until just before the end of his ministry) and Jesus preached baptism in His own name (Luke 24:47). The fact that Jesus' disciples were baptized in Jesus' name before Calvary is evidenced by the Apostles not being "re-baptized" after the New Testament began on the Day of Pentecost. This demonstrates the validity of their pre-Calvary water baptism. The fact that John's disciples at Ephesus WERE re-baptized after Calvary demonstrates the difference between their water baptism and the Apostles pre-Calvary water baptism. The difference between the two water

baptisms is "the name of Jesus" (Acts 19:5). After the disciples of John were re-baptized at Ephesus "in the name of the Lord Jesus," their water baptism and the Apostles' water baptism were exactly the same.

The New Covenant which took effect on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 only added the availability of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to the message of repentance and water baptism in the name of the Messiah:

Acts 2:36-39

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The ONLY DIFFERENCE between the plan of salvation in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and the plan of salvation in the Book of Acts is the fulness of the indwelling of God's Spirit in His people. It is God's indwelling Spirit (His Spirit being IN US and not just WITH US) that is the primary element of the promised New Covenant:

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Ezekiel 36:26-27

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

John 4:13-14

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 7:37-39

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The plan of salvation for the seven years of wrath as demonstrated in the vision which John had of the great multitude in heaven in Revelation 7 is the exact same one as was preached by John the Baptist and Jesus during Daniel's 69th week.

Revelation 7:9-17

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The multitude had on "white robes" which are obtained in water baptism in the Messiah's name. However, they did not have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost as proven by the fact that they were NOT led to "fountains of living water" until AFTER they arrived in heaven. (For a much more detailed look at this group of "saved" believers and a comparison of them with the Church, see "CHAPTER 15 — THE TIME OF ABRAHAM'S PROMISE.") Therefore, they could not have been saved under the covenant which began on the Day of Pentecost.

The ultimate purpose for this discussion of the plan of salvation during Daniel's 70th week is to demonstrate that those saved during this period are the "gleanings" and that the main body of the harvest had to have been reaped before the beginning of the 70th week. Therefore, endtime, Apostolic, world-wide harvest of souls has to be the "Last Sign Before Rapture."

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EVANGELIZING AND HARVESTING?

The significant difference between "evangelism" and "harvesting" will characterize and define the difference between the latter rain period and the endtime harvest period:

During the latter rain period (in which we currently remain though we are very near the transition), the numerical results are considerably smaller than would be expected in a harvest. There are several reasons for this. First, it is not time for the harvest — the grain is not ripe. Second, the Lord's focus is on producing the laborers who are necessary to the reaping of the endtime harvest. Third, because the Church, in general, is NOT involved with the lost, this is proof that the Church is greatly in need of being revived. The Church cannot be involved with the harvest unless it is first truly revived. When such a large portion of believers have no personal involvement with the lost, the numbers of the lost being saved will remain far below what God is willing and able to save.

Reaching the lost during the time of the latter rain is characterized as "evangelism." As generally defined, evangelism is any involvement of a believer with an unsaved person for the sake of bringing about the salvation of the lost. In the context of this book, the word "evangelism" is being very narrowly defined. Evangelism here denotes the specific one-on-one methodologies which are necessary to convince individuals to be saved. The amount of personal involvement necessary to win a soul under these conditions is considerable because there is less conviction working supernaturally than will be characteristic of the harvest period. Consequently, the numerical results are smaller.

Even when a larger number of souls than usual is saved, almost all of the converts will have had personal attention given to them by a soulwinner before experiencing salvation. Accordingly, the great majority of those filled with the Holy Ghost in the great outpourings which have recently been received in Ethiopia, New Guinea, Central America, Zambia, and the Philippines were personally invited by soulwinners to the meetings in which they were saved. To obtain results from soulwinning efforts during the latter rain, the laborer is required to give varying amounts of person-to-person attention to the prospect. This point does not in any way lessen the awesomeness of these specific outpourings of the latter rain of the Holy Ghost. In fact, their miraculous nature and great numbers lend perspective to how truly great the harvest will be.

Furthermore, the degree of personal involvement with each soul is essential because those added to the Church during the latter rain are being disciplined to be servant-laborers in the harvest. While here on earth, Jesus invested much personal time with those who would lead His harvest. Yet, we do not find recorded, in Scripture, anything resembling the personal involvement of the Apostles with the rank and file of the grain harvest. The Apostles gave their time to "prayer and the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). The difference is not due to lack of concern, elitism, or any other negative factor. It was due solely to the urgency of the harvest.

Reaching the lost during the harvest period will be extremely different than during the latter rain — in focus, concept, approach, etc. — in the following ways:

First, the focus of the laborers' efforts is different — reaping multitudes not evangelizing individuals. In the grape, fig, and olive harvests, individual fruits are picked. In the grain harvest, as much grain as possible is reaped with each swipe of the sickle.

Second, the concept is much different. In the harvest of fruit, only the fruit is picked. Usually, no part of the tree or vine is taken with the fruit. However, the grain harvest is under the influence of two constraints: the need to harvest the crops before any rain falls upon them and the time limit of "seven weeks" set by God. Consequently, in the grain harvest, the whole stalk is taken, knowing that the chaff and the wheat will have to be separated later. But, the urgency of reaping the harvest as quickly as possible justifies the labor expended on the chaff. It would be far too time consuming to attempt to separate the grain from the stalks while they stand in the field in order to eliminate the reaping of chaff.

Consequently, we see the parallel between the two examples given in the Bible which refer to the method's of the harvest period — reaping a grain harvest and net-fishing. In both examples, large quantities are gathered and the good and bad are separated later. In both the results are more dependant upon the reaper or fisherman being in the right place at the right time, than on the spiritual condition and interest of the specific individual being reaped. The move of God will be so great that many who are not truly seeking God will be reaped or caught in the net, but they will be separated out of the results later by the purging (threshing) of the Word of God and the conviction (winnowing) of His Spirit.

Third, the underlying approach used in presenting the Gospel is radically different. During the latter rain, the lost are encouraged to receive the blessings and benefits of God. A call to be a part of God's kingdom will appeal to the hearts of many. Jesus called to the disciples "Follow me" not "Repent or die." However, during the harvest, conviction of sin and the urgent need to be saved will characterize the focus of the message to the lost. During the latter rain, the lost are reached most effectively by meeting their personal needs. During the

harvest, the sickle of conviction and urgency, felt by the laborers and communicated to the lost, will leave a gigantic swath cut by the Holy Ghost's sickle through great crowds of people.

Fourth, our relationship to and with the Lord changes. During the latter rain, we go and God goes with us; we preach and God works with us (Mark 16:15,20). During the harvest, God goes and we go with Him; He speaks the Word and we repeat it; He works and we work with Him.

Additional differences between the "evangelism" of the latter rain period and the "harvesting" of the endtime harvest period are:

During the latter rain period, almost all evangelism efforts are planned and scheduled. In almost every case, even those meetings with tremendous results occurred as a result of careful planning, great effort, and much expense. The great majority of those who have been filled with the Holy Ghost were invited to the meeting. In many cases the meetings were not even held in a convenient location. Therefore, those who were saved traveled some distance with other believers in order to be saved. This is not in anyway a criticism of any of these efforts. In fact, those who will be most involved in God's endtime harvest are those who were most involved in efforts to win the lost during the latter rain.

During the harvest period, most people will be reached by supernatural, spontaneous moves of the Holy Ghost. Not one major move of God in the Book of Acts resulting in large numbers being saved was a "planned" meeting: the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John at the Temple after the lame man was healed, Cornelius' household, etc. During the harvest period, the Spirit of God will be moving in such a way that the primary responsibility of the reapers will be simply to seek God's guidance as to where and when they are to go each day to be involved in what the Lord is doing during any particular day. In addition, the rare occurrence during of the latter rain of people spontaneously receiving the Holy Ghost without anyone specifically laying hands on them will be the norm during the endtime harvest.

Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

His methodology which He "modeled" for us during His earthly ministry will be the pattern for the ministry of the Church during endtime harvest. Most of the results which He experienced were the result of a supernatural demonstration of the power of the Holy Ghost. This resulted in crowds gathering spontaneously. Jesus preached a confirmed Word which resulted in multitudes believing. Paul said that this was his primary ministry method:

1 Corinthians 2:3-5

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

This method of ministry resulted in a "fully preached" gospel:

Romans 15:18-19

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

This ministry, modeled by Jesus and demonstrated by Paul, is the ministry of the endtime harvest.

Therefore, we can conclude that evangelizing is focused on reaching individuals; harvesting is focused on reaching the multitudes. In evangelism, God works with us; in the harvest, we work with God.

THE CONCLUSION:

The cycle of the grain harvest represents an overview of the history of the Church. If the cycle of the grain harvest does correspond to the chronology of events during the Church's history, then the great majority of souls harvested during the Church Age will be reaped during the concluding period of that history. By the typology of the overview, the first century Church's harvest must be viewed as the gleanings of the Old Testament harvest. The significance of this consideration would be the fact that essentially the greatest degree of harvest and almost all of its bulk by volume would be at the end of the Church's history and not at its beginning.

The harvest of souls reaped by the first century Church is considered awesome by today's current standards. Yet, in God's sight, it was only gleanings. If it was only gleanings, just how great will the dimensions and proportions of the last day harvest actually be?