

Pentecost and the Establishment of the Old Covenant

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If I were to ask you what major events from the Bible do you most often associate with Pentecost, I'm willing to bet the vast majority of you would have a very similar answer. Your answer would probably be the giving of the law and the giving of the Holy Spirit. As we're going to see, yes, both of those events are associated with Pentecost, however, if we just focus on those particular events and don't see the bigger picture, we might be focusing on the trees and missing the forest.

What we're going to see today and tomorrow is that the giving of the law and the giving of the Holy Spirit, while both essential and important events we should appreciate, are simply parts of establishing the covenants because that was the entire purpose and context into which they fit. The covenants are really, you might say, the major events. If you look at the Old Covenant that literally dominates the entire narrative of the Old Testament from the point of Exodus forward, the whole narrative of the story is about God and His covenant relationship with Israel. Other nations simply come into the story as they interact with Israel.

The same is true in the New Testament—it's about God and His covenant relationship with the Church. That's the entire focus. What I want you to see in all of this is sometimes we can focus so much on the trees that we might miss the forest—the bigger picture, the context into which it all falls. What we're going to look at today and tomorrow is the establishing of the covenants and their relationship with Pentecost. If you would like a title for today's sermon it's:

Pentecost and the Establishment of the Old Covenant

As you might guess, tomorrow we're going to talk about the New Covenant but today we're going to focus on the Old Covenant story. What I want you to see first of all is that the entire focus of the Mount Sinai story and the giving of the law is completely focused on the establishing of a covenant—that is the entire context in which it happened. If you'll turn over to Exodus 19 you'll notice as we start that the entire Mount Sinai story—the purpose of it, the whole big plan that's happening—is God's desire to establish a covenant with Ancient Israel. Notice chapter 19:1.

Exodus 19:1 *In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai.*

2) *For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.*

3) *And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:*

- 4) *“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.*
5) *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*
6) *And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” (NKJV)*

Notice from the very beginning of this story, the entire context, the whole point of this is God wants to establish a covenant with Israel. He wants to have a special relationship with them and part of their agreement, as we’re going to see—what they have to fulfill—is their part of this covenant in obeying God’s law. We’re going to look at the whole context, the law given as the terms of what they have to agree to as their part of this covenant agreement. The covenant is the big picture, the whole context of why this is happening. Now pick up in verse 7.

- 7) *So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.*
8) *Then all the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” (NKJV)*

I want you to also notice here there are at least three times in this story you’re going to see a similar phrase like this where Israel says, all that the LORD has spoken, we will do. What I want you to understand in all this, especially in this particular case, is they are agreeing to a proposal that’s been given to them. At this point, they don’t even understand everything that they’re going to have to abide by as part of this covenant because the law hasn’t been given to them. Every time you see this statement don’t assume that’s formally making a covenant.

We’re going to see here in chapter 24, there’s actually a formal ceremony that they will go through that involves animal sacrifices when they’ve officially ratified the covenant. At this point, they’re basically just saying what God is saying—that sounds good to us, we’ll be a special people, that sounds right. They don’t even understand all the terms to which they’re agreeing. The terms to which they’re going to have to agree are obeying God’s law and they don’t even have that yet.

- 8 continued) *... So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.*
9) *And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.” So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.*
10) *Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and [sanctify] consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. (NKJV)*

Notice He’s telling them to do their laundry. That’s going to become important later but just take note of that as we read this.

11) *And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (NKJV)*

I also want you to notice what we just saw in verses 10 and 11; there's a three-day count that will become important that He's laying out to them. We have a three-day count and it's today, tomorrow and the third day—you can't mistake how to do the math because there's no debate as to when day one is—day one is called "today". We're going to come back to that in a minute but just notice that as we go through this story.

12) *You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.*

13) *Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.'* When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

14) *So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. (NKJV)*

Notice once again, they're doing their laundry; that will become important later.

15) *And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives."*

16) *Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.*

17) *And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.*

18) *Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.*

19) *And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.*

20) *Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.*

21) *And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish.*

22) *Also let the priests who come near the LORD [sanctify] consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them."*

23) *But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and [sanctify] consecrate it.'"*

24) *Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them."*

25) *So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them. (NKJV)*

Over the next couple of chapters, we're going to skip over some of the content here because I think a lot of you are very familiar with it. Basically, what we have between chapters 20 and 23, in all of those contained there, is God giving Israel a snapshot of the laws that they're going to have to obey as part of this covenant. He gives them the Ten Commandments; He even reiterates the Sabbath; He mentions the Holy Day seasons; He tells them three seasons in a year you're going to have Holy Days; He gives them various statutes and judgments; He gives them an overview snapshot of all the laws they're going to have to obey as a part of their keeping the covenant. Move over to Exodus 24:1 and we're going to pick up the story after God has given all the details. (We're going to skip over all the details of the specific laws that He gave them.)

Exodus 24:1 *Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.*

2) And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him."

3) So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." (NKJV)

Notice when we first read that similar comment in chapter 19, I pointed out that just because they're saying all the LORD has said we will do, they're agreeing, but they're not formally making and ratifying a covenant yet. We're going to see there's a formal ceremony associated with this that involves animal sacrifices when they officially make it a covenant and make it legally binding. Understand that they're basically just saying that everything we're hearing sounds good and we want to proceed forward. They're not officially—you might say, legally—ratifying a covenant and putting it into force yet, so just understand that.

4) And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. (NKJV)

What He's telling us is Moses wrote down all these laws and everything that God had told them in this whole period. As we're going to see in just a few more verses, that's referred to as the Book of the Covenant—a formal record of everything God had given them, Moses writes down. Let's make particular note of the next sentence in verse 4.

4 continued) ... And he rose early in the morning [we're now on the next day, that's very significant], and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (NKJV)

Everything that we're reading now was on the day after the Ten Commandments were being spoken. As we're going to see in this story, we have two important days and this is day two. Let's continue in verse 5.

5) Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.

6) *And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.*

7) *Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."*

8) *And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words." (NKJV)*

As we're going to see, we can dogmatically prove from the Bible this is the point where the covenant is officially ratified. He's sprinkling the blood saying this is the blood of the covenant that they've officially agreed to—this is the formal ceremony that actually makes this covenant. You'll notice also—it's not mentioned particularly in these chapters—but the Old Covenant agreement between God and Israel is referred to many times later in the Bible as a marriage covenant. It uses the language of describing God as the husband, Israel as the wife, at times when they were unfaithful and not obeying God, as cheating on Him and committing adultery with other gods—this is described in terms of a marriage. What that means is the marriage ceremony took place because they're even saying the I do's. All that the LORD has said, I will do—they're basically saying the I do's of a marriage. Notice in the next couple of verses,

9) *Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,*

10) *and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.*

11) *But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank. (NKJV)*

Notice what's happening here—they just made a marriage covenant between God and Israel and had the formal ceremony, and what's taking place right afterward—they're having a banquet. Think about that from a New Covenant parallel, when we have the marriage between the Church and Jesus Christ—what is it referred to as—when there's a marriage supper, there's a banquet that takes place right after the ceremony.

You'll see a lot of parallels between these because what you'll see as we go through these two sermons is, it's as if you held up a mirror in between the year of the Exodus and the year that Christ died, and how those events play out, and also the symbolism between the marriages in the covenant. In the Old Covenant, the marriage is on the front end when they initially make this agreement, and for the marriage in the New Covenant, that's after the firstfruits have successfully made it to the Kingdom of God. You could say it's on the back end in that regard.

There are still a great number of parallels between this whole process that you'll see between the Old Covenant symbolism and the New Covenant. As you're going to see later, even the dates, the days of the weeks, and the calendars line up with each other.

I mentioned that the ceremony with animal sacrifices and Moses sprinkling blood upon the people, saying, this is the blood of the covenant—this is the actual ratifying of the covenant. This is when the covenant becomes official and legally binding going forward. How do we know that? How do we know for sure that this isn't just some additional extra formality that was done later, that this is the actual cutting of the covenant? We know for sure because Hebrews 9 tells us that explicitly.

Hebrews 9:16—I'm going to read verses 16 and 17 out of the New King James translation because that's what I'm normally always reading from unless I state otherwise. The reason I'm making a point of this is these two verses are poorly translated in the New King James translation and it obscures the meaning. I'm going to read this here and then read from a more accurate translation that gives you a better idea exactly what these two verses are saying.

Hebrews 9:16 *For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*

17) *For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.* (NKJV)

There are several translation errors that obscure the meaning. One of the major ones is the use of the word *testament* rather than the word *covenant*. If you look up the Greek word used not only in these verses but throughout this chapter, what you'll see is that word can be accurately translated as covenant or testament—it can be used either way. However, covenants and testaments are very different things.

If you've ever been involved in doing a will, you'll find the cover page will say the last will and testament of John Doe or whoever the person's name is. Those are formal instructions of when this person dies, where they want the property to go—how do they want their assets divided up. That's not how a covenant works. A covenant is an agreement between living parties of what each party is going to do—similar to what we would call a contract today, but taken a lot more seriously in terms of how it was done. It's an agreement between living parties—each party agreeing as to what they will do and making a formal agreement out of it. But even that's one of several translation errors. To get a better idea of what is expressed in these verses I would like to quote these same two verses from a translation called The Holy Bible in Its Original Order. Here's how it translates these two verses.

16) *Now where there is a covenant, it is obligatory to bring forth a symbolic sacrifice to represent the death of one who personally ratifies the covenant.*

17) *Because a covenant is ratified only over the dead sacrificial animals since there is no way that it is legally enforced until the living ratifier has symbolically represented his death.* (HBOO)

An important part of covenants and how they were done in the Bible wasn't like how we do contracts today. When two parties get into a legal agreement in our world and they

sign on the dotted line, they're both stating they're going to fulfill their end of it. Nobody is typically staking their life that they're going to follow through on their end. If one party doesn't fulfill their end maybe the other party takes them to court, sues them and there are some financial consequences, but nobody's saying I wish death upon myself if I don't fulfill my end. This was a very important part of how covenants were done because it was taken very seriously, as you're basically wishing death upon yourself if you don't follow through on your commitment.

To further explain this, I would like to quote from a commentary that addresses these two verses I just read. It's called The Word Biblical Commentary by William Lane. The section I'm going to quote is from volume 47B, from a section that's on pages 242 and 243.

In the Old Testament, ratification of a covenant, based on sacrifice, frequently entailed a self-maledictory procedure. The ratifying party invoked a curse upon himself when he swore commitment to comply with the terms of the covenant. In the transaction, the ratifying party was represented by animals designated for sacrifice. The bloody dismemberment of the representative animals signified the violent death of the ratifying party if he proved faithless in his oath. Until the oath of allegiance had been sworn and validated by the action of cutting animals in two and walking between the pieces, the covenant remained merely tentative. It was legally confirmed on the basis of dismembering bodies of the sacrificial victims. In its context, the unusual formulation on the basis of dead bodies refers to the bodies of representative animals used in the self-maledictory right of covenant ratification. It finds an exact parallel in Psalm 50:5 whereby sacrifice means on the basis of sacrificial animals. The thought is amplified by the strong negative assertion that a covenant is never operative while the ratifier lives. The formulation accurately reflects the legal situation that a covenant is never secured until the ratifier has bound himself to his oath by means of a representative death.

What this meant was—to give it a term in our world today—sometimes people say, are you willing to stake your life on that, and that's basically what they were saying. They were making an agreement and literally staking their life on it, saying I'm wishing death upon myself if I do not fulfill my end of the commitment.

I just read from the commentary where it talked about animal sacrifices and walking between the carcasses. There are a couple of examples that you will see in the Old Testament (I'm not going to take the time to turn to them right now) where when they're ratifying a covenant, they would literally not only sacrifice an animal, they would take the carcass and split it from top to bottom right down the middle, lay out the halves of the carcass and then walk between them as a formal ceremony—picturing their death if they didn't follow through on the commitment. This is how covenants were ratified. When you understand that, you realize why Moses was taking these sacrificed animals

and sprinkling the blood upon the people because they were basically staking their lives in terms of fulfilling their part of this agreement.

If we continue to read the next several verses and keep in mind the other translations I read to you, you'll see that what these verses are actually saying is very consistent. Pick up in verse 18 (and this is back to the New King James Translation).

18) *Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.* (NKJV)

We're talking about the Old Covenant in Mount Sinai, because notice verse 19:

19) *For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,*

20) *saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you."*

21) *Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.*

22) *And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin].* (NKJV)

As we can see here, the Bible makes it very clear for us that the covenant, the Mount Sinai covenant, was not officially ratified—it was not legally enforced and formally done until the part of chapter 24 from verse 4 on—in other words, the following day. Notice what we have—in the Old Covenant story, we have the giving of the law, the speaking of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai that we're familiar with in Exodus 20, and all the other laws that were given in the next several chapters—that's on one day. The ratifying of the covenant is the next day because we noticed in chapter 24:4 there's a second morning mentioned there. It says Moses gets up early that morning—we're now on the next day so we have two important days that we're dealing with.

If you noticed as we read through these chapters, and even if you read through the chapters we skipped over (chapters 22-23), there is nothing directly stated in any of those chapters that ever tells you that Pentecost is involved in this story. If we're going to connect Pentecost to the Mount Sinai story, we're going to have to do a little detective work.

I think we're going to see we can make a very strong argument that Pentecost is involved in this story, but before we look into this further—you might say do a little detective work—there's one thing we absolutely know for sure. We have two important days—we have forty-eight hours' worth of events and we have a twenty-four-hour holy day—we know one thing for sure, both of these days can't be Pentecost, the math doesn't work that way. We can make one of them Pentecost but they simply can't both be Pentecost because math doesn't work like that—you can't get forty-eight hours of events into a twenty-four-hour Holy Day. How do we then connect the Mount Sinai story with Pentecost? To do that we're going to have to do a little detective work and the first

thing we're going to have to figure out is when did Pentecost occur the year of the Exodus, the year that it happened—what was the date of Pentecost? That's the first thing we're going to have to figure out. As you know with all the other holy days, they're on set calendar dates—on this day of this month you shall have this holy day. Pentecost doesn't work like that, it bounces around. We have a week "window" of when it could fall so the first thing we have to do is nail that down.

Before services, I passed out a handout to most all of you that you should have at your seats and if you're seeing this sermon off the website or off a DVD this will be provided for you as well. It will be mailed out with the DVD's and it will be put on the website so you'll have access to it. [To access it, go to pacificcog.org and click on "Written Material", then on "Study Papers".] The title of the document is The Calendar from Exodus to Pentecost. What you'll see is it's a front-and-back document—on the front you have the month of Nissan and the month of Iyar which are the first and second months of the Hebrew calendar. On the back, you have the month of Sivan which is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. I use this as a visual aid that we can work with to nail this down because it's easier to follow what I'm about to cover if you can visually look at it.

As you know, the way we count Pentecost is from the Sunday that falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread. We call it Wave Sheaf Sunday because that's when that ceremony was performed, but to know when that Sunday is we have to know how the days of the week fell for the Days of Unleavened Bread the year of the Exodus. The actual account in Exodus of Israel coming out of Egypt—just those specific events—never really tells us what day of the week we're talking about. We have to figure out a way to nail down what day of the week these fell on so we can figure out when the Sunday was during the Days of Unleavened Bread, so we can do a fifty-day count to get to Pentecost—how are we going to do that? To do that we're going to need what I'm going to call an anchor date. In other words, we need some date that we can identify from the Bible—sometime in these three months where the Bible clearly identifies for us not only what day of the month it is but makes it very clear for us what day of the week it is. Once we have an anchor date, we can count backward and forward from that date and fill in how the days of the week fall for these three months. Fortunately, the Bible gives us just such an anchor date to work with. If you'll turn over to Exodus 16:1,

Exodus 16:1 *And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. (NKJV)*

It clearly tells us the events we're about to read throughout the rest of this chapter—this happened on the fifteenth day of the second month, so now we have a specific date. I'm going to summarize the rest of this chapter for time's sake because it's a famous story you're probably relatively familiar with. If you read the rest of this story, it makes it very obvious that the fifteenth day of the second month was a weekly Sabbath. Here's how we know that—the story that plays out is, Israel is complaining and saying God

brought us out here to starve us to death. We have nothing to eat and we're all going to die. God hears their appeal and He comes down and says (this is my summary of it) I have a short-term plan and a long-term plan for you. The short-term plan is tonight at sunset, you're going to have quail—you're going to have your belly full of quail, you're going to have all the quail you can eat. Starting tomorrow, I've got a long-term plan for you. We're going to start feeding you with manna—food is going to rain from the sky six days a week and what's going to be unique about it is for the first five days when it falls, what you're going to get is only going to be good for that day and the next day; if you save any over it's going to be bad and you're not going to want to eat it. On the sixth day, you're going to get twice as much and this will be different because you can save over half of it and it will still be good the next day. On the seventh day, the Sabbath, there's not going to be any food falling from the sky.

What He's doing here is He's establishing not only a way to feed them regularly, He's basically making it blatantly, painfully obvious—as a friend of mine loved to joke, He made it stupid-proof—as to when the Sabbath is. If food falls from the sky six days a week and on the seventh day it doesn't, you just can't mistake when that seventh day is. It is blatantly obvious, you cannot be so stupid as to miss that because it is the one day that food does not fall from the sky. Notice the point of this entire cycle is making it incredibly obvious when the Sabbath is. If you read through this story, it tells you on day six you're going to get twice as much; it doesn't say on Friday you're going to get twice as much, it says on day six. It only makes sense that you have to start this on day one, on Sunday. The cycle doesn't make any sense at all if you don't start it that way to lay out. If you're having the conversation today and the conversation goes, tomorrow morning we're going to start with Manna—tomorrow is Sunday, today is Saturday, you obviously know how that works out.

If you look at your calendar handout notice on the fifteenth day of the second month I have it labeled as "Quail at dusk" and I give you Exodus 16:1-13. Then on Sunday the 16th you have "Manna in the morning" and I mention Exodus 16:13-21. Once you can nail these two down, now we have anchor dates to work with. Now all you need is the knowledge that Nissan is the first month of the Hebrew calendar and is always a thirty-day month; your second month, Iyar, is always a twenty-nine-day month; and Sivan, your third month, is always a thirty-day month. Once you have that knowledge and you have an anchor date to work with, you can work backward and forward and populate your calendar and lay out exactly how the days of the week fall with all of this.

If you glance up at Nissan, your first month on the calendar, you'll notice I've got Passover Day on the fourteenth. On the fifteenth, we start Unleavened Bread and I have Israel departing Egypt. Notice something else interesting—Passover Day falls on a Wednesday and the first day of Unleavened Bread falls on a Thursday, which should sound kind of familiar. The reason I say that is you're probably more familiar with how the days of the week fell the year that Christ was killed. Over the years the Church of God has published lots of articles and booklets and all sorts of material addressing that. We won't go through all the scriptures to prove this but we purposefully can make a

point of that because there is a popular myth in our culture today of Good Friday and Easter Sunday trying to fit three days and three nights into a mathematically impossible picture of Christ's death and resurrection.

We can prove from the Bible that Christ was killed on a Wednesday—He was killed Wednesday afternoon on the latter part of the fourteenth. He was put in the grave before sunset as we go into the first day of Unleavened Bread because the New Testament tells us that Sabbath was a High Day—it was the first day of Unleavened Bread. He's in the grave Thursday, Friday, Saturday and right at sunset on the end of the Sabbath, He's resurrected—three days and three nights. Notice this is a mirror image of how the days fell out.

The following day, Christ goes up before the Father to fulfill the wave sheaf to be accepted before Him; that's a Sunday during Unleavened Bread and notice I have that labeled as the eighteenth. This is an exact mirror image—kind of what you would expect. Also, just a point of technicality, I put the label "Wave Sheaf Offering" on Sunday, the eighteenth, because that's the Sunday from which we would tabulate Pentecost. I'm not trying to state that Israel would have actually done the wave sheaf ceremony that particular day because if you read through Leviticus 23, when it gives the instruction for the wave sheaf what it says is, when you get into the land I shall give you and reap its harvest, then you shall do this. The instructions make it very obvious they couldn't do that until they got into the Promised Land. Think about it logistically—this is the people fed with Manna for forty years because they didn't have their own crops to harvest—they wouldn't have a sheaf of grain harvested to wave in the first place, so it's just a logistical impossibility.

We know that Sunday the eighteenth is where we would count from to tabulate Pentecost and it's a fifty-day count. The other thing you'll notice, in some translations in the Bible, in Leviticus 23 it mentions seven Sabbaths that you'll go through in this cycle. What I also did, if you look beginning on Nissan the twenty-fourth on that Sabbath, you'll see the Sabbaths numbered throughout the calendar. So you have the Sabbaths labeled all the way down and if you flip the page over on the back, to the third month of Sivan, you'll see your seventh Sabbath falls on Sivan the seventh, and then Pentecost falls on Sivan the eighth. This would be true not only for the year of the Exodus but for the year that Christ died. They are mirror images of each other and you'll find incredible parallels in terms of how all of this plays out.

Now we know exactly when Pentecost was that year; we have an exact date for it but how do we connect the story of Mount Sinai with this particular date? We've nailed down when Pentecost was that year, but we still have to have some way of proving the Mount Sinai story has anything to do with Pentecost. Let's turn back over to Exodus 19 and do a little more detective work to put all of this together. Notice it starts off in the third month which is the first statement made. Well, the third month of the Hebrew calendar as we've just seen is the month of Sivan. That's always when Pentecost falls. Just as a side note—if you notice on your calendar there's a yellow bar that I put across

between Sivan the fifth and Sivan the eleventh. That is the week in which Pentecost can fall in any given year. If you're doing a fifty-day count anywhere from the first day of Unleavened Bread to the last day of Unleavened Bread, which would be the fifteenth of Nissan to the twenty-first of Nissan, and you count fifty days, you have to fall somewhere between the fifth of Sivan and the eleventh of Sivan—that's just the way that fifty-day math is always going to work and you'll see in a minute why I made a point of highlighting that particular window. We know that Pentecost that year was on the eighth of Sivan but I made a note of the fifth through eleventh because that's when Pentecost can fall in any given year. If you look at Exodus 19:1 we know we're in the third month but what day are we on here? We have to do a little detective work for that one too.

Exodus 19:1 *In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai.* (NKJV)

We know we're in the right month—we're in the month of Sivan which is the third month, so we're close—but what day are we on? It doesn't give us an exact date but it does give us a clue—it says *on the same day*. What do we do with this comment? It makes a reference to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt and then says *on the same day*. Hold your finger here on Exodus 19 because we're going to come right back, but quickly turn over to Numbers 33 and we'll see that we can conclusively nail down exactly when Israel came out of Egypt, and then we can use that to help us figure this out.

Numbers 33:3 *They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians.* (NKJV)

We know absolutely that Israel departed Egypt on the first day of Unleavened Bread because it tells you it's the fifteenth day of the first month *and* the day after Passover—you can't get any clearer, we know exactly when that took place. Notice also from our calendar handout, we know that the first day of Unleavened Bread was a Thursday because that's going to become important as well. For the rest of this, you're probably only going to be looking at the back of your sheet for the third month because we're going to do some comparisons. If you look in commentaries that address chapter 19:1 and look at how they attribute this same-day comment, you're going to find this is debated. Not everybody agrees on how to apply this same-day comment here but this is our clue as to how to connect this. What we're going to do is look at the different arguments that can be used here and what we're going to see is there's only one of them that will give us either one of these dates that we talked about being on Pentecost.

We have two important days: We have the day the Ten Commandments were spoken, and we have the day the covenant was actually made. If we're going to connect either one of them to Pentecost, there's only one of these options we can use that's going to do that for us. If you look at the different ways commentaries will argue this, one of the

ways that they will do it is to say the same day means the exact same calendar date. That argument doesn't make any sense because we know they left Egypt on the fifteenth day of Nissan. If we're on the fifteenth day of Nissan again, we have to be at least one year if not multiple years out and the third-month comment that was made in verse 1 wouldn't make any sense at all so we have to throw that argument out. The other possibility that's argued for is this is the same day of the month. That would mean the fifteenth—in other words, Israel left Egypt on the fifteenth of Nissan. The argument would be then that this is talking about the fifteenth day of Sivan. If you glance at your calendar handout you'll notice first of all not only are we a week beyond when Pentecost happened that year, we're outside the window of when Pentecost can happen any year. We haven't even started our three-day count yet. Remember, whatever day we nail down, we've had to then do today, tomorrow, and the third-day count to get to the day when the Ten Commandments were spoken. If you start with the fifteenth and start counting from there, you're completely outside the window of when Pentecost can be any year.

Another argument that's often used is it's referring to the first day of Sivan. The logic behind that argument is because in Hebrew when it refers to the third month, it's stated in terms of the third new moon—that's basically what the Hebrew meaning is. The logic then goes if it's referring to the same day as the third new moon then that would be the first of Sivan, the first day of the month. Try that math—if you look at the first day of Sivan and do your three-day count which is today, tomorrow, the third day—that gets you to Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. Your third day is going to be Tuesday, the third—you can't even get into the window of when Pentecost takes place any year.

There's only one argument we can make for the same-day relationship with the Exodus that will get us to Pentecost in any case, and that's going to be the same day of the week. The first day of Unleavened Bread we can nail down we know for sure was on a Thursday. If we use that argument, as you can see, we have Thursday the fifth—that if we start counting from can get us into Pentecost one of these days. If we use the twelfth, nineteenth or twenty-sixth, we're starting outside the window of when Pentecost can be any year, let alone when we know it is this particular year. With that all in mind, let's skip down to Exodus 19:10 and review again—remember we have to do a three-day count—I just want you to review what it says because we know very clearly how to do this count.

Exodus 19:10 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.*

11) And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (NKJV)

When He's having this conversation, He says it's going to be happening in three days and day one is "today". If we count today, tomorrow, the third day—notice what that does. Thursday the fifth of Sivan, that's today, then tomorrow is Friday the 6th, then the third day is Saturday the seventh. It doesn't take you to Pentecost, it takes you to the

Sabbath prior. Think about what we went through in chapter 24. As I mentioned, there are two important days—there's the day the law was communicated to them and the following day they ratified the covenant. They make the formal covenant agreement on the day afterward. If day three is Saturday the seventh, the day afterward when the covenant is actually made is Sunday the eighth, and that gets you right on Pentecost.

What this gets you is a picture of not only the days of the week lining up with the parallel of the events between the year of the Exodus and the year Christ died—you also have the dates of Pentecost being the same and you have the Old Covenant and the New Covenant both being ratified on the Feast of Pentecost. The two events basically dominate the whole story of the Bible. The Old Covenant dominates the entire Old Testament because the whole story is about God and His covenant relationship with Israel (other nations come into the narrative as they interact with Israel). Similar to the New Testament—you have God and the Church and the whole focus is upon that relationship. You have these two major events taking place here.

You're probably asking, haven't I heard most of my life the idea put across that the law was spoken or given on Pentecost—how do people come up with that idea? I researched that as I'm going through this. How do people do the math to come up with that logic? I find oftentimes, in my opinion, there are two mistakes that are typically made. One is either they come out with Thursday the fifth being the same-day relationship but then just skip over the logic that the three-day count is very clear—today, tomorrow, third day. You can't mistake when day one is, when it's called "today". The other way that they do it is they take the story between chapter 19:1 and where he gets down to verse 10 as he's describing the events before God says, today, tomorrow, the third day, and find a way to add an extra day in there which pushes the count out, which makes your third day come to Pentecost. Even if you manipulate the math, there are still two other problems you have to deal with. Notice in verse 10 of chapter 19.

Exodus 19:10 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. (NKJV)*

He's telling them to do their laundry. Also look over to verse 14, this is following through on what He says in verse 10.

14) *So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. (NKJV)*

They're doing their laundry. I can guarantee you in Old Testament times as they're going through the wilderness, nobody is hauling around a Maytag washer and dryer. It wasn't so easy for them, that they could put the clothes in the machine, pour a little soap in there, press the button and come back when it's done. This was manual labor that they would have to do—it would be labor-intensive. Think about this—if this is going to be today and tomorrow, and the third day would be Pentecost—to follow that argument, what is the day that always falls before Pentecost?—the weekly Sabbath.

Does it make sense that the same God (just a few weeks earlier in Chapter 16) gets upset at them for going out to pick up Manna on the Sabbath when He already told them, there's not going to be any Manna, and I want you to stay in, and His reaction is, how long will you continue to disobey Me? Would the same God then turn around and say, I want you to do your laundry on the Sabbath—does that make sense?

Not only does this scenario have Israel doing their laundry on the Sabbath and then receiving the terms of the covenant on Pentecost, according to that scenario, you would then have the covenant being ratified on Monday after a dual Sabbath, holy-day weekend was over. The monumental event that dominates the narrative of the entire Old Testament would be put off, not done on either Sabbath, but on a weekday, as a side note afterward—does that make any sense? See, logically, if you do the math right, you get mirror images of these two years, not only with the days of the week falling the same way, the date of Pentecost being the same way, and the monumental events—the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, the stories that dominate the Bible in both the Old Testament and New Testament—happening on the day of Pentecost. They're exact mirrors of each other.

What we have to keep in mind is remembering the big picture, because the entire point of the Mount Sinai story, as we read from the very beginning, when God initially talks to them about wanting to meet with them and tell them all this—what's the purpose? To make a covenant. It's not just I want to give you My law so that when you wander around in the wilderness you'll get along with each other better and you'll have a better society—there was a big purpose in mind. Not only did He want to give them the Promised Land, but He also wanted to make them a special people because there was a big plan in mind that was much bigger than just Israel. That's what we have to realize to keep our mind on the big picture.

Turn over to Deuteronomy 4 and we'll notice that in giving the law and establishing this covenant there was a very big plan involved here that was quite frankly much bigger than just Israel. What we're going to see when we look through this, one of the mistakes that Israel made is focusing on the trees and missing the big picture—missing the forest, basically. Even those who tried to focus on the law, trying to be faithful to God, wound up instead of using the law as God intended—as being edification for them and for the nations around them and to help others—it became the pedestal upon which they stood to look down at everybody else, and sometimes was the club they used to beat others over the head. They lost the big picture of what it was about. Notice in Deuteronomy 4:1,

Deuteronomy 4:1 *“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. (NKJV)*

Remember the Promised Land is a part of this covenant as well.

- 2) *You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*
- 3) *Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor.*
- 4) *But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you.*
- 5) *“Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess.*
- 6) *Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’*
- 7) *“For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?*
- 8) *And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? (NKJV)*

He gave them this law not just so they would have more effective lives and their society would function better; part of the purpose of all this was that so they would have such good results that the nations around them would look at them and ask, what are these guys doing right? Life just seems to be going so much better for them than for us. Maybe we should learn from them and maybe we should inquire of their God as to why things go so good for them.

The purpose was not just for Israel to beat their chest and say, we have the law and we’re the covenant people; yes, they were the covenant people and yes, they were given the law but it was to be a humbling responsibility to be an example to the rest of mankind so that those around them would want to follow God. They would see this as desirable and something they would want to learn. It was to be an example to others. The picture was to be an edification for everyone else. What so often happened, even when Israel was trying to be faithful as we’re going to see in a minute in the New Testament time frame—they lost the big picture and it became this is our badge of superiority—we have the law and we’re the special people, we’re superior, totally missing that their purpose was to be an example to others to edify the rest of mankind. As we keep reading through this story, it emphasizes this isn’t just about the law, it’s about the covenant. Pick up in verse 9.

- 9) *Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,*
- 10) *especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’*
- 11) *“Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the*

mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.

12) *And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice.*

13) *So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.*

14) *And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess. (NKJV)*

Once again, the purpose was more than just giving Israel the law. Understand that God's law is fundamental—it's very important, it is in effect to today and something we should learn, and something we should obey in our lives. We also have to realize the greater context in which all of this took place. This wasn't just about a nation receiving the law so they could get along with each other better as they wander around the wilderness. This covenant was about them being given the Promised Land and that wasn't just about them having a nice, comfortable life and living in this land flowing with milk and honey—it was so they could be an example to the rest of the world. They could edify through their example to others and make God's way attractive; make them want to learn about Him and seek after this God; learn more about this God so they would want to follow Him. It was to make that attractive—that was the responsibility they were being given.

So often what happened was Israel disobeyed God, walked away from His law but even those who didn't, those who at least attempted to hang on to His law and attempt to follow it, very often still missed the big picture of what this was about and really missed the whole context of what their purpose was in having this. Oftentimes it became the pedestal upon which they stood to look down at the rest of the world and the club they used to beat others over the head; to claim forever their superiority rather than seeing this as a humbling responsibility of being an example.

Notice this over in Matthew 23—moving forward to the time that Christ was on the earth. You'll notice what happened to Judah by this time. By this point in Matthew 23, the Pharisees are the religious leaders in Israel at the time that Christ is on the earth. They were the ones who saw themselves as the guardians of the law. Quality control for everybody in terms of obeying God; this was the role they put themselves in. Notice what they did in their focus on the law. They pretty much miss the forest for focusing on the trees.

Matthew 23:23 *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

24) *Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! (NKJV)*

In other words, He's saying, you really missed the whole point. Christ is not saying they shouldn't tithe and that's not important. He's saying, you are meticulous about your tithing and that you should have done; that's good but you missed much bigger issues. You've turned this into a list of rules to follow and missed the whole purpose of what this was about. The whole objective of trying to change what kind of person you are in terms of how you treat other people—you've completely missed that whole focus.

Not only did they lose the bigger picture of it all—when they caught themselves focusing on God's law, what often happened is they weren't as focused on God's law as they were on their traditions. In our modern-day context, it's the equivalent of what I've always been taught; what Mr. So and So said. That became more important than what scripture itself actually says. To see this turn over to Matthew 15. We're going to see an account where the Pharisees are taking issue with Christ and the Apostles, and what's interesting to note here, we know Jesus Christ lived over thirty-three years and never once sinned; that means He perfectly obeyed God's law His entire life. You would think a bunch of guys who saw themselves as the guardians and sticklers of following God's law would look at a man who could go for thirty-three years and never once violate it would be their hero—He would be their superstar—this guy is the embodiment of what we're supposed to stand for but that's not how they responded at all.

Matthew 15:1 *Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,*

2) *"Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? [Notice tradition is more important to them than scripture] For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."*

3) *He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? (NKJV)*

Christ is saying what's really important, but you've pushed aside scripture to follow your own tradition, your own ideas, and you're patting yourself on the back like you're doing something good.

4) *For God commanded, saying, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'*

5) *But you say, "Whoever says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God'—*

6) *then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.*

7) *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:*

8) *'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*

9) *And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*" (NKJV)

What He's saying is they consider themselves as sticking to the truth (as we might say) but in their culture, it was we follow the law and we're sticklers of the law—but what Christ is telling them is no, you're following your own ideas and your own traditions and you've literally pushed aside scripture to follow that. The Pharisees were known for adding their oral law in their traditions on top of God's commandments and making them more important than God's instructions. We today in our common culture can fall into a similar pitfall.

To give you an example of that, let me share with you a story that happened within the last year or two. I forget the exact time frame but it's directly relevant to Pentecost weekend. It was about a year or two ago, I forget the exact time frame. Late one evening I get a phone call and I answered the phone and a gentleman introduces himself—we had never spoken prior to that evening—and he tells me he has recently listened to a number of sermons off the Pacific website and for the most part liked what he heard but he said, I have a question for you. Can you convince me that Sunday is the right day for Pentecost and not Monday because I'm convinced it's Monday.

He was basically challenging me on the subject. He asked me to defend why we do what we do. I told him if you would like to know my perspective and why I keep it on Sunday, I gave a sermon on that in the last couple of years, it's on the website. I emailed him a link and I said if you listen to this it will walk you through exactly why I feel Sunday is the correct argument. He said, okay if I listen to this afterward, would you be willing to discuss the subject with me afterward? I said sure, I'll be happy to talk to you about it. He said if I can show you from the Bible that Monday is the right day, would you be willing to face that? I said, yes, I'm happy to discuss it with you but I'll tell you I'm pretty convinced that Sunday is the right argument, so you'll have a tough job.

Let me also explain to you something else about how I think. The reason I explain this story to him—from my history of dealing with people who are still focused on Monday Pentecost, I always find that the core of their argument oftentimes is not even arguing the subject from Leviticus 23 or any of the other scriptures directly relevant to that; their argument is focused on the fact that Mr. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God, for almost forty years, kept Pentecost on Monday; therefore that's right and that's basically how the logic goes: That's what I've always been taught and that was established, and we just have to have faith that it was correct. The very fact that Mr. Armstrong was involved in changing that in the 1970's doesn't really change anything for them because in their mind he went off track.

As I explained to this gentleman—I was anticipating this would probably be part of the argument that would come later—so I mentioned to him, let me just tell you how I think so you understand who you're dealing with. When I was at Ambassador College, in my sophomore year I was in a class called Fundamentals of Theology; there were a number of times as this class played out that we would get into various discussions about theological subjects, and oftentimes students would challenge an idea or bring up

an idea that they were discussing but literally the argument they would present is, I've always been taught X, so X is true, or, Mr. So and So said ... and they would be quoting another professor or some other minister—somebody in Worldwide who had a title to their name. They would say Mr. So and So said this, and it was put across, so that makes it true. My professor would get irritated with this, and he stopped and said, do not come in this class with an argument of Mr. So and So said, or what I've always been taught. What Mr. So and So said and what I've always been taught is evidence for *absolutely nothing*. Come in here with an argument from your Bible, from scripture, and I'll be happy to discuss that with you all day. I'll stay after class and we'll discuss that, but I will not entertain an argument of I've always been taught a certain thing therefore it's true, because that is evidence for nothing. I shared this story with the gentleman and said, understand that's how I think so if you're going to argue the subject with me you're going to have to base your argument with Leviticus 23 or some of the other relevant scriptures that directly address how you calculate Pentecost. That's the only thing that's going to convince me of anything.

As you might imagine this gentleman listened to the sermon and emailed me back and said I've listened to your sermon, in fact, I listened to it twice and I'm more convinced than ever that Monday is the right day. He asked me if I would discuss it with him—we had an email exchange a few times and after we went back and forth a few times, and I couldn't help but notice that he had not even once attempted to argue the subject from the scriptures directly, relevant to how to tabulate Pentecost. His entire argument had been based around Mr. Armstrong kept it this way, the Church kept it this way for forty years, we have to have faith that was right, and that was the entire argument. After several times going back and forth, I wrote him back and reminded him, Sir, when we started this whole exchange, I told you up front that the only thing I would accept is something that is directly from the scriptures that directly pertains to how you tabulate Pentecost. Anything outside of that—appealing to tradition—is going to mean absolutely nothing to me. I told him we are going to just have to agree to disagree because we are not going to go any further.

My point is we can fall into that same logic in our world today. Where the Pharisees looked at the traditions of the Elders is this—because if you know anything about the history of the Pharisees, it was not unusual for them to spend more time debating; this great Rabbi said this and this other great Rabbi said this; rather than saying what does the scripture say and digging down to that. It was all based on the precedence of what some famous teacher had taught them. I'm not talking about the biblical writers that were canonized but just how tradition had developed and that's evidence for nothing. We can fall into those same pitfalls as well.

Another point I want you to see from all of this, as I mentioned—Israel lost sight of the big picture of why they were given this covenant. They were given the law and yes, the law is important, but what that often became is Israel standing on their pedestal and saying, we're the covenant people and we have the law and we're better than all these

other low lives out here—rather than taking it as God intended as a humbling responsibility for them to be an example; for them to make God’s way of life look attractive and something that other people would want to follow. As Christ makes it very clear, in His criticism of Israel at the time He was walking the earth, Israel was not inherently superior by any means. Turn over to Matthew 11:20.

Matthew 11:20 *Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:*

21) *“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

22) *But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.*

23) *And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

24) *But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.” (NKJV)*

What I want you to see is Christ makes it abundantly clear that, yes, Israel was a people, God’s covenant people, with whom He had a special relationship. Were they the people to whom He gave His law—yes! Yes, they were. But that didn’t make them superior forever for all eternity to everyone else on the planet, but that’s how they tended to take it: As the chosen people who were better than all these other heathens, rather than taking it as a humbling responsibility of something they should have taken seriously because they had a duty to be an example and to help others.

As you can see through the parallels of this (because tomorrow we’re going to look at the New Covenant), as firstfruits the responsibility that we have is very similar to what Israel had. Israel was the first nation that God was working with—He had a physical covenant with them—but the purpose was to edify the rest of mankind. What they tended to do was focus on having the law and seeing that as making them special, rather than seeing the purpose of why they had the law; it was to be a help and edification to everyone else. We in the New Covenant can make a similar mistake. We can take our responsibilities as firstfruits and instead of thinking we should be humbled by this—that we have a responsibility to be an example and thus edify the rest of mankind—we can take that as we have the truth, we are a special people, we’re better than everybody else. No, we’re not. We have to learn the lessons of this and not fall into the same trap.

We are about out of time today. Today we focused primarily on the establishment of the Old Covenant and tomorrow we will focus on the establishment of the New Covenant. I’ll just end by saying, tune in tomorrow for Pentecost and the establishment of the New Covenant.