

# Pentecost

## *A Day to Count*

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**December 2000**

Back in 1974 the Worldwide Church of God made a major doctrinal change to their beliefs by changing Pentecost from a Monday observance to a Sunday. Many papers have been written concerning this all important topic. The day of Pentecost is a pivotal Holy day. It's of the utmost importance that the right day is kept. This article is being written to reflect on the change that was made and to emphasize the significance of why the day of Pentecost is a day to count.

The first issue I'll address is, "Does it really matter which day one observes"? To answer this question one must also answer the following, "What is the doctrinal foundation as given by God?" Without going into an in-depth analysis of the foundation at this time, I believe that the proper observance of the Sabbath and Holy days is at the main core of doctrinal foundation. I assume most Sabbath keepers would consider it foolish to defend a statement such as, "Keep either Saturday or Sunday as holy time, the day doesn't matter." I also believe the same analogy holds true for a Monday versus a Sunday Pentecost. God sanctions only one day as holy time. Our personal feelings are irrelevant unless they express the inspiration given by God. Our concern should be in regards to truth, God's inspired truth.

Many who once kept the Sabbath and Holy days now believe their observance is no longer required. They believe that as long as you personally set aside time to honor God the day doesn't matter. Unfortunately this view is a result of what happens when one rejects the revelation of God. We don't make time Holy, only God does, and if God says to keep the feasts as a statute forever, then I believe it matters which day God sanctioned.

Let's start with the meaning of the day of Pentecost. I assume most accept the fact that this day pictures the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. The receiving of the Holy Spirit comes after individual repentance as pictured by the first Holy Day season of the year, the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. How can one come to understand which day to observe if they aren't led by the power of God's Holy Spirit? I can not get over the irony in the meaning of this day. If you don't keep the right day you are in essence rejecting the spirit power of God, the very meaning of the day. The keeping of Pentecost is a focal point in one's spiritual life. In the straight and narrow path we are to walk in, one could consider a Sunday versus a Monday Pentecost to be a fork in the road. If you make the wrong choice you are in danger of lessening the influence of Gods spirit power in your life. God's spirit power must be replenished on a continual basis. To reject the day God gave, the day that pictures the outpouring of his spirit, is tantamount to committing spiritual suicide.

Along with the changing of Pentecost in 1974, I believe another major event took place. That event being a transition into a time in which God is no longer moving and directing any one group with the conversion and calling of people in large numbers. We are in a time of waiting, a time of holding fast. There are dozens of scriptures, which expound on the principal of holding fast (Rev. 3:11; Heb. 3:12-14, 10:23; Titus 1:9; I John 2:24). Based on this I have to conclude that there was a time coming when many would depart from God's truth (II Tim. 4:3-5). I believe we are experiencing the times as described in Amos 8:11, a time of a famine of the hearing of the word of God. The prophecies of God's people being scattered have been and continue to be fulfilled. (Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34)

If one is searching for a group that mirrors the days of the Radio Church of God, I don't believe you'll find it. I do not see God working with any one group in the same manner that many witnessed in the earlier years of the Radio Church of God and subsequent Worldwide Church of God. The WCG has changed so much that it barely resembles the same church. Many factions of the WCG make the claim of having returned to the foundational doctrines, but continue to observe a Sunday Pentecost.

The majority of God's people have rejected a Monday Pentecost, however, even those groups which have kept a Monday do not have increasing numbers. Unfortunately many look to numbers for the answer, they simply overlook the fact that we are in a holding period. God prophesied these times would occur and who are we to argue with God? I believe many have not questioned the change from a Monday to Sunday simply because they haven't seen any physical evidence of a Monday keeping group being blessed in the same manner as in the earlier years of the church. Keeping a Monday Pentecost is not a guarantee that one will continue to walk before God, however, it is a prerequisite for those whom God once gave the knowledge to, and have since rejected.

The day of Pentecost is a test for God's people and what is sad is that most do not even question a Sunday Pentecost. I would be inclined to believe that most who at one time kept a Monday Pentecost do not even consider it an issue today. Articles have been written by the likes of Paul Royer, Raymond Cole, and Richard Nichols outlining the many proofs of a Monday Pentecost. But who has repented as a result of reading these articles? Who has been convinced that they made the wrong decision? The point I'm trying to make is this, once you become blinded to a truth, only God can rejuvenate his spirit within an individual. No matter how convincing an article is, no matter how clear the truth may seem to be, if God is not ready to move then the truth will fall upon deaf ears. The intent of this article is not to go into long technical explanations of all the proofs of a Monday. As stated, other papers have been written and are an excellent source of this information. This paper is being written to reflect back on what I believe has occurred and to emphasize that Pentecost is a day to count.

One of the things I learned growing up in the church was the uselessness of trying to convince an unconverted friend of God's truth. No matter how much one might try to convince someone of the simplicity of God's truth, it just won't make sense unless God

opens ones eyes to see and understand. At some point in time in the future I believe God will once again open the minds of some whom have rejected this day. How and when God will do that is beyond the scope of this article.

Of all my beliefs, the one I am most convinced of is the correctness of a Monday Pentecost. Every direction I turn I see and learn more of why Monday is the correct day. In the few occasions where someone has tried to convince me of Sunday, it has only lead me into a deeper understanding of why Monday can be the only answer. I know that of and by itself this proves nothing. I only state this to emphasize that there is absolutely no doubt in my mind which day God ordained.

I've listened to others who believe in a Monday state that you must understand this day from a spiritual point of view first and then the physical falls into line. I couldn't agree more. God purposed it this way and I firmly believe the reason was to test his people.

What follows is what I believe to be the basics in regards to Pentecost.

- 1) God revealed to his church the basic foundational doctrines, including a Monday Pentecost.
- 2) God worked through a man, Herbert Armstrong, to raise-up and rejuvenate an end-time era of his church.
- 3) God revealed a Monday Pentecost to Mr. Armstrong, but not necessarily the method of how to count.
- 4) HWA made two mistakes in how to count Pentecost, however, one mistake cancelled out the other with the result proving the inspiration of a God given Monday.
- 5) God allowed these mistakes to test his people.
- 6) The church corrected one of the mistakes made by HWA. The count does in fact start on Sunday (Saturday night at sunset), not Monday. (Lev. 23:15)
- 7) The church rejected the inspiration of a God given Monday and thereby did not fully look into the matter of how to complete the count.
- 8) The second major mistake HWA made was in how to complete the count. He started the count a day late, but also ended the count a day too soon, only counting forty-nine and thereby arriving on a God inspired Monday. This is the point I will focus on in the remainder of this article. One must fully count 50 before observing Pentecost as instructed in Lev.23:15.
- 9) When one accepts in faith that God gave to his church the foundation to build upon, you will understand how to count the day of Pentecost
- 10) Those whom God called and who later rejected a Monday are accountable to God and God will deal with them in his own time and in his own way.

Not only did the church change from a Monday to a Sunday, but they also changed the observance of Pentecost to a week earlier in the years which the Days of Unleavened Bread start on a Sunday and end on a Saturday. When the church made such an obvious mistake in moving this up one week I would think an internal spiritual alarm would go off. That maybe those pushing for a Sunday Pentecost were on the wrong track and not being led and directed of God. Other papers go into this in detail, however, the gist of the

matter is, a Holy day can not also be a workday. Wave sheaf Sunday must be on the Sunday that follows Saturday, the last Day of Unleavened Bread.

One of the many proofs of a Monday Pentecost is this, “Did the church repent when they learned of their disobedience?” Was a day of fasting declared as the church repented of the many years of observing the wrong day? There was no group repentance that I’m aware of, the church simply stated a mistake in counting had been made and guess what, we should be keeping a Sunday. The Bible examples show that when one realizes a major mistake has been made, repentance is called for. The total lack of repentance should make one seriously question whether God’s spirit was leading the advocates of a Sunday observance.

Simply stated, Pentecost is a day to count. This is the first and most important principal to remember when calculating Pentecost. Leviticus 23 is the foundational chapter of when to keep God’s feasts. Many confuse the issue by the definition of the 50<sup>th</sup> versus the 51<sup>st</sup> day. Many count inconsistently by counting inclusively at the start and exclusively at the end. One should put aside the ambiguous and keep to the basics. What could be plainer than this, God states in Leviticus 23 to **count fifty** and then keep the day of Pentecost. The various factions of the churches of God only count forty-nine and then keep Sunday, the final day of the count, but you can’t keep Pentecost until the count is complete. There is no doubt in my mind of the inspiration of Acts 2 in the wording of, “And when the day of Pentecost was **fully** come...”.

So when do you count ONE? Is it Saturday at sunset, Sunday afternoon, or Sunday sunset? You have to count at some point in time. You can’t just say Sunday is the first day of the count and leave it at that. Counting requires that at some precise point in time you say, ONE, TWO, THREE, and so on. The Bible is clear on the principle of counting days at their conclusion. An analogy that helps clarify this principle is the manner in which one counts their age. Just as you can’t say you’re one-year-old until one year has expired, you also can’t count ONE until the first day is complete. The example of creation states, “and the evening and the morning were the first day”. The day was counted at its completion. So, the count starts at Saturday night sunset with the actual count of ONE declared at the completion of the first day, Sunday night sunset.

The church was correct in stating the count should start on Sunday not Monday. But, what they failed to understand is that HWA only counted 49, and then kept Pentecost. This of and by itself is proof to me in the inspiration of a God given Monday. What if the church had come to understand that HWA had only counted forty-nine and decided to move Pentecost to a Tuesday? Obviously, the result would be the same. Only Monday is holy time. Sunday, Tuesday, or any other day of the week except Monday, is not sanctioned by God. So to repeat myself one more time, the basic principal of Pentecost is to count fifty and then keep the feast.

Whether one considers Pentecost the 50<sup>th</sup> or 51<sup>st</sup> day is where many stumble. In this present day of how we talk about time, most would consider those keeping a Monday Pentecost to be keeping the 51<sup>st</sup> day. The argument given is, “Sunday is the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the

week and Saturday is the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, therefore, Sunday is the 50<sup>th</sup> day and Monday would be the 51<sup>st</sup> day". Yes, Saturday is day seven in the week, however, relative to counting, a week is not complete until Saturday night at sunset. In counting a week you would finally count seven on Saturday night at sunset, at this precise time the count is complete, the week is over. If you viewed counting like the odometer on your car, on Friday night at sunset the odometer would hit six. During the Sabbath it would continue to move from six and one tenth, six and two tenths, and so forth until finally at sunset Saturday night it would roll over to seven. In this regard, Saturday is the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the count but considered the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week. In this same context of counting, Sunday is the 49<sup>th</sup> day of the count with the count complete on Sunday night at sunset, when one finally counts *fifty*. In this manner, Monday is still day 50 relative to counting, since one can't count fifty-one until Monday night at sunset. One must remember that the basics are to count fifty and then keep Pentecost. You can not mix counting with day-of-the-week logic.

Let's zero in on this logic for a moment. You must be consistent when counting Pentecost. You can't be inclusive at the start of the count and change to exclusive at the end, just as you can't mix day-of-the-week logic with God's counting logic. Gods' commands on keeping the Sabbath are relative to a day-of-the-week. We are commanded to keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day holy. God blessed the 7<sup>th</sup> day and sanctioned it. Six days we are to work and then rest on the seventh. The instructions for keeping Pentecost are of a different nature. It is not based on day-of-the-week logic but rather counting logic. The instructions in Leviticus 23 don't say to keep the 50<sup>th</sup> day per se, it says to count fifty and then keep the feast. If you focus on keeping the 50<sup>th</sup> day in terms of day-of-the-week logic it will lead you to a Sunday, however, if you focus on counting 50 it will lead you to a Monday.

We all know Christ spent three days and three nights in the grave yet all scriptures refer to Christ being raised on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. In Luke 24:21 it refers to Sunday as being the 3<sup>rd</sup> day since all these things happened. Why is it the 3<sup>rd</sup> day and not the 4<sup>th</sup>? The difference is that it is being referred to in the context of counting, not day-of-the-week. If one tries to resolve Pentecost over the term 50<sup>th</sup> versus the 51<sup>st</sup> they more than likely will arrive at the wrong conclusion. The point of this article is to try to help one understand that the most important principal in counting Pentecost is to fully count fifty.

Hopefully the preceding paragraphs are not too confusing. As I stated earlier under point 9 in the basics of Pentecost, when one first accepts in faith that God revealed the foundational doctrines it becomes much clearer.

Since we know the Bible doesn't contradict itself we should also know that Deuteronomy 16 is not in conflict with Leviticus 23. One says to count 50 and the other says to count seven weeks. We all know that there is only one day of Pentecost not two, so obviously these counts must start at different times in order to complete at the same time. Leviticus 23 is the foundational chapter for determining when to keep the feasts of God. There is no reason to be in a quandary over these texts. Use Leviticus 23 as your foundation and you will not be confused.

I truly wish God's people would repent and fall on their knees asking for God's forgiveness. I wish they would return to the observance of a Monday Pentecost. If only his people would unite in humility and acknowledge their sins. Why doesn't the church understand they "strove over words" and neglected the inspiration of God? Great patience is required in these times. We simply must wait on God. God is not asleep, he will stir his spirit power once again. Will you be ready? Will your lamp be trimmed and full of oil, or will you need to go and replenish the supply?